**1 January 1853** Prohibition goes into effect in New Brunswick but will soon be repealed.

**6 January 1853** Juan Bautista Ceballos replaces Mariano Arista Luna replaces as interim President of Mexico.

**10 January 1853** Jules Massenet (10) is examined once again for entrance to the Paris Conservatoire. He plays a Beethoven (†25) sonata and is admitted to a piano class. See 9 October 1851.

Louis Moreau Gottschalk (23) arrives in New York from France, his first time in the United States since 1842.

**12 January 1853** Taiping troops fight their way into Wuchang and kill all the Imperial soldiers therein.

**16 January 1853** Matteo Carcassi dies in Paris at the age of 60.

**17 January 1853** *Phönix-Schwingen* op.125, a waltz by Johann Strauss (27), is performed for the first time, in the Sophiensaal, Vienna. Also premiered is Strauss’ *Freuden-Gruß-Polka* op.127.

**18 January 1853** *Solon-Sprüche* op.128, a waltz by Johann Strauss (27), is performed for the first time, in the Sophiensaal, Vienna.

**19 January 1853** *Il Trovatore*, a dramma by Giuseppe Verdi (39) to words of Cammarano and Bardare after Garcia Gutiérrez, is performed for the first time, in Teatro Apollo, Rome directed by the composer. The work is extremely successful with the audience who demand that the fourth act be repeated.

**20 January 1853** Pegu Province, Burma is annexed by Great Britain, thus ending the Second Anglo-Burmese War.

**25 January 1853** *Aesculap-Polka* op.130 by Johann Strauss (27) is performed for the first time, in the Sperl Ballroom, Vienna.

**26 January 1853** *Satanella-Quadrille* op.123 and *Satanella-Polka* op.124 by Johann Strauss (27) are performed for the first time, in the Sophiensaal, Vienna.

**29 January 1853** Emperor Napoléon III of France marries Eugenia de Montijo, a Spanish countess, in a civil ceremony at the Tuileries. A cantata composed for the occasion by Daniel-François-Esprit Auber, to anonymous words, is performed, on his 71st birthday.

**30 January 1853** French Emperor Napoléon III marries Countess Eugenia de Montijo in Notre Dame Cathedral, Paris. The Empress enters the cathedral to the music of *Le Prophéte* by Giacomo Meyerbeer (61).

**31 January 1853** *Motor-Quadrille* op.129 by Johann Strauss (27) is performed for the first time, in the Sophiensaal, Vienna.

**2 February 1853** Franz Liszt (41) completes his Piano Sonata in b minor in Weimar.

*Le sourd, ou L’auberge pleine*, an opera by Adolphe Adam (49) to words of Langlé and Leuven after Choudard Desforges, is performed for the first time, at the Opéra-Comique, Paris.

**6 February 1853** Giuseppe Mazzini leads an attempt to take the Milan fortress by force. His appeal for an insurrection is generally ignored and the plan fails. After the failure of the revolt, Austrian Field Marshall Count Radetzky declares a state of siege and closes the city of Milan, in the middle of preparations for *La Traviata*.

**7 February 1853** *Wiener Punch-Lieder* op.131, a waltz by Johann Strauss (27), is performed for the first time, in the Sperl Ballroom, Vienna.

**8 February 1853** Manuel Apolinario José María Ignacio Lombardini de la Torre replaces Juan Bautista Ceballos as interim President of Mexico.

**11 February 1853** Louis Moreau Gottschalk (23) gives his first concert in New York, at Niblo’s Saloon. The reviews are mostly positive.

**13 February 1853** Emperor Franz Joseph II orders the confiscation of all property belonging to the Milan conspirators and orders the city of Milan to support those Austrians wounded in the uprising and the families of those killed.

**16 February 1853** Prince Alyeksandr Sergeyevich Menshikov arrives in Constantinople on a mission from Tsar Nikolai. He is to try to convince the Sultan to return control of the Christian Holy Places back to Russia from France.

