

# A TALE OF TWO *LENORES* – OR IS IT THREE?

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[With subsequent amendments]

Before getting underway with this paper, it should be made clear that the woman's name referred to in the title of this paper is indeed Lenore. It is not a mistaken reference to the cross-dressing heroine of a certain rescue opera unfaithful in its title to her but popularly known as *Fidelio* by that compulsively revisionist composer Ludwig van Beethoven, for that lady is named Leonore. Our figure is the main character of the 1778 *Sturm and Drang* ballad of Gottfried August Bürger which inspired a host of 19th. century German composers to set it to music in one manner or another. It may be this *Lenore* who also inspired Edgar Allen Poe's raven to quoth "nevermore" - fitting reference perhaps to the critical assessment of performances which Lenore settings seem to get. In fact, just getting a performance of something called Lenore proved to be an overwhelming challenge for Antonin Reicha, a contemporary whom Beethoven respected highly, since Reicha never did get to hear a performance of his 70 minute melodrama on Bürger's text for speaker, vocal soloists, chorus and large orchestra which he composed in 1815 at the height of the Napoleonic wars. This paper, however, is not dedicated to a listing of musical works inspired by Bürger's poem Lenore, but rather, to a rather strange and thoroughly coincidental series of events involving two composers who were inspired to write symphonies, abstract instrumental works, on the ballad Lenore. The more famous of the two composers is obviously Joachim Raff, whose Symphony No.5 in E major, *Lenore*, was considered a masterpiece in its time but only now, some hundred years since it began disappearing from concert programs, is it being rediscovered and appreciated by the general public (thanks to recordings, of which there are now six different versions). Less well remembered, but certainly not unknown, is the other Lenore composer, August Klughardt, for Klughardt did compose one work, his Wind Quintet in C major, op.79, which has remained a repertoire piece in the genre, but also, alas, his only work known to a wide public.

Joachim Raff was born in 1822 and died sixty years later in 1882. August Klughardt was born in 1847 and died in 1902. Raff led an extraordinarily successful career as composer and pedagogue and was admired by the truly great among his contemporaries, such as Liszt, Wagner and Brahms, as well as being genuinely respected by members of younger generations like Saint-Saëns, Dvorák, Tchaikovsky and Richard Strauss. August Klughardt can be termed successful as well, both as performer and composer, though his success was far less than that of Raff. He was certainly respected by his contemporaries and accomplished as a musician in every respectable way but he was of his time and of his place and both were crowded with creative musical personalities at least equal to, if not greater than his own.

Despite a good quarter century difference in their ages, both Joachim Raff and August Klughardt share some common career parallels and aesthetic viewpoints. As many may know, consideration of Raff's famous association with Franz Liszt and the New German school in the 1850s ultimately reveals that there is far less Liszt in Raff than there may be Raff in Liszt. Recent Raff research tends to push the notion that Raff's dismissal from the pantheon of greats of his time (Wagner, Liszt, Brahms) has more to do with Raff's reluctance to adopt completely New German ideals and/or endorse the conservative attitudes of the *Schumannianer* who ultimately regarded Brahms as the triumphant guardian of musical values. As Matthias Wiegandt and others today like to say, Raff fell between the stools and lost his position of attention as a result - that, of course, is only

part of the story, though a good beginning. Raff was considered a good Lisztian, because Liszt said so; he was a member in good standing with the New German School because he endorsed a major aesthetic of the group, namely, that of program music. Aside from that, Raff went his own way and openly criticized Wagner in his *Wagnerfrage* of 1851, a work published even before *Lohengrin* was premiered in Weimar and, though declaring complete admiration for *Meistersinger*, Raff expressed alienation with *Tristan* and had little sympathy for the "Ring". Twice during his career there were serious ruptures with Liszt. One might think that the New Germans wreaked vengeance on Raff as a result, but it was actually the Brahms' supporters who did more to detract from Raff's reputation, in particular George Henschel and Felix Weingartner in their writings. This, despite the fact, that Raff's concerted works draw on the same roots as Brahms, the classical masters and Mendelssohn and Schumann. Indeed, it doesn't take much encounter with Raff to clearly hear the influence of both Mendelssohn and Schumann in the amplification of his own, truly individual voice. When August Klughardt begins his career, he gravitates toward the New German School and, as should be considered natural for a young composer trying to establish himself, he seeks approbation, endorsement and assistance necessary for furthering his career. Klughardt visits Liszt in 1871 and, as is reported in the 1902 biography of Klughardt by Leopold Gerlach, "is given warm encouragement" - something with which Liszt was notably gracious. By the 1880s it had become fairly apparent that Klughardt had drifted very far from any appreciable stylistic indebtedness to the now fading aesthetics and musical practices of the New German School: when Klughardt's opera *Gudrun*, whose medieval source epic is considered the New Testament supplement to the Old Testament ideals of *Das Nibelungenlied* and whose material would be eminently suited to Wagnerian temperament, is premiered in 1882, the New German composer Felix Draeseke (himself the composer of an as then not yet performed *Gudrun* opera) treated Klughardt's work with malicious scorn and contempt - to be honest, more because of the text than the actual music. When Klughardt died in 1902, he had already joined the ranks of legions of honored Kapellmeister whose lives had already yielded most of the rewards which their creative endeavors would bring. As one peruses Klughardt's catalog of instrumental works one notices that, after 1875, there are no titled symphonies and nothing indicating the genre "symphonic poem". There is much chamber music in traditional form and after his *Gudrun*, oratorios, not operas attract Klughardt's attention. He has gone and strayed from the "New German School".

