The Verbunkos idiom in Liszt's 'Music of the Future': historical issues of reception and new cultural and analytical perspectives

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List of Music Examples

Chapter 1: The Unacknowledged Past
1.1: Some of the most common features of style hongrois: (a) verbunkos minor and kalindra scales;
   (b) bokázó cadences; (c) the undulating 'Kuruc' fourth; (d) typical syncopated rhythm ....................... 288
1.2: The verbunkos scale, as derived from a rotation of the Greek-Chromatic tetrachord (based on István
   Szelenyi, 1963, p. 314)........................................................................................................................... 288
1.3: Hungarian Rhapsody no. 13, bs. 40-46................................................................................................... 288
1.4: The meeting of modernist and folklorist worlds: Correspondence between symmetric and 'verbunkos'
   scales (based on Bärdos, op. cit., p. 192) ............................................................................................ 289
1.5: La Nolte, bs. 72-87 (some dynamics and pedalling omitted)............................................................... 290
1.6: The two modes on C (downward stems) and D (upward stems) as one continuous tone-row .......... 290

Chapter 2: Modernism and Authenticity
2.1: Examples of dissonances and drone-based harmonisations derived from verbunkos in (a) Haydn, Piano
   Concerto in D minor, Hob. XVIII:11, bs. 186-9; (b) Schubert, Divertissement à l'hongroise (D818),
   third movement, bs. 547-54; and (c) Liszt, Hungarian Rhapsody no. 12, bs. 7-10 ................................ 291
2.2: Examples of (verbunkos-related) dissonant bimodal juxtapositions from three different periods in
   Liszt's oeuvre: (a) Zwei Werbungstänze (1828), non troppo lento, bs. 5-7;
   (b) Hungarian Rhapsody no. 7 (1851/3), bs. 68-73; (c) Csárdás Obstinate (1885), bs. 17-24 ............. 293
2.3: (a) A concise representation of the main themes of the vivace assai section from Hungarian
   Rhapsody no. 14 (RH14), as they appear in bs. 209-274, leading to
   (b) three variants of Theme I, bs. 275-99 ............................................................................................ 294
2.4: RH14, vivace assai: structural-motivic similarities between Themes I, II and III ................................. 296
2.5: The melodic-harmonic structure which binds the three themes as they appear in bs. 209-274 .......... 296
2.6: The relationship between verbunkos elements, melodic structure, and the three-stage tonal process in
   the vivace assai, bs. 209-338 ............................................................................................................. 297

Chapter 3: Style hongrois and the Question of Influence
3.1: The opening of Liszt's Präludium und Fuge über das Motiv B-A-C-H (1855 version) ....................... 298
3.2: Réminiscences de Don Juan, bs. 392-424: The beginning of Liszt's reworking of the "Ed io frattanto
   dall'altro canto con questa e quella vo' ammoregiar" phrase from the 'wine' aria .......................... 299
3.3: violin part from Hungaria, bs. 79-86 ................................................................................................. 300
3.4: A textural reduction (figuration omitted) of the middle (scherzando) section from the seventh Hungarian Rhapsody, bs. 105-84........................................................................................................... 300

3.5: The beginning of the ‘Wallachian melody’ from Magyar Dalok no. 20 (bs. 99-106)................................ 301

3.6: Asymmetric phrase structures, ostinato ‘cut-in’ cadences, discordant pedal point (C#) and ambivalent I/V tonality in Hungarian Rhapsody no. 9, bs. 270-91 ........................................................................ 301

3.7: Minor-major modal shift in the first theme from Liszt’s Hungarian Rhapsody no. 15 ........................................ 302

3.8: Hungarian Rhapsody no. 14, bs. 339-354........................................................................................................ 302

3.9: (a) The verbunkos minor scale’s relationship with the (b) IV, and (c) II1 chords........................................ 303