On four successive nights beginning today, Richard Wagner (39) reads *Der Ring des Nibelungen* to invited guests in the Hotel Baur au Lac in Zürich.

**17 February 1853** The *Monumental City* departs San Francisco making for Sydney.

**18 February 1853** While walking on one of the city walls in Vienna, Emperor Franz Joseph of Austria is stabbed twice in the neck by János Libényi, a Hungarian nationalist. The assailant is subdued by others nearby (both of whom are later raised to the nobility). Franz Joseph survives. Libényi will be executed.

**21 February 1853** Giuseppe Verdi (39) arrives in Venice to produce *La Traviata*, particularly upset at the choice of soprano.

**27 February 1853** Peter II replaces August as Grand Duke of Oldenburg.

**3 March 1853** Louis Moreau Gottschalk (23) premieres his *Fragment of the Symphony, “The Battle of Bunker Hill”* in Philadelphia.

**4 March 1853** Franklin Pierce replaces Millard Fillmore as President of the United States. The 33rd Congress convenes in Washington. President Pierce’s Democratic Party increases their majority over the opposition Whigs in the House of Representatives, while the Democratic majority in the Senate remains virtually unchanged. Because of the crushing defeat of the Whig Party in the 1852 elections, it will soon fall apart.

**5 March 1853** Arthur William Foote is born at 44 Warren Street, Salem, Massachusetts, the third of six children (three surviving infancy) born to Caleb Foote, editor of the *Salem Gazette* and Mary Wilder White, amateur singer and daughter of a judge.

German immigrant Heinrich Engelhard Steinweg founds Steinway and Sons in Manhattan.

**6 March 1853** Giuseppe Verdi’s (39) opera *La Traviata* to words of Piave after Dumas is performed for the first time, in Teatro La Fenice, Venice. The evening is a disaster. Critics blame the singers. Verdi will write, “*La Traviata* was a grand fiasco, and what is worse, they laughed.”

*Kaiser Franz Josef I. Rettungs-Jubel-Marsch* op.126 by Johann Strauss (27) is performed for the first time, in the Sperl Ballroom, Vienna.

Bavarian immigrant Levi Strauss arrives in San Francisco where this month he will start a wholesale dry goods business.

**10 March 1853** A detachment of US Marines is landed at San Juan del Norte, Nicaragua to prevent the Accessory Transit Company from being evicted by the local government. It is the first of many interventions by the United States in Nicaragua.

**11 March 1853** The town marshal of San Juan del Norte, Nicaragua arrives at the site of illegally built facilities of Cornelius Vanderbilt’s Accessory Transit Company to evict them. The town has provided an alternate site and offered to pay moving costs. The recently arrived US Marines prevent him from performing his duties.

**16 March 1853** In Constantinople, Russian emissary Prince Alyeksandr Sergeyevich Menshikov demands that the Ottoman Empire agree to a treaty enshrining Russia’s right to protect Christians living in Ottoman territories.

**17 March 1853** Christian Doppler dies in Venice at the age of 49.

**18 March 1853** Taiping troops fight their way into Nanking. About 20,000 Imperial officials, soldiers and wealthy individuals are killed. A large number of women are herded into an empty building which is set afire while the Christian Taiping say prayers outside.

**30 March 1853** Taiping leader Hung Hsui-ch’uan, who believes himself to be the brother of Jesus, enters Nanking amidst great ceremony. He begins to set up the ideal society of the Taiping.

*La Tonelli*, an opéra comique by Ambroise Thomas (41) to words of Sauvage, is performed for the first time, at the Théâtre Favart, Paris.

After an eleven-year absence, Louis Moreau Gottschalk (23) arrives home in New Orleans having traveled from Louisville, Kentucky aboard a paddle-wheeler. Since the boat arrives eight hours early, there is no one there to meet him.

