

phy, nothing is so clear to the persistent and open-minded listener [than] the good and the bad, the moral and unmoral.”⁶⁹ Later Goepp elaborates on this quality.

This [Schubert’s] tenth symphony, is in every way typical, symbolic, directly eloquent of this greatest of heroic struggles, which ought to come to every man, whereby the artistic victory becomes an expression of the moral, and whereby the corresponding artwork has perhaps, as its greatest value, this stamp of ethical achievement.⁷⁰

These were also the positive, empowering possibilities of program, especially in the more multivalent, modern use of the word. Against referentialism, its resultant oversimplifications and the philistinisms that followed, Goepp wished for music, and art in general, to make us better. And, though given many music critics’ positions on program music, it may seem paradoxical, this was one of the original reasons for program music, too.

Although we may now think of Liszt as the arch virtuoso, and that his music is implicated by bourgeois or reactionary associations, the fact is that the music he developed was designed to reach out. Liszt himself wrote repeatedly about bringing music to the masses through subsidizing musicians, orchestras, and choruses made up of regular people, through cheap music editions, for example.⁷¹ His wide-ranging piano transcriptions of symphonic works were not always a case of simply showing off. They brought inaccessible large-scale works into the parlor, some degree of high culture to those excluded from privilege. This was also the point of his programs: to bring all art and knowledge and experience into music.

[Liszt felt] it his mission to heighten man’s experience and at the same time embody it in all its manifestations—the quest for the spiritual . . . the ceaseless exploration in spite of loneliness and insecurity. . . . He felt that music should embrace the world, and he cast his net as wide as possible.⁷²

Program is variously looked upon as bourgeois, as pandering, and as a denial of music’s rightful place and function. It is also possible to see it as a progressive and democratic solution to the alienations of the emerging industrial age. The rise of narrative in classical music, through the agency of the nineteenth-century