3.10: Early example of the verbunkos minor’s harmonisation Zwei Werbungstänze (1828), bs. 32-5........ 303

3.11: Keyboard-based polychordal and bimodal effects in Hungarian Rhapsody no. 10:
   (a), bs. 86-8; (b) bs. 102-8 ...................................................................................................................... 304

3.12: Liszt, Ungarischer Romanzero no. 11, allegro, bs. 49-72 .................................................................. 305

3.13: Brahms, Ungarische Tänze no. 9, bs. 1-16 .................................................................................... 306

3.14: An imaginary, reconstructed ‘source’ for Liszt’s and Brahms’ setting................................................. 307

3.15: Hidden parallelisms and dense motivic reflection in Brahms’ ninth Hungarian Dance, bs. 9-12....... 308

3.16: (a) ‘Proper’ dissonance control in Bb minor; (b) a hypothetical Bb, major (or F Dorian) context;
   (c) Liszt’s actual progression in b. 54, where the melodic Ds is treated as a consonant ...................... 308

3.17: Harmonic analogy between the (a) imperfect and (c) perfect cadences of bs. 59-60 and 63-4
   respectively; (b) and (d) are given as harmonic reductions................................................................. 309

3.18: Repeat of the first half of phrase A, bs. 99-102 .................................................................................... 309

3.19: a harmonic summary of phrases A and B ............................................................................................. 310

Chapter 4: Listening to Alternative Tonal Practices

4.1: Schenker’s modal system of mixtures and its exclusions (beyond the dotted line)......................... 311

4.2: Chopin, Mazurka in C# minor, op. 51/1, bs. 1-8 ............................................................................. 312

4.3: Common-tone retention between diatonic keys: a comparison between (a) normative minor mode and (b) verbunkos minor mode. ‘R’ stands for ‘relative key’. .................................................. 312

4.4: (a) A-kalindra’s monotertial and semitonal relationships to its second degree and (b) the quasi-diatonic relationship between kalindra modes that symmetrically divide the octave into three major thirds..... 313

4.5: Sunt Lacrymae Rerum, bs. 1-8 ........................................................................................................... 313

4.6: Hungarian Rhapsody no. 3, bs. 9-16; this is a repeat of the opening phrase ............................... 314

4.7: RH3, bs. 28-40 (second part of Section B and the beginning of Section A’.)................................. 314
4.8: modal transformations in RH3 ................................................................................................................ 315
4.9: RH3, Section A'B' and codetta (bs. 58-66) ................................................................................................ 316
4.10: A representation of retro-audible connections in RH3........................................................................ 317
4.11: First section (S1) from the sixth rhapsody's allegro ............................................................................. 317
4.12: A Schenkerian graph of the sixth rhapsody's allegro ........................................................................... 318
4.13: A reading of S1 where D-har/maj is the controlling tonic key .............................................................. 319
4.14: (a) Alternative spellings for the hexachordal collection in the concluding cadence in D and the vacillating cadence which follows (corresponding to bs. 120-126)
(b) a hypothetical and schematic representation of the tonal-textural 'meaning' of bs. 120-127 .......... 319
4.15: The idiomatic and tonal transformation of the concluding cadences in:
   (a) S2, bs. 149-61
   (b) S3, bs. 188-94
   (c) S4, bs. 213-21 ................................................................................................................................. 320
4.16: Above: The finale's 'alternative' tonal structure
Below: The background structure according to the above .................................................................. 321