**1 April 1853** Edvard Grieg (9) becomes a student in Tank’s School in Bergen.

**4 April 1853** Oldenburg and Hannover join the German Zollverein.

**6 April 1853** Catholic rioters attack a Protestant church in Cincinnati where a nativist rally is in progress.

**7 April 1853** Dr. John Snow administers chloroform to Queen Victoria as she gives birth to Prince Leopold in Buckingham Palace. This goes a long way to establish the use of anesthesia in childbirth.

**10 April 1853** *Meditation sur le Ier prélude de Bach* (Ave Maria) by Charles Gounod (34) is performed for the first time. The composer-arranger calls it a “mischievous prank.”

**11 April 1853** *Le roi des halles*, an opera by Adolphe Adam (49) to words of Leuven and Brunswick, is performed for the first time, at the Théâtre-Lyrique, Paris.

**12 April 1853** Emperor Napoléon III names Gioachino Rossini (61) a Commander of the Legion of Honor.

**14 April 1853** Francisco de Lersundi y Hormaechea replaces Federico Roncali as Prime Minister of Spain.

**15 April 1853** Lowell Mason (61) and his wife arrive home in Boston after a European tour of 16 months. Their trip took them to Great Britain, Germany, Switzerland, and France.

**16 April 1853** The first railroad in India begins service from Bombay to Thane, a distance of 34 km.

Mikhail Ivanovich Glinka (48) writes to his sister that he intends to stay in Paris, at least until 1854.

**19 April 1853** Hoping to attract the attention of influential musicians, and a little money, Johannes Brahms (19) and his violinist friend Eduard Hoffmann (Reményi) set out from Hamburg on a concert tour of nearby cities.

Floris Adriaan van Hall and Dirk Donker Curtius replace Johann Rudolf Thorbecke as chief ministers of the Netherlands.

**20 April 1853** Generalissimo Antonio López de Santa Anna y Pérez de Lebrón returns from exile in Venezuela and is proclaimed President of Mexico with wide powers.

**21 April 1853** Anders Sandøe Orsted replaces Christian Albrecht Bluhme as Prime Minister of Denmark.

**23 April 1853** The *Monumental City* arrives in Sydney from San Francisco, by way of Tahiti, after a voyage of 65 days. With 90 passengers, it is the first steamship to cross the Pacific Ocean. Unfortunately, the ship will run aground near Mallacoota, Australia on May 15 with the loss of 37 lives.

**25 April 1853** The new Normal Musical Institute opens in New York. An introductory address is given by its director, Lowell Mason (61).

**1 May 1853** A convention meeting in Santa Fe approves a constitution for Argentina, without Buenos Aires.

*Veilchen-Polka* op.132 by Johann Strauss (27) is performed for the first time, in the Sperl Ballroom, Vienna.

**2 May 1853** The Duchies of Anhalt-Dessau and Anhalt-Köthen merge to form the Duchy of Anhalt-Dessau-Köthen.

At a performance in the Wierss’schen Room, Celle, Johannes Brahms (19), finding the piano a half-step low, transposes the entire program up a half-step rather than have his violinist, Eduard Reményi, tune down.

The Hippodrome, a 4,000-seat facility with a canvas roof, opens in New York on 23rd Street and Fifth Avenue.

**5 May 1853** In private negotiations in Constantinople, the Ottoman government agrees that the control of the Christian holy places will be turned back to Russia and the Orthodox Church from France.

**7 May 1853** *Le trésor à Mathurin*, an opéra-comique by Jacques Offenbach (33) to words of Battu, is performed for the first time, in Salle Herz. It will later be revived as *Le mariage aux lanternes.*

**8 May 1853** A setting of the 91st Psalm for solo voices and chorus by Giacomo Meyerbeer (61) is performed for the first time, in the Friedrichskirche, Potsdam in the presence of King Friedrich Wilhelm IV of Prussia and King Leopold I of Belgium.

**10 May 1853** In private negotiations in Constantinople, the Ottoman government refuses Russia’s second demand that it be named protector of all Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman Empire.