Back, however, to Klughardt's initial allegiance to the New German School and the topic of this paper, "A Tale of Two *Lenores* - Or Is It Three?". It was by sheer coincidence, but as a reward for that drudgery which often passes for research, that this narrator stumbled across an exchange of letters between Joachim Raff and August Klughardt preserved in the *Raffiana* collection of the Bavarian State Library. For those who are not aware of it, there is no reason to hide the fact that August Klughardt wrote a symphony entitled *Lenore*. It is actually his second symphony. Only those who get their hands on either Gerlach's Klughardt biography or see the previously mentioned unpublished letters to Raff are likely to realize that the reason for Klughardt's initial approach to Raff had nothing to do with sycophantic urgings, but with the very real possibility of Raff making possible a performance in Wiesbaden of Klughardt's very first symphony, entitled *Waldleben* - "Forest Life" - composed in 1871. As most here are aware, Raff's possibly most popular symphony was his Symphony No.3 in F major, op.153, *Im Walde* - or "In the Forest" and when Klughardt composed his *Waldleben* Raff's symphony was conquering the concert halls of the world, cited as a true masterpiece and everywhere received with enthusiasm and pleasure. Though Gerlach in his biography insists that the score of Klughardt's *Waldleben* still exists (and it is dutifully listed in the major international reference works) a ten year search has not located an archive containing it; needless to say, despite initial hopes on Klughardt's part that the work might be published, it never was. Ultimately it was Klughardt himself who withdrew *Waldleben* from public performance.

Klughardt's first letter preserved in Munich is dated October 21, 1872 and was sent from Weimar where, of course, he had been visiting Liszt. In it he wastes no time in reminding Raff of his apparent promise to arrange for a performance of *Waldleben*.

Not to hold the listener in suspense, Raff **did** arrange for a performance of Klughardt's *Waldleben* Symphony in Wiesbaden the following year; but it is the second paragraph of this letter that is more relevant to this paper. Klughardt wrote that he has read in a music journal that Raff has completed a new symphony *Lenore* (after Bürger's ballad). He is curious to hear it as he has recently played in rehearsal a symphony of his own with the same content and title which has met with a good reception and for which Liszt expressed "extraordinary praise".

In the concluding paragraph of the letter it is not clear whether Klughardt is asking Raff to get a performance of the new *Lenore* or the *Waldleben* symphony, which was at the beginning of the letter, but one assumes he is referring to *Waldleben*. The next letter of Klughardt to Raff is well over a month later and is dated December 2, 1872. It is easily summarized: he apologises for not yet sending Raff the *Waldleben* parts but explains that they were required for an imminent performance in Leipzig. He reminds Raff to advise him if there is an opportunity for a performance in Wiesbaden and offers his fulsome appreciation of Raff's efforts on his behalf. The letter is again obviously in reference to the *Waldleben* Symphony.

The third Klughardt letter of the BSL *Raffiana* comes from January 22, 1873. The letter begins without the usual salutation and its opening paragraph refers once more to the *Waldleben* Symphony, confirming that the score will be with Raff in a few days. He asks for details of the proposed performance so that he may be present.