Chapter 5: The Verbunkos Idiom in Liszt's Late Works
5.1: Set-classes in Sunt Lacrymae Rerum, bs. 109-112: (a) different permutations of 3-3
      (b) vertical set-classes ......................................................................................................................... 322
5.2: Spondees and other groups of long accented notes, typical in 'storm' marches (exx. a, b, and c):
   (a) Rákóczi March (1871 version), bs. 31-3
   (b) Ungarischer Sturmmarsch (1876 second version), bs. 17-20;
   (c) Revive Szegedin! (1879), bs. 1-8;
   (d) short-long-short rhythm and bokázó figure in Hungarian Rhapsody no. 17 (1884), bs. 1-4 .......... 323
5.3: Ornamental style and melodic types: (a) Mephisto Waltz no. 3 (1883), bs. 27-8
      (b) Bagatelle sans tonalité (1885), bs. 1-16
      (c) Mephisto Waltz no. 2 (1878/9-81), bs. 1-7 .................................................................................. 324
5.4: Equal-voice parallel sixths in Csárdás obstinée, bs. 283-314.................................................................................. 325
5.5: (a) Mephisto Polka, bs. 17-47 (repeated in idiomatic variation, bs. 48-80)
      (b) harmonic reduction of the above .................................................................................................. 326
5.6: Pendular inflected repetitions in (a) Hungarian Rhapsody no. 16, bs. 87-96
      (b) La lugubre gondola II, bs. 69-76 .................................................................................................. 327
5.7: Pendular and progressionl inflected repetitions in (a) Csárdás obstinée, bs. 17-76
      (b) structural reduction of the above ............................................................................................. 328
5.8: Pendular and progressional inflected repetitions in (a) Bagatelle sans Tonalité, bs. 37-60
(b) structural reduction of the above .......................... 329

5.9: (a) Unstern!, bs. 21-30
(b) reduction of bs. 21-72
(c) Bartók, Mikrokosmos no. 109: From the Island of Bali (published 1940): bs. 1-4............... 330

5.10: Nuages gris, bs. 1-12 ............................................................................................................................ 331

5.11: Széchenyi István, main theme, bs. 43-54. Xs mark the ‘non-functional’ chord on the VI ................. 331

5.12: Magyar gyors induló, bs. 1-46 .............................................................................................................. 332

5.13: Csárdás macabre, bs. 1-108: (a) Introduction; (b) Exposition: Curtain Theme and (c) Theme I........... 334

5.14: Themes associated with the Csárdás macabre from other works: (a) Opening bars of Liszt’s Totentanz; (b) Liszt’s piano transcription of Saint-Saëns’ Danse macabre, bs. 31-8 ...................... 335

5.15: Harmonic reduction of bs. 1-178 (G1 to the beginning of G2) ............................................................. 336

5.16: Thematic transformation in second half of the ‘bridge’, bs. 132-49 .................................................... 336

5.17: Curtain Theme in bs. 157-62, leading to Theme II (G2) and ‘F major’ and, above in the ‘ossia’ stave, the varied version of Theme II (right hand only) in bs. 253-68 ........................................................... 337

5.18: (a) Reduction of harmonic transition into Gι-ver/lyd, bs. 163-91
(b) the equivalent passage in the recapitulation, bs. 419-47................................................................. 338

5.19: ‘Luminous’ themes compared: (a) the F-major ‘spiritual’ theme of Les Jeux d’Eau à la Villa d’Este, bs. 40-51 and (b) the Gι-ver/lyd theme in Csárdás macabre, bs. 191-216 .................................................. 339

5.20: Macabre transformations of previous themes at the beginning of G1’ (repeat of G1): (a) Theme I-g1’ (return of the ‘sarcasm’ theme) followed by (b) a daemonic variant of one of the bridge themes..... 340

5.21: End of the exposition and beginning of the recapitulation, bs. 281-301 ............................................. 341

5.22: (a) End of recapitulation and beginning of the coda, bs. 555-80 ....................................................... 342

5.23: Closing cadences in D-kal and final entrance of the Curtain Theme, bs. 626-37 .................................. 344

5.24: Conclusion of the Csárdás macabre ..................................................................................................... 344

5.25: (a) Detailed and (b) background representations of the modal-tonal process in the Csárdás macabre 345
Chapter 1:

The Unacknowledged Past

1.1: Some of the most common features of style hongrois: (a) verbunkos minor and kalindra scales; (b) bokázo cadences; (c) the undulating "Kuruc" fourth; (d) typical syncopated rhythm

(a) verbunkos scales

(b) bokázo cadence (variants)

(c) Kuruc 4th

(d) short-long-short rhythm

usually harmonised as either 'authentic' or 'plagal'

1.2: The verbunkos scale, as derived from a rotation of the Greek-Chromatic tetrachord (based on István Szelenyi, 1963, p. 314)
1.3: *Hungarian Rhapsody no. 13*, bs. 40-46

Bárdos quotes the B₃-ver/lvd passage in bs. 44-5 (Bárdos, 1978, p. 189)

Mode: B₃-ver/lvd

Formal tonal context: Neapolitan 6 chord mixed into A major

The phrase concludes in A minor

---

cadence repeated (Bárdos' example)  

(A major tonic abruptly returns in b. 49 -- not quoted)

1.4: The meeting of modernist and folklorist worlds: Correspondence between symmetric and ‘verbunkos’ scales (based on Bárdos, op. cit., p. 192)
1.5: *La Notte*, bs. 72-87 (some dynamics and pedalling omitted)

The melody enclosed in the rectangle is Bárdos’ example of a 1:3 scale (Bárdos, op. cit., p. 193).

1.6: The two modes on C# (downward stems) and D (upward stems) as one continuous tone-row.
Chapter 2:

Modernism and Authenticity

2.1: Examples of dissonances and drone-based harmonisations derived from *verbunkos* in (a) Haydn, *Piano Concerto in D minor*, Hob. XVIII:11, bs. 186-9; (b) Schubert, *Divertissement à l'hongroise* (D818), third movement, bs. 547-54; and (c) Liszt, *Hungarian Rhapsody no. 12*, bs. 7-10

(continued overleaf)
(b) dissonant 9th

(c) (Mesto)

sempre f e marcato
2.2: Examples of (verbunkos-related) dissonant bimodal juxtapositions from three different periods in Liszt’s oeuvre: (a) Zwei Werbungstänze (1828), non troppo lento, bs. 5-7; (b) Hungarian Rhapsody no. 7 (1851/3), bs. 68-73; (c) Csárdás obstinée (1885), bs. 17-24

(a) F♯ parallel fifths (cf. bs. 72-3)

(b) Camera work on cross relations (encircled) C hidden octaves between inner melodic line (B⁴-C⁶-D)

(c) A → G♯

A♯

Tension

Resolution (verbunkos I♯)

A

sempre staccato

B
2.3: (a) A concise representation of the main themes of the vivace assai section from Hungarian Rhapsody no. 14 (RH14), as they appear in bs. 209-274, leading to (b) three variants of Theme I, bs. 275-99

Theme I\textsubscript{1o}: bs. 217-24 (repeat of Theme I\textsubscript{1} from bs. 209-16, an octave higher)

(Vivace assai)

Theme II: 225-32

repeated an octave higher, in bs. 233-240

b. 241

Theme III\textsubscript{1o}: 243-258

(continued overleaf)
Reprise of first theme (three variants): Theme I

End of Theme III (b. 258)

Theme I:'

Theme I:'

heading towards Theme IIIb ('delicate variant')
2.4: RH14, vivace assai: structural-motivic similarities between Themes I, II and III

The beamed A represents the binding structural note (consonant with the C 'drone bass' as I"); white notes represent the local perception of the tonic – which is debatable in Theme III

2.5: The melodic-harmonic structure which binds the three themes as they appear in bs. 209-274

The beamed A represents the binding structural note (consonant with the C 'drone bass' as I"); white notes represent the local perception of the tonic – which is debatable in Theme III
2.6: The relationship between *verbunkos* elements, melodic structure, and the three-stage tonal process in the *vivace assai*, bs. 209-338

White notes indicate the (sometimes arguable) perception of the local tonic; the key signatures indicate the (analogously arguable) perception of key.