**12 May 1853** *Tom the Fool*, a comic opera by Anton Rubinstein (23) to words of Mikhailov, is performed for the first time, in the Alyeksandrinsky Theatre, St. Petersburg.

**14 May 1853** Hector Berlioz (49) once again departs Paris for London to conduct.

Mustafa Naili Pasha replaces Damad Mehmed Ali Pasha as Grand Vizier of the Ottoman Empire.

**15 May 1853** Lowell Mason (61) becomes music director of the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York.

**17 May 1853** The first performance of Robert Schumann’s (42) *Fest-Overture* op.123 for tenor, chorus and orchestra to words of Müller and Claudius, closes the Lower Rhine Music Festival in Düsseldorf.

The New York Central Railroad is incorporated as an amalgamation of ten previously existing railroad companies.

**18 May 1853** Members of a secret society, the Triad, rise in Amoy (Xiamen) and, with the help of local citizenry, take over the port. They proceed to execute Imperial Chinese officials and moneylenders.

Louis Moreau Gottschalk (24) departs New Orleans aboard the steamboat *Magnolia* for a concert tour.

**21 May 1853** After the Russian demand that it be named protector of Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman Empire is rejected by Turkey, Russian emissary Prince Alyeksandr Sergeyevich Menshikov leaves Constantinople precipitating a break in relations.

**22 May 1853** The world’s first public aquarium opens at the London Zoo.

Three nights of concerts featuring the music of Richard Wagner ends in Zürich on the composer’s 40th birthday. He is given a banquet, a laurel wreath and a poem in his honor is read. This poem is presented anonymously, but was written by the wife of a close friend, Johanna Spyri, who will become more famous for creating *Heidi* in 1880. The festival brings Wagner great acclaim, and produces an enormous debt.

**27 May 1853** The clipper ship *Northern Light* arrives in Boston, 76 days and five hours out of San Francisco.

**30 May 1853** The British cabinet orders six warships to the Dardenelles in light of Russian threats against Turkey.

Le Repos de la Sainte Famille from *La fuite en Egypte* for chorus and orchestra by Hector Berlioz (49) to his own words is performed for the first time, in London. See 1 December 1853.

**31 May 1853** Tsar Nikolay sends a courier to Constantinople to tell the Sultan he has eight days to agree to Russian demands or there will be war.

**1 June 1853** Two works for piano and orchestra by Franz Liszt (41) are performed for the first time, in Pest: *Fantasie über Motive aus Beethovens Ruinen von Athen* and *Fantasie über Ungarische Volksmelodien*.

**2 June 1853** A British fleet arrives in Besika Bay shortly followed by a French fleet to counter any Russian designs against Turkey.

Giacomo Meyerbeer (61) arrives in Paris from Berlin in hopes of producing his new opera *L’étoile du nord*.

**6 June 1853** At a concert in Weimar to honor King Fridrich August II of Saxony, Grand Duke Carl Friedrich, patron of Franz Liszt (41), asks the King to pardon Richard Wagner (40). Nothing comes of it.

**8 June 1853** As a present for his 43rd birthday, Clara Schumann (33) presents Robert Schumann with the manuscript to her Piano Variations in f sharp minor.

Scherzo in e flat minor op.4 for piano solo by Johannes Brahms (20) is performed for the first time, at the court of Hannover, by the composer from manuscript. King Georg V pronounces him “little Beethoven.”

*Ode on the Installation of the Earl of Derby* by Henry R. Bishop (66), to words of Claughton, is performed for the first time, at the event at Oxford University.

**12 June 1853** *Messe des orphéonistes* by Charles Gounod (34) is performed for the first time, in the Church of Saint Germain-l’Auxerrois.

**14 June 1853** *Caroussel-Marsch* op.133 by Johann Strauss (27) is performed for the first time, in the Volksgarten, Vienna.

