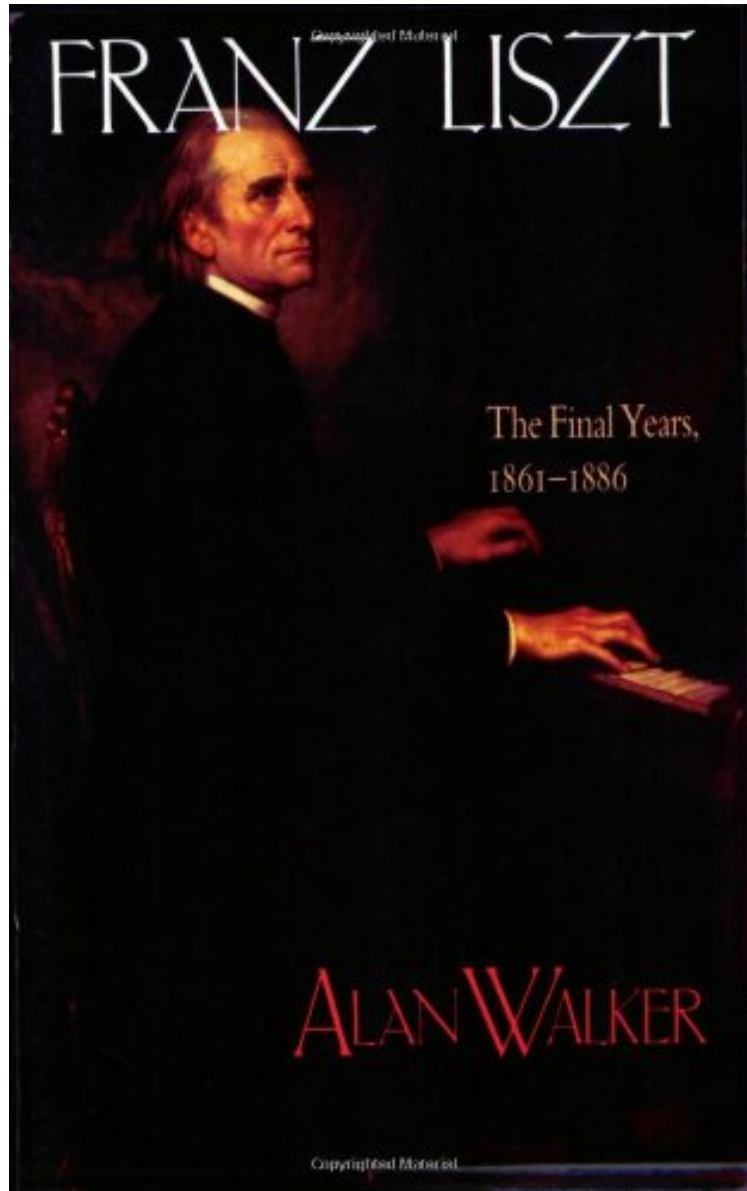


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## Franz Liszt, Vol. 3: The Final Years, 1861-1886

*Alan Walker*

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**Alan Walker : Franz Liszt, Vol. 3: The Final Years, 1861-1886** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Franz Liszt, Vol. 3: The Final Years, 1861-1886:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. The world of Liszt, an era pulsing with life. By eledavf VivianI can only echo what I wrote about Volume 2: This is a magnificent biography. I have read all three volumes and recommend them to every music lover. Liszt was significant in so many ways, as a nurturer of other composers, as a voice of his

native land, and of course as a friend and victim of Wagner (but who was NOT a victim of that anti-musical megalomaniac?) This biography covers other complex musical relationships existing between Liszt and the most famous composers of that time, including Brahms and both Schumanns. Then too there are stories of difficulties in the musical world beyond the personal, such as with the dedication of a memorial to Beethoven at his birthplace. Without a doubt, a wonderful history of that thrilling era in European music when sonority and actual human passion meant something to the creators.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Full-Length Portrait of Franz Liszt By Bing-Alguin How to review such a gigantic and magnificent biography as Alan Walker's on Franz Liszt and do full justice to its three bulky volumes and its about 1700 pages, all of them well stuffed with information? Almost impossible! This is probably one of the best biographies ever written, one of the most fascinating, one of the most readable and attractive. It is not only a ravishing story of a composer's life that is more riveting than most composers', glorious in its palmy days as well as a little tragic and sentimental in the third volume's account for his old age and its decay and fall, full of alcoholism, depression and diseases; sensationally super-romantic in his relationship with women and illegitimate children as well as sympathetically generous and open-handed in his contacts with other musicians and composers and musical disciples - and ultimately the pious Catholic Abb Liszt taking holy orders. It is also a biography covering Liszt's music with initiated though always very lisible analyses, a great surplus in a biography, as biographies often turn their backs on the real reason why a composer, a writer, a painter is well worth being biographed. Finally, it gives a grandiose survey of the musical and cultural life in Europe in the middle of the 19th century, stunningly rich and meaty and well-informed, continuously offering you new aspects of an extremely enthralling field. Walker's ambition has been to weed in the marshland of legends and errors and inaccuracies in the prevalent image of Liszt's life, spread since the composer's own lifetime. It is the scholarly result of his incredible efforts to get a clearer picture of his life. This is a truer picture of a mysteriously legendary composer than we have had earlier - though it is a very kind and maybe a bit uncritical portrait we get of this charismatic super-genius. Liszt's position in European music and culture in all during his active life was incomprehensibly great, maybe greater and more influential than any composer ever had. It is a tremendous adventure to read about all his glorious triumphs as a virtuoso pianist and as a composer, a conductor, a teacher and a musical promotor, a writer, a freedom symbol and patriot, a friend of Chopin's and Wagner's and many other activities and characteristics. I have been rapturously plunged into these three volumes for a very long time, and I wish every music lover to enjoy them as much as I have.