![Diagram of musical notation showing stages of tonal process]
Chapter 3:

*Style hongrois and the Question of Influence*

3.1: The opening of Liszt's *Präludium und Fuge über das Motiv B-A-C-H* (1855 version)

\[\text{Allegro moderato} \quad \text{stringendo} \quad \text{Adagio}\]

\[\text{poco a poco accel.} \quad \text{Tempo I}\]

etc.

toccata / verbunkos improvisatory style
3.2: Réminiscences de Don Juan, bs. 392-424: The beginning of Liszt's reworking of the “Ed io frattanto dall’altro canto con questa e quella vo’ ammoregiar” phrase from the ‘wine’ aria
3.3: violin part from *Hungaria*, bs. 79-86

3.4: A textural reduction (figuration omitted) of the middle (*scherzando*) section from the seventh Hungarian Rhapsody, bs. 105-84

Each half-phrase is repeated in its turn, and the whole phrase is sounded three times in figurative variations.
3.5: The beginning of the 'Wallachian melody' from *Magyar Dalok* no. 20 (bs. 99-106)

```
p fantastico
```

3.6: Asymmetric phrase structures, ostinato 'cut-in' cadences, discordant pedal point (C♯) and ambivalent I/IV tonality in *Hungarian Rhapsody* no. 9, bs. 270-91

Repeat signs replace the originally written-out music; '1c' stands for 'one bar of cut-in cadence'.

```
subphrase structure:

\[(2+2+1c) \times 2\]

\[(2+1c) \times (2+1c)\] \times 2
```

bs. 270-74
275-79

P dolce leggiero

bs. 280-85
286-91

'cut-in' cadence
3.7: Minor-major modal shift in the first theme from Liszt’s Hungarian Rhapsody no. 15

3.8: Hungarian Rhapsody no. 14, bs. 339-354
3.9: (a) The *verbunkos* minor scale’s relationship with the (b) IV\(^6\) and (c) II\(^4\) chords

3.10: Early example of the *verbunkos* minor’s harmonisation *Zwei Werbungstänze* (1828), bs. 32-5
3.11: Keyboard-based polychordal and bimodal effects in *Hungarian Rhapsody no. 10*: (a), bs. 86-8; (b) bs. 102-8
3.12: Liszt, *Ungarischer Romanzero* no. 11, *allegro*, bs. 49-72
3.13: Brahms, *Ungarische Tänze* no. 9, bs. 1-16

Allegro non troppo

(continued overleaf)
3.14: An imaginary, reconstructed ‘source’ for Liszt’s and Brahms’ setting.

Phrase A

```
I ______________________________________ V ---- IV III I V7 I
```

Phrase B

```
V ______________________________________ V
```

for Liszt

```
```

for Brahms

```
```
3.15: Hidden parallelisms and dense motivic reflection in Brahms' ninth Hungarian Dance, bs. 9-12

Note values correspond to the harmonic pace in the piece (not to the Schenkerian hierarchy of white/black notes); full beams indicate the structural bass-melody arpeggiation; dotted beams indicate the subsidiary arpeggiation of the middle voices.

Exx. 3.16 - 3.19 refer to the allegro section from Liszt’s Ungarischer Romanzero no. 11

3.16: (a) ‘Proper’ dissonance control in B♭ minor; (b) a hypothetical B♭ major (or F Dorian) context; (c) Liszt’s actual progression in b. 54, where the melodic D♮ is treated as a consonant.

In all three examples, white notes represent stable consonances, black notes represent neighbour or passing notes/chords, and small notes signify chromatic neighbour or passing notes.
3.17: Harmonic analogy between the (a) imperfect and (c) perfect cadences of bs. 59-60 and 63-4 respectively; (b) and (d) are given as harmonic reductions.