It is the second paragraph of the letter which is relevant to the present study for Klughardt continues with the report. In it he states that his *Lenore* was premiered in the third concert of the Weimar Court Orchestra. This event had made him realise that the coincidence of them both having written works on the same subject had left him open to charges of imitating Raff's work. He recalls an afternoon when he played over for Raff his first (*Waldleben*) symphony at Frau Merian's house. He and Raff had a conversation in which he mentioned to Raff that he, Klughardt, was working on a symphonic poem [sic!] after Bürger's *Lenore* and that he shared his opinion that the material was worthwhile. If only Raff had told him that he was thinking of using the same source for a symphony he would have "backed off immediately". Even at the first rehearsal of Klughardt's *Lenore*, neither Liszt, Eduard Lassen nor Frau Merian had mentioned the existence of Raff's *Lenore*. Only subsequently did he discuss Raff's work with Lassen, who confirmed that it was quite different in character from Klughardt's piece. Going on to confirm that he will not withdraw his *Lenore* from performance and confirming that he has suffered great stress before writing to Raff openly about the issue, he concludes by hoping that by so writing he has allayed any suspicions and that he hopes to talk to Raff face to face about the matter.

This passage in the letter is very interesting from a number of standpoints. In the very first letter, from October 27, Klughardt stated that he had read in a music journal the report that Raff had just completed a new symphony based on Bürger's ballad. In this letter from the following January Klughardt states that in a conversation with Raff - one must assume that it was before the writing of the October letter - Raff had merely indicated to him that *Lenore* was eminently worthwhile material and had not mentioned that he, Raff, intended to work with it. Indeed Raff had already finished the score in August, 1872 and by December was already working on his Sixth Symphony (which we shall simply refer to as the "Symphony of the Long Title"). If Klughardt is rueful concerning the lack of communication from Liszt, Lassen and Frau Merian at the presentation of his *Lenore*, he is not recriminatory in relation to Raff, since he refers only to the withheld knowledge of the forthcoming publication of Raff's *Lenore*. Though his fears of comparison are evidently put

to rest during his conversation with Lassen about Raff's work, he remains uneasy - with obviously good reason - that he'll be put in a bad light, both as a composer and as an honest person. What is most revelatory in this letter, and one of the reasons it has considerable importance to Raff research - and indirectly Klughardt research - is that Klughardt does not refer to his *Lenore* as a symphony but as a symphonic poem. This is the letter which presents the musicologist with some insight into the listings of not only Klughardt's *Lenore* but of his entire output of symphonies. When Klughardt published *Lenore* it was published with the description "*sinfonische Dichtung in vier Abtheilungen*" - "symphonic poem in four sections". Well, Liszt called his first symphonic poem, *Ce qu'on entend sur la montagne*, his *Bergsinfonie* or "Mountain" Symphony (in one continuous movement, to be sure) and Felix Draeseke, another of the new German School, wrote a symphonic poem on the *Frithjof* saga and declared it a *Symphonie in drei Abtheilungen* (symphony in three movements) and today we still give pause to consider Tchaikovsky's *Pathétique* as his Symphony No.7 because of the Manfred Symphony (or is it his Manfred symphonic poem in four movements?). Klughardt's biographer Leopold Gerlach is adamant on the fact: Klughardt's *Lenore* is the composer's second symphony, op.27 the key of D minor and *Waldleben* is the first symphony of Klughardt. It's almost amusing to realize that Klughardt himself was **intentionally** responsible for the confusion, because of his regard for Raff (which, according to Gerlach, was entirely misplaced). What is even more humorous is that the numbering of Klughardt's total of six symphonies doesn't even begin in his own catalog of works until his C minor symphony of 1890, listed as No.4, Op.37 and the first of his symphonies published with a number on the title page: it is actually his fifth symphony chronologically and follows a Symphony in D major, Op.37, which is listed as No.3 composed in 1879 and an F minor Symphony of 1876 bearing the opus 34 and indicated as No.2. At that point the numbers cease, though Klughardt clearly indicates he has withdrawn (though not destroyed) his *Waldleben* of 1871 - we shall call it Klughardt's *Nullte* or No.0. Guess what's left to be considered Symphony No.1 though it never received the number? You're right! It's *Lenore* and what's more - to paraphrase the raven - it'll be *Lenore* forevermore!

On the 3rd. of February, 1873 Klughardt writes the fourth of the letters of the *Raffiana* in the BSL and it continues to ask Raff to intercede for him in arranging a performance of his symphony (*Waldleben*). He also states that when he comes for the performance he will bring with him the *Lenore* score and play it for Raff.