**15 June 1853** On a day of celebration for the silver jubilee of the reign of Grand Duke Carl Friedrich, Johannes Brahms (20) meets Franz Liszt (41) and Peter Cornelius (28) at Altenburg, the mansion of Princess Carolyne Sayn-Wittgenstein in Weimar. Brahms is too nervous to play any of his music so Liszt reads the e flat minor scherzo from manuscript. Liszt comments as he plays. Brahms is overwhelmed, but later appears to doze while Liszt plays his own works.

**25 June 1853** A performance of *Benvenuto Cellini* in an Italian translation conducted by Hector Berlioz (49) at Covent Garden before Queen Victoria, Prince Albert and King Georg V and Queen Marie of Hannover is hissed from beginning to end by a group opposed to foreign composers and musicians in what is considered an Italian house. Berlioz cancels a performance scheduled for tomorrow. Also in the audience are Crown Prince Carl Alexander of Weimar, Pauline Viardot (31), Louis Spohr (69), and George Eliot.

**26 June 1853** Over the past week, nine people have died of yellow fever in New Orleans. Over the next three months, almost 8,000 people will die in the epidemic.

**27 June 1853** A testimonial concert by over 200 London musicians takes place to compensate Hector Berlioz (49) for the failure of *Benvenuto Cellini.*

**28 June 1853** *Vermählungs-Toaste* op.136, a waltz by Johann Strauss (27), is performed for the first time, in the Volksgarten, Vienna.

**29 June 1853** Giacomo Meyerbeer (61) calls on Mikhail Ivanovich Glinka (49) in Paris. They discuss opera, Gluck (†65) in particular. They will never meet again.

**1 July 1853** The Cape Colony receives a constitution which provides for a legislative council.

**2 July 1853** Russian forces cross the River Prut into Turkish territory, occupying Moldavia and Wallachia.

Franz Liszt (41) arrives in Zürich from Karlsruhe. He is met at the station by Richard Wagner (40). Liszt will visit with Wagner for over a week.

**5 July 1853** The first practical glider is flown across Brompton Dale, near Scarborough, Great Britain, by an unwilling John Appleby, an employee of the inventor, George Cayley. Cayley is the first to study and write about aerodynamics. The flight is successful and no one is hurt.

**8 July 1853** Four United States ships sail into Edo (Tokyo) harbor, where the commander, Commodore Matthew Perry, insists on seeing an important official on the threat of force.

Grand Duke Carl Friedrich of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach, patron of Franz Liszt (41), dies at Belvedere Castle. He is succeeded by his son Carl Alexander. Perhaps because of Carl Friedrich’s less than inspiring interest in music, Liszt will not hurry back from Zürich for the funeral.

**9 July 1853** Hector Berlioz (49) departs London after conducting *Benvenuto Cellini*.

**10 July 1853** After a visit of eight days with Richard Wagner (40), Franz Liszt (41) departs Zürich. Wagner describes it as a “wild week.”

**13 July 1853** The choral societies of Zürich join outside of Richard Wagner’s (40) window to give him a torchlight serenade.

**14 July 1853** The Lord of Toda, Japan receives Commodore Matthew C. Perry USN. Perry will negotiate a treaty to open Japan to United States ships.

**15 July 1853** *Tanzi Bäri* op.134, a polka by Johann Strauss (27), is performed for the first time, in the Volksgarten, Vienna.

**18 July 1853** *Knall-Kügerln* op.140, a waltz by Johann Strauss (27), is performed for the first time, in the Bierhalle Fünfhaus, Vienna.

The Grand Trunk Railway opens a line between Montreal and Portland, Maine.

**25 July 1853** Anton Bruckner (28) applies for the Austrian civil service post of clerk in the district court of St. Florian.

**30 July 1853** Robert Schumann (43) suffers what is probably a stroke during a visit to Bonn.

**31 July 1853** Ambassadors of the great powers in Austria formulate the Vienna Note to try to diffuse the Russia-Ottoman tension. It calls on the Ottomans to reaffirm the treaties of Küçük-Kainardji and Adrianople and making Russia and France joint guarantors of the Christians in the Ottoman Empire.