Note that (d) offers the more normative counterpoint against Liszt’s ‘de-synchronised’ voice-leading in (c).

3.18: Repeat of the first half of phrase A. bs. 99-102
3.19: a harmonic summary of phrases A and B

Although tonally self-enclosed (hence white notes), the phrases are joined by modally-generated enharmonic connections (esp. the regularly-inflected A♭/♭; see also dotted slurs) and by an overarching arpeggio motive that resonates with the local arpeggio motives in Phrase B.

* = local tonic / tonic chord
Chapter 4:

Listening to Alternative Tonal Practices

4.1: Schenker's modal system of mixtures and its exclusions (beyond the dotted line)

4.3: Common-tone retention between diatonic keys: a comparison between (a) normative minor mode and (b) *verbunkos* minor mode. 'R' stands for 'relative key'.
4.4: (a) *A-kalindra's* monotertial and semitonal relationships to its second degree and (b) the quasi-diatonic relationship between *kalindra* modes that symmetrically divide the octave into three major thirds.

4.5: *Sunt lacrymae rerum*, bs. 1-8

*A-kal*: (enharmonic) B♭ minor - A major (cf. ex. 4.4a)

Lento assai

'diatomic' major-third relationship: A major - C♯ minor (cf. ex. 4.4b)

*A-kal*: evasive tonic
4.6: Hungarian Rhapsody no. 3, bs. 9-16; this is a repeat of the opening phrase

Section B (repeated from bs. 17-27): Theme II

4.7: RH3, bs. 28-40 (second part of Section B and the beginning of Section A'.)
4.8: modal transformations in RH3
4.9: RH3, Section A’B’ and codetta (bs. 58-66)

**Section A’**

- **Scale-motive from Theme II (motive 2)**
  - **motive 1**
  - **motive 2**
  - **motive 3: ‘verbunkos chord’ from Theme II**
  - **più dim.**

**Codetta**

- **Theme II transformed to B♭-lyd**
  - **dolciss.**

**Motive 1, continuing the same major-type mode**

4.10: A representation of retro-audible connections in RH3

4.11: First section (S1) from the sixth rhapsody's allegro

A repeat sign is used here instead of a written-out first phrase (P1, bs. 104-111) and "D.C." denotes a return to the B\textsubscript{b} phrase, in this case P4 (i.e. the beginning of S2). The highlighted area shows the modal transition into D\textsubscript{har}/\textsubscript{maj}.

P1: 96 P2: 104
P1 (single notes), repeated, P2 (melody in octaves as shown)

P1: 102 P3 (from bs. 112)
P2: 110
P3 (from bs. 112)

Poco calando

"D.C."
4.12: A Schenkerian graph of the sixth rhapsody's allegro; repetition of detail is denoted by the x symbol.
4.13: A reading of S1 where D-\textit{har}maj is the controlling tonic key

4.14: (a) Alternative spellings for the hexachordal collection in the concluding cadence in D and the vacillating cadence which follows (corresponding to bs. 120-126); (b) a hypothetical and schematic representation of the tonal-textural 'meaning' of bs. 120-127

In 4.14a, white notes denote the tonic chord in each context; in 4.14b, white and black notes represent the real rhythmic value.
4.15: The idiomatic and tonal transformation of the concluding cadences in: (a) S2, bs. 149-61; (b) S3, bs. 188-94; (c) S4, bs. 213-21.