Klughardt's pre-occupation is still obviously with a performance of the *Waldleben* and in Raff's answer to this letter, Raff passes on the information that it would be good if Klughardt could appear as piano soloist with the Wiesbaden Kurorchester when the *Waldleben* is performed and suggests Beethoven's C minor concerto. Klughardt's reply of March 6, 1873 is a rather lengthy letter to Müller-Berghaus, the fifth of the holdings in the BSL and deals mainly with the suggestion that he play Beethoven's C minor concerto and the performance fees involved; nothing about either the *Waldleben* or *Lenore* symphonies is mentioned. But in the sixth of the BSL Klughardt letters and addressed to Raff, March 10, 1873, and which is also reasonably lengthy there is some interesting reading. The first paragraph may be passed over, since it deals mainly with Klughardt's appearance as piano soloist, but the remaining two paragraphs are of special interest. Firstly he repeats that, if he is to play in the concert in which *Waldleben* is to be performed, he needs to have a specific date and time so that he may arrive promptly. Klughardt then adds an enticing, but alas cryptic comment referring to a *Lenore* which was composed thirteen [!] years ago: it interests him and he asks Raff if he knows it.

There is no record of Raff acknowledging the existence of such a work and Klughardt does not mention its composer's name in any of his correspondence. It is disappointing to report that diligent research has not uncovered a composer who ca. 1860, composed a *Lenore* Symphony. So the question remains: a tale of two *Lenores* or is it three?

[Subsequent to the presentation of this paper and after exhaustive research it appears that the reference by Klughardt in this letter to Raff simply cannot be to another symphony named *Lenore*. Rather, bearing in mind the date cited in Klughardt's letter for his reference, the fact that he is residing in Weimar while Liszt is there and finally the assuredness expressed by him that Raff would have known the piece to which he refers, it has to be a reference to Liszt's *Lenore*, a piano-accompanied melodrama S.346 of 1858/60]

Evidently things did not work out for Klughardt to be present for the performance of his *Waldleben* Symphony. At the beginning of April, 1873 for on April 6, 1873 Klughardt (still in Weimar) writes Raff a thank you note and asks for Raff once again to intercede on his behalf so that at a repeat performance of the *Waldleben* later on he might indeed be able to be present, both as piano soloist and composer. Towards the end of the letter he makes a revelatory remark asking Raff not to ignore his, Klughardt's, *Lenore* and hoping that he might send this "second symphony" to Raff soon.

What is "revelatory" is his admission that he considers the *Lenore* his official Second Symphony. Furthermore there is a second letter from Klughardt dated April 6, 1873, seventh among the *Raffiana* of the BLS, but it is not to Raff but rather to Müller-Berghaus, the conductor of the Wiesbaden Kurhaus concerts, in which Klughardt thanks the conductor for the first Wiesbaden performance of the *Waldleben* Symphony and then adds the request that his "second symphony *Lenore* be found a place in a program in the coming months. He confirms that he intends to submit the work to Müller-Berghaus soon and asks that it be treated with compassion.

Here one has a second confirmation that Klughardt considers his *Lenore* to be a symphony and, indeed, his second.

Klughardt's eighth letter in the BLS collection is dated April 27 and is indeed to Raff but is of little consequence and mentions no works either by himself or Raff. In the ninth letter of Klughardt in the *Raffiana*, dated July 21, 1873, Klughardt asks Raff that he consider a performance of *Lenore* in the fall. He confirms that Müller-Berghaus knows the score.

The tenth and last letter of Klughardt to Raff in the BLS is dated September 5, 1873 and in it, though again no works of either are mentioned, Klughardt literally says farewell to the composer whom he admires so highly and who obviously has done much for him. He reports on his new post as court Kapellmeister in Neustrelitz [north of Berlin] which he will leave for in October and asks for Raff's good wishes in the move from Weimar. The numbers of other musicians in that city allows him to leave it "peacefully"...

No other letters of Klughardt to Raff have surfaced but, as you have heard, those in the *Raffiana* of the Bavarian State Library give an interesting portrait of parallels begetting coincidence between a master and a journeyman. All that is known of Klughardt's *Waldleben* symphony is that it was in C major and contained four movements, at least one of which carried a title taken from Goethe, "*Über allen Gipfeln ist Ruh*". Considering Klughardt's New German orientation one may assume it was cyclical, but that won't be verifiable until the score is located. It was evidently not a true program symphony *à la* Raff or Liszt, but more a descriptive symphony, *à la* Beethoven's *Pastorale*. That Klughardt knew Raff's *Im Walde* goes without saying, since in the early 1870s it was probably the most frequently performed contemporary symphony. That Klughardt did not know Raff's *Lenore* while composing his own *Lenore* is quite evident from the letters just presented. That being said, a comparison of the two *Lenores* is in order.