8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Doing justice to Liszt By E. C. Alvarez This is the third and final volume of Alan Walker's lengthy and in-depth biography of Liszt. It so happens to be the third volume I purchase. This is the most informative and entertaining biography I've ever read (including footnotes and the appendices). Mr. Walker goes beyond the call of duty (or defines it), by having done extensive travels during his years researching for this masterwork on the master of Romantic music, Franz Liszt. He was even granted access to the Vatican's Secret Archive to study what happened during Liszt and Carolyne's struggle to get married. Anyone truly interested in reading the definitive biography on Liszt cannot consider anything else but these three volumes by Mr. Walker. I came upon them by chance, and now do I consider myself very lucky. He has since the publication of the third volume released some complimentary books, with more specific topics and correspondence of the time. Alan Walker is indeed The Liszt erudite. Period!

The third volume in Alan Walker's magisterial biography of Franz Liszt. "You can't help but keep turning the pages, wondering how it will all turn out: and Walker's accumulated readings of Liszt's music have to be taken seriously indeed." D. Kern Holoman, New York Review of Books "A conscientious scholar passionate about his subject. Mr. Walker makes the man and his age come to life. These three volumes will be the definitive work to which all subsequent Liszt biographies will aspire." Harold C. Schonberg, Wall Street Journal "What distinguishes Walker from Liszt's dozens of earlier biographers is that he is equally strong on the music and the life. A formidable musicologist with a lively polemical style, he discusses the composer's works with greater understanding and clarity than any previous biographer. And whereas many have recycled the same erroneous, often damaging information, Walker has relied on his own prodigious, globe-trotting research, a project spanning twenty-five years. The result is a textured portrait of Liszt and his times without rival." Elliot Ravetz, Time "The prose is so lively that the reader is often swept along by the narrative. . . . This three-part work . . . is now the definitive work on Liszt in English and belongs in all music collections." Library Journal

From Publishers Weekly The last quarter-century of Liszt's life was filled with dramatic turns, contrasts and emotional storms, like the Hungarian composer's romantic music. The buoyant man of the world retreated into a monastery near Rome (1863-1865), emerging as a Roman Catholic cleric. His elder daughter, Blandine, died from a breast operation, and Liszt tried his best to break up the adulterous relationship of his younger daughter, Cosima, with composer Richard Wagner, whom she married after concealing the out-of-wedlock births of three children by Wagner from her first husband, pianist and Wagner-worshiper Hans von Bulow. Shuttling endlessly between Rome, Weimar, Budapest, Paris, Vienna, overworked, overdrinking Liszt suffered a nervous breakdown in 1877 and struggled with suicidal

impulses. Polish princess Carolyne von Sayn-Wittgenstein, whose wedding to Liszt was canceled at the last minute in 1861 because of her family's meddling, betrayed him in 1881 by inserting an anti-Semitic chapter into Liszt's revised book on Bohemian music. In this final volume of an extraordinary biography, Walker, a professor of music in Ontario, shows how Liszt's universal despair gave rise to the pathbreaking, proto-modernist music of his later years. A rarity among composers' biographies, this full-bodied portrait combines lively writing and impeccable scholarship. Photos. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc. From *Library Journal* The final volume of Walker's monumental study (Franz Liszt, Vol. 1: The Virtuoso Years, 1811-47, LJ 11/1/82; Franz Liszt, Vol. 2: The Weimar Years, 1848-61, LJ 5/15/89) draws upon some recent scholarship to present a more complete picture of Liszt's life and achievements than had been previously possible. Liszt's remarkably peripatetic existence creates manifold challenges for the conscientious scholar, but Walker is more than equal to the task. His narrative is copiously footnoted yet never seems to bog down in minutiae. In fact, quite the opposite: the prose is so lively that the reader is often swept along by the narrative. A particularly fascinating section concerns the infamous Cosima Liszt-Hans von Bülow-Richard Wagner triangle, which is skillfully dissected by Walker to separate legend from accurate history. Liszt emerges as an unmistakably generous and self-effacing man in his later years whose prodigious gifts as a composer and pianist were undimmed until the very end. Walker provides frequent musical examples throughout, and his comments on them are not too technical for the general reader. This three-part work, which represents a 25-year labor of love, is now the definitive work on Liszt in English and belongs in all music collections. Larry A. Lipkis, Moravian Coll., Bethlehem, Pa. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc. From *Booklist* In the third installment of his biography of nineteenth-century composer/pianist Franz Liszt (the previous volumes are *Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years, 1811-48* [1983] and *Franz Liszt: The Weimar Years, 1848-62* [1989]), musicologist Walker writes with the depth and insight worthy of academia but also with the vibrancy and enough clarity to capture the interest of the lay reader. The last years of the Romantic era composer's life are fascinating to the extent that they were so much at odds with his earlier years. Walker has accomplished two laudable goals: shedding new light on Liszt's life by accessing rare documents and conveying the humanity of his subject despite a daunting amount of detail. Walker compassionately conveys the transformation of the rakish Liszt into a pious, reclusive, self-effacing man. Wracked with bouts of depression, alcoholism, and illness, Liszt's final years are remarkably similar to those of the eccentric twentieth-century pianist Glenn Gould. Abandoning performances, Liszt spent his final years as "a life split in three," dividing his solitary travels between Vienna, Rome, and Weimar, Germany. Walker has written a lively, informative, and compassionate portrait of an artist. Ted Leventhal