Cf. original version of these cadences in S1, ex. 4.11, bs. 120-26.
4.16: Above: The finale's 'alternative' tonal structure; Arrows signify directionality, white notes the tonic or perception of tonic. Dotted stems signify doubtful structural status and dotted beams denote tonal ambiguity. Below: The background structure according to the above.
Chapter 5:

The Verbunkos Idiom in Liszt’s Late Works

5.1: Set-classes in *Sunt Lacrymae Rerum*, bs. 109-112: (a) different permutations of 3-3 (the example is a textural reduction and omits the repetitions in bs. 111-2); (b) vertical set-classes.
5.2: Spondees and other groups of long accented notes, typical in 'storm' marches (exx. a, b, and c):
(a) Rákóczi March (1871 version), bs. 31-3;
(b) Ungarischer Sturmmarsch (1876 second version), bs. 17-20;
(c) Revive Szegedin! (1879), bs. 1-8’;
(d) short-long-short rhythm and bokázo figure in Hungarian Rhapsody no. 17 (1884), bs. 1-4

* In all of the examples in this chapter, unless otherwise stated, repeat signs and bar-repeat designations are used in place of Liszt’s original written-out repeats.
5.3 (continued overleaf): Ornamental style and melodic types: (a) Mephisto Waltz no. 3 (1883), bs. 27-8; (b) Bagatelle sans tonalité (1885), bs. 1-16; (c) Mephisto Waltz no. 2 (1878/9-81), bs. 1-7

- Ornamental style and melodic types:
  - **(a)** Mephisto Waltz no. 3 (1883), bs. 27-8
  - **(b)** Bagatelle sans tonalité (1885), bs. 1-16
  - **(c)** Mephisto Waltz no. 2 (1878/9-81), bs. 1-7

- **Allegretto mosso**
  - Pendular melodic figures

- **Allegro vivace**
  - Motivic anacrusis figure
5.3 (continued from previous page): (d) Hungarian Rhapsody no. 19 (1885), bs. 1-4; (e) *Mephisto* Waltz no. 3, bs. 1-10

(d) Hungarian Rhapsody no. 19 (1885), bs. 1-4; (e) *Mephisto* Waltz no. 3, bs. 1-10

5.4: Equal-voice parallel sixths in *Csárdás obstinée*, bs. 283-314

bs. 283-290 (written an octave higher), 291-298

bs. 299-306 etc.
5.5: (a) *Mephisto Polka*, bs. 17-47 (repeated in idiomatic variation, bs. 48-80); repeat signs are used in place of written-out repeats; (b) harmonic reduction of the above.

(a) *Mephisto Polka*, bs. 17-47 (Allegretto)

(b) harmonic reduction of the above

---

Bs. 49-80 repeat bs. 17-48 with idiomatic variations.

---

(b) augmented β motive (A - C# - F# - E9)

1º minor spelling: 38 → 34

---

descending upper tetrachord of F₃ minor

descending lower tetrachord of F₃ minor

inflected repetition: 'modulation' to A₄ minor?
5.6: Pendular inflected repetitions in (a) *Hungarian Rhapsody no. 16*, bs. 87-96; (b) *La lugubre gondola II*, bs. 69-76

The whole passage in bs. 69-84 is repeated sequentially a second down (E major/minor) in bs. 89-104
5.7: Pendular and progressional inflected repetitions in (a) Csárdás obstinée, bs. 17-76; (b) structural reduction of the above
5.8: Pendular and progressional inflected repetitions in (a) Bagatelle sans tonalité, bs. 37-60;
(b) structural reduction of the above

(a)

(b) structural reduction of the above

[Music notation image]

accel. poco a poco
etc.

poco a poco appassionato

Minor/major oscillation
of C-Eb-Ab/ C#-Eb-A

B minor? (IV?)

Enharmonic
'dominant V'
of F# minor?
5.9: (a) Unstern!, bs. 21-30; (b) reduction of bs. 21-72; (c) Bartók, Mikrokosmos no. 109: From the Island of Bali (published 1940): bs. 1-4

(a) Unstern!, bs. 21-30

(b) Reduction of bs. 21-72

(c) Bartók, Mikrokosmos no. 109: From the Island of Bali (published 1940): bs. 1-4
5.10: *Nuages gris*, bs. 1-12

Bs. 1-8 are abbreviated; all chords and dissonant clashes are derived from inner melodic movements of diatonic tones

\[
\text{G-ver (G-A-Bb-C-D-Eb-F\#)}
\]