To begin, Raff's *Lenore* exhibits an approach to Raff's concept of symphonic outline which is three sections clearly encompassing the usual four movements of a symphony. The first two movements, the opening *Allegro* and the sublime slow second movement are meant to reflect the love of *Lenore* for Wilhelm and form Part I of the symphony. Part II introduces the military aspect: a March, it takes the place of a *scherzo*, and its trio clearly declares *Lenore*'s pangs of parting and fears for her beloved before the March bursts back to relate

Wilhelm's departure for war. Parenthetically this movement represents Raff in one of his most genial moments for it is a palindrome, the pianissimo ending of which is a perfect segue to the *Finale*. It is in the *Finale* alone, at one and the same time both fourth movement and third section, that Raff actually uses the material of Bürger's ballad and then with a vengeance, for every stanza seems illuminated in the music and the story is very easy to follow. Raff's brilliant use of thematic recall and contrapuntal combinations create an irresistible pull to the shocking climax; and the following extended slow coda is a veritable apotheosis to the concept of dramatic resolution.

Klughardt's concept is really quite different but, in its own peculiar way, it sounds like a three sectional work despite the four movements indicated. To begin with, Raff's *Lenore* is cast in the major mode, E major to be exact, and Klughardt's is in the key of D minor. Klughardt tries no stratagems to proclaim originality of form, though despite his declaration that his *Lenore* is clearly in traditional four movement outline, a three sectional design emerges. The march, like Raff's a substitute for the *scherzo*, comes on second spot rather than on third as with Raff. But the march leads directly into the slow movement and possesses no trio. Klughardt uses superscriptions from the Bürger ballad for his four movements, isolating specific sections and illustrating concentrated emotional idealizations. What Raff exhibits in his fourth and final movement, Klughardt considers through his entire symphony. Raff's symphony is about the length of Beethoven's *Eroica* with all repeats, just under an hour; Klughardt's *Lenore* times in at about 35 minutes or about two-thirds the length of Raff's work. Whereas Raff's opening movement radiates happiness and love, Klughardt's first movement contains the first stanza of the ballad to set the mood of the symphony: "*Lenore fuhr um's Morgenroth empor aus schweren Träumen; Bist untreu Wilhelm, oder todt? Wie lange willst Du säumen?*" ("Lenore arose from oppressive dream that morning red; Art thou faithless Wilhelm or art Thou dead. How long willst Thou hold me in this dread?").

Klughardt places his march as second movement. Raff insists that his march occupies the second section of his symphony, but it is obvious to all that it is the third movement. Klughardt's superscription is: "*Er war mit König Friedrichs Macht gezogen in die Prager Schlacht, und hatte nicht geschrieben, ob er gesund geblieben*" ("He had joined King Frederick's force in battling for Prague's wealth, and had not written whether hail or still in health") The two marches couldn't be more dissimilar. Klughardt's is literally a parade ground entry, has no trio section and leads without pause directly into the slow third movement. Raff's a proud but menacing call to arms.

It is unfair to compare Klughardt's slow movement with Raff's hauntingly beautiful second movement or conclusion of Part 1. Suffice it to say that Klughardt's music is expressive and satisfying if not memorable. The focal points of the *Finales* in both *Lenores* are of course the galop to the grave, Wilhelm's revelation as a skeleton, and Lenore's punishment for her blasphemy. As mentioned before, Raff literally takes the listener - now armed with a plethora of themes for Raff's recall - through Bürger's entire poem. Klughardt employs as his guide the quotation, "*Vollbracht, vollbracht ist unser Lauf! Das Hochzeitbett tut sich auf... Die Toten reiten schnelle, wir sind, Wir sind zur Stelle!*" ("T'is done, t'is done, we've come full run, the wedding bed awaits not just one. The dead are riders of swift pace, we're here, we're here now at our place."). Obviously both *Finales* dote on the ride to the abyss and it is in the description of that ride that both Raff and Klughardt coincidentally hit on a similar idea: a measured and weighty chorale-like theme to underscore the sense of foreboding, of impending doom and tragic destiny. Raff's epilog is one of transfiguration, Klughardt's one of unresolved tragedy, and at the end of the score Klughardt adds the concluding lines of the ballad: "*Geduld! Geduld! Wenns Herz auch bricht! Mit Gott im Himmel hadre nicht! Des Leibes bist Du ledig, Gott sei der Seele gnädig!*" ("Patience, patience, even if the heart might break. With God in heaven wager no spite, thou art body, t'is the soul which seeks God light.") It is also worthy of note that Klughardt does indulge in thematic recall in his finale.

Thus ends this tale of the two *Lenores*. As for the third – it seems that the tempting prospect of yet another and earlier symphony, hitherto unremembered by posterity, must give way to the more prosaic reality of Klughardt's reference being to Liszt's melodrama on Bürger's ballad for voice and piano of 1860. Such are the rewards of research.