**1 August 1853** *Pepita-Polka* op.138 by Johann Strauss (27) is performed for the first time, in the Sperl Ballroom, Vienna.

**3 August 1853** Ernst I replaces Georg as Duke of Saxe-Altenburg.

With no immediate prospects in Paris, Hector Berlioz (49) arrives in Baden-Baden with Marie Recio to conduct a concert of his music.

**5 August 1853** Tsar Nikolay accepts the Vienna Note of 31 July.

**11 August 1853** Hector Berlioz (49) conducts a highly successful performance of his music in the Salle de la Conversation, Baden-Baden.

**12 August 1853** The British merchant ship *Madagascar* sails from Melbourne making for London. Neither the ship, nor the 160 people aboard are ever heard from again.

A fleet from Egypt arrives to support the Ottomans against Russia.

**14 August 1853** The Ottoman government unofficially rejects the Vienna Note of 31 July.

**24 August 1853** Hector Berlioz (49) conducts the first of two highly successful concerts of his music in the Comoedienhaus, Frankfurt.

Chef George Crum invents the potato chip in Saratoga Springs, New York.

**27 August 1853** Johannes Brahms (20) begins a walking tour from Mainz down the Rhine.

**28 August 1853** Joseph Joachim shows up on the doorstep of Robert Schumann (43) in Düsseldorf, precipitating 48 hours of chamber music.

**1 September 1853** *Le nabab*, an opéra comique by Fromental Halévy (54) to words of Scribe and Saint-Georges, is performed for the first time, at the Théâtre Favart, Paris. It enjoys a moderate success. *Le nabab* marks the last collaboration of Halévy with Eugène Scribe.

**5 September 1853** While visiting La Spezia, near Genoa, Richard Wagner (40) (so he claims) in half-sleep, half-waking state, dreams that he is sinking into a current of water (in E flat). On waking he realizes that he has dreamed the prelude to *Das Rheingold*.

Johannes Brahms (20) arrives in Bonn having hiked about 150 km down the Rhine from Mainz in ten days.

**7 September 1853** Members of the Small Sword Society take over Shanghai and gain the approval of the populace. They immediately halt trade in opium.

**15 September 1853** Mily Balakirev (16) applies to the University of Kazan for admission as an external student. He will be accepted.

**18 September 1853** *Wiedersehens-Polka* op.142 by Johann Strauss (27) is performed for the first time, in Ungers Casino, Vienna.

**19 September 1853** Luis José Sartorius, conde de San Luis replaces Francisco de Lersundi y Hormaechea as Prime Minister of Spain.

**20 September 1853** Turkey officially rejects the Vienna Note of 31 July.

**24 September 1853** France annexes New Caledonia.

**26 September 1853** Tsar Nikolay I and Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph II meet in Olmütz (Olomouc) in an effort to diffuse the Turkish crisis.

**28 September 1853** The *Annie Jane* out of Liverpool is crushed by a wave during a gale off Barra Island in the Hebrides. 348 mostly Scottish emigrants are lost. 102 are saved.

**30 September 1853** Johannes Brahms (20) arrives at the door of Robert Schumann (43) in Düsseldorf, but is informed by twelve-year old Marie Schumann that her parents are not at home. She suggests he return tomorrow.

Archduke Rainer Joseph of Austria, Prince Royal of Hungary and Bohemia, dies in Bolzano at the age of 69.

**1 October 1853** The first general election in New Zealand concludes after ten weeks of voting. 37 members have been elected without party designation.

The Schumann family is visited in Düsseldorf by a young friend of Joseph Joachim, Johannes Brahms (20). Brahms plays extensively for them, astounding his hosts. Robert Schumann (43) records in his diary, “Visit from Brahms, a genius.” Brahms will appear in Schumann’s diary almost every day for the next month.