5.11: *Széchenyi István*, main theme, bs. 43-54. Xs mark the ‘non-functional’ chord on the VI.

\[
\text{VII}_2 \text{('non-functional VII')}
\]

(transpositional function between D and Fs)
5.12: *Magyar gyors indaló*, bs. 1-46 (bs. 25-46: see overleaf); original repeat signs

Schnell und ungestüm

Bimodal spelling:
-enharmonic VI in F-ver / II in C-kat?"
5.12 (continued from previous page): *Magyar gyors induló*, bs. 25-46

- End of bimodal ambivalence

- Rinforz.

- Cresc.

- Structural V: return of A minor

- Stacc.
5.13: Csárdás macabre, bs. 1-108: (a) Introduction; (b) Exposition: Curtain Theme and (c) Theme I (overleaf)
5.13 (continued from previous page): (c) Theme I, bs. 89-108

5.14: Themes associated with the Csárdás macabre from other works: (a) Opening bars of Liszt’s Totentanz (cf. Csárdás macabre, ex. 5.13a and ex. 5.13c); (b) Liszt’s piano transcription of Saint-Saëns’ Danse macabre, bs. 31-8 (cf. Csárdás macabre, ex. 5.13b and ex. 5.20b)
5.15: Harmonic reduction of bs. 1-178 (G1 to the beginning of G2)

5.16: Thematic transformation in second half of the 'bridge', bs. 132-49
5.17: Curtain Theme in bs. 157-62, leading to Theme II (G2) and 'F major' and, above in the 'ossia' stave, the varied version of Theme II (right hand only) in bs. 253-68
5.18: (a) Reduction of harmonic transition into G\textit{-}\textit{ver/lyd}, bs. 163-91 and (b) the equivalent passage in the recapitulation, bs. 419-47
5.19: 'Luminous' themes compared: (a) the F#-major 'spiritual' theme of *Les Jeux d'Eau à la Villa d'Este*, bs. 40-51 and (b) the Gι-verlyd theme in *Csárdás macabre*, bs. 191-216
5.20: Macabre transformations of previous themes at the beginning of G1’ (repeat of G1): (a) Theme I-g1’ (return of the ‘sarcastic’ theme) followed by (b) a daemonic variant of one of the bridge themes (cf. ex. 5.16).
5.21: End of the exposition and beginning of the recapitulation, bs. 281-301
5.22: (a) End of recapitulation and beginning of the coda, bs. 555-80

Descending E-\textit{ver}l\textit{y}d scale: overall melodic progression to D major

(a)

Descending E-\textit{ver}l\textit{y}d scale: overall melodic progression to D major

Coda

CPM in D (D-maj/har), main progression: III - VI - I - VI

Thematic-tonal-modal synthesis: 'luminous' Theme I

(continues overleaf)
5.22 (continued from previous page): (b) Modal metamorphosis in bs. 581-90; (c) Theme I continues; final resolution to D major and its prolongation through modal mixtures, bs. 589-609
5.23: Closing cadences in D-kal and final entrance of the Curtain Theme, bs. 626-37

5.24: Conclusion of the Csárdás macabre
The emergence of D as the tonic: weakest point — strong, then evasive —— longer —— delayed by VI —— definitive resolution —— ' plagal' prolongation

Legend:
- CT: Curtain Theme
- T1: Theme I
- T2: Theme II
- G1: 'sarcasric' and 'daemonic' themes (varied repeat of G1)
- LT: 'luminous' Theme
- CPM: chromatic parallelism motive
- 3NM: three-note motive
- N: structural neighbour note
- Motivic modal/choratic fluctuation
- Dotted beams and slurs signify distant connections
- Barlines separate main sections (||) and subsections (±)

5.25: (a) Detailed and (b) background representations of the modal-tonal process in the Csárdás macabre