

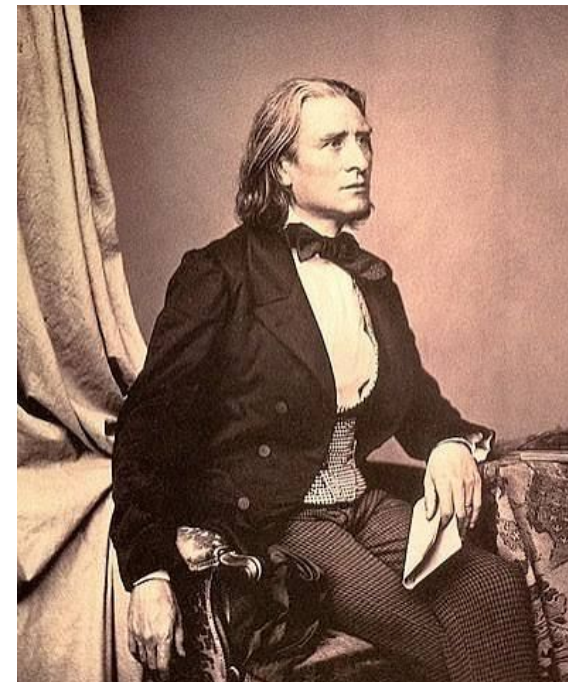
THURSDAY 22ND OCTOBER

Pianist and composer Franz Liszt was born this day 1811 in Doborján which was then in Hungary, but is now part of Austria. He grew up in a modest household where his father worked as a Land Steward for the Prince. His father was an amateur musician and he encouraged his son from an early age.

Franz began improvising and writing his own music at five and gave his first concert aged nine. His father died when he was 15 and he began teaching piano in Paris, and touring Europe giving concerts. He combined exceptional skill with **showmanship**, amazing audiences with music that was sometimes improvised on the spot. He made the solo piano recital popular as he was able to hold an audience's attention with a single instrument.

His compositions could be spectacular with lightning fast repeated notes and enormous leaps across the keyboard and are notoriously hard to play by all but the most skilled pianists.

In the 1840s he became a kind of Victorian pop star. His fans, particularly female fans, became overwhelmed with excitement when seeing him play, stealing his discarded gloves, broken piano strings and even locks of his hair! Their behaviour was dubbed 'Lisztomania', more than 100 years before 'Beatlemania'.



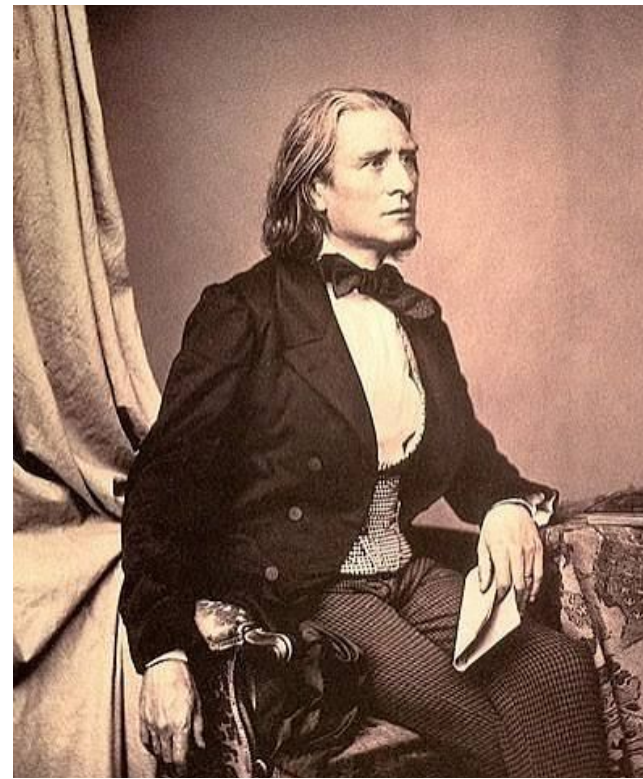
- Watch Lang Lang play Liszt's [La Campanella](#), what do you think?
- Does it surprise you there were wild music fans in the 1840s?

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