Ottoman Sultan Abdul Mejid demands that Russia evacuate his Romanian principalities.

Carl Bechstein founds C. Bechstein Pianofortefabrik AG in Berlin.

**2 October 1853** An Austrian decree prohibits Jews from owning land.

**3 October 1853** *An die Künstler* for chorus and winds by Franz Liszt (41) to words of Schiller, is performed for the first time, in the Hoftheater, Karlsruhe, directed by the composer.

**4 October 1853** At Sumla, Ottoman commander Omer Pasha delivers an ultimatum to the Russian commander Prince Gorchakov. Russia must evacuate the Danube Principalities on threat of war.

**5 October 1853** The Ottoman Empire declares war on Russia.

**6 October 1853** Franz Liszt (41) and a group of interested musicians arrive in Basel to meet and talk with Richard Wagner (40). Among them are Hans von Bülow, Joseph Joachim, and Peter Cornelius (28).

*Le bijou perdu*, an opera by Adolphe Adam (50) to words of Leuven and Pittaud de Forges, is performed for the first time, at the Théâtre-Lyrique, Paris.

**9 October 1853** Franz Liszt (41) and Richard Wagner (40), accompanied by a small group, arrive in Paris from Basel.

*Kron-Marsch* op.139 by Johann Strauss (27) is performed for the first time, in the Volksgarten, Vienna. Also premiered is Strauss’ *Wellen und Wogen* waltz op.141.

**10 October 1853** In the home of Madame Patersi de Fossombroni in Paris, Franz Liszt (41) sees his three children for the first time in nine years. He has come from Switzerland with Richard Wagner (40), Princess Carolyne Sayn-Wittgenstein and her daughter Princess Marie. Also present are Hector Berlioz (49) and Liszt’s mother Anna. At the request of Princess Marie, Wagner continues to read his *Nibelungen* poem which he had begun reading to them in Switzerland. It is the first time that Wagner lays eyes on Cosima Liszt, now just 15. It is the first time that Wagner and Berlioz have met since 1843. This is probably the only time that Liszt, Berlioz, and Wagner ever inhabited the same room.

**11 October 1853** At the home of Hector Berlioz (49) in Paris, Franz Liszt (41) and Richard Wagner (40) come over for breakfast. Liszt accompanies Berlioz’ singing parts of *Benvenuto Cellini*. It is the first time Wagner has heard it.

**12 October 1853** The British cabinet drafts a request that Turkey forego military action for a time sufficient to restore friendly relations between Turkey and Russia.

Hector Berlioz (49) and Marie Recio depart Paris for Brunswick.

**16 October 1853** In a performance of the Gesangverein in Düsseldorf, Robert Schumann (43) continues conducting well after the music stops. Members of the Gesangverein refuse to be led by Schumann in the future.

**18 October 1853** Sometime during the next five days, Giuseppe Verdi (40) arrives in Paris with Giuseppina Strepponi to spend the winter. He is staying five minutes walk from the hotel where Franz Liszt (41) and Richard Wagner (40) are. They do not run into each other, and Verdi will never meet either Wagner or Liszt.

Incidental music to Aylic-Langlé’s comédie en vers *Murillo ou la Corde du pendu* by Jacques Offenbach (34) is performed for the first time, at the Comédie-Française, Paris.

Louis Moreau Gottschalk (24) gives the first of three performances in Boston, at the Music Hall. With the ticket price exorbitantly high, the audience is very small. The reviews are decidedly mixed.

**19 October 1853** The chairman of the Düsseldorf Allgemeiner Musikverein, Julius Illing, and another member, JE Heister, have an argument with Robert Schumann (43) most likely over Schumann’s ability as a conductor.

**20 October 1853** Russia declares war on the Ottoman Empire.

**22 October 1853** Naval forces of Great Britain and France enter the Dardanelles.

Tonight and on 25 October, Hector Berlioz (49) conducts wildly successful performances before full houses in Brunswick.

**23 October 1853** Fighting begins as Turkish troops cross the Danube at Tutrakhan, 60 km southeast of Bucharest. The Ottoman Empire declares war on Russia.

Edward Gottschalk dies in New Orleans. His son, Louis Moreau Gottschalk (24), in Boston on a concert tour, hurries home. From this date, the composer will take on all his father’s debts and support his mother and siblings.

**27 October 1853** The Düsseldorf Musikverein refuses to sing under Robert Schumann (43) owing to a “disasterous performance of a mass by Hauptmann at the Maximilian Church on 16 October.”

Robert Schumann (43) conducts a concert in Düsseldorf. It is the last time he will conduct.

**28 October 1853** Robert Schumann’s (43) article “Neue Bahnen,” extolling the virtues of the unheralded Johannes Brahms (20) appears in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* saying “Brahms is one of the elect.”

At the Schumann home in Düsseldorf, Joseph Joachim and Clara Schumann (34) perform a violin sonata written by Albert Dietrich (first movement), Johannes Brahms (20) (scherzo) and Robert Schumann (43) (intermezzo and finale).

Hector Berlioz (49) and Marie Recio hike around or up the Brocken near Bad Harzburg. It is the setting for the witches’ Sabbath from Goethe’s *Faust* and Mendelssohn’s *Die erste Walpurgisnacht.*

Richard (40) and Minna Wagner arrive home in Zürich after two weeks in Paris.

*Pépito*, an opéra-comique by Jacques Offenbach (34) to words of Monaux and Battu, is performed for the first time, in the Variétés, Paris.

**1 November 1853** Julius Blüthner opens his piano building business in Leipzig.

At his home in Zürich, Richard Wagner (40) begins to compose *Der Ring des Nibelungen*.

**2 November 1853** Russians attack the Turkish island of Oltenitsa in the Danube. They are beaten off.

Johannes Brahms (20) departs Düsseldorf with recommendations from Robert Schumann (43), making for Leipzig.

**3 November 1853** Lawyer-publisher-adventurer William Walker arrives in La Paz, Baja California with 45 followers from San Francisco and proclaims the Republic of Lower California. He immediately moves the capital to Ensenada.

**4 November 1853** Peter Cornelius (28) moves into the Altenburg in Weimar at the invitation of Princess Carolyne Sayn-Wittgenstein.

*O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden* for solo voices, chorus and orchestra by Felix Mendelssohn is performed for the first time, in Leipzig on the sixth anniversary of the composer’s death.

**5 November 1853** Joseph Joachim and Johannes Brahms (20) go to a morning rehearsal in Hannover where Hector Berlioz (49) is preparing for an upcoming concert. Brahms and Berlioz meet for the first time.

The first telegraph in Mexico goes into operation between Mexico City and Nopaluca, Puebla.

**7 November 1853** The chairman, Julius Illing, and another member, Joseph Herz, of the Allgemeiner Musikverein Committee visit Clara Schumann (34) with the unanimous proposal that in future Robert Schumann (43) conduct only his own music.

**9 November 1853** Robert Schumann (43) makes a formal reply to the Musikverein Committee demand of 7 November by claiming that this is a breach of contract.

**10 November 1853** At a subscription concert in Düsseldorf, conductor Robert Schumann (43) fails to appear. It is taken by his assistant Julius Tausch.

**11 November 1853** After a successful rising lasting six months, Imperial Chinese authority is restored to Amoy (Xiamen). Since most of the citizens joined the revolt, soldiers take part in a blood bath. 2,500 people are beheaded today alone.

David Livingstone departs Linyanti (Botswana) heading northwest, looking for a route to the Atlantic coast.

**14 November 1853** The Düsseldorf Musikverein Committee replies courteously to Robert Schumann’s (43) statement of 9 November but implements its design.

**15 November 1853** Queen Maria II of Portugal dies in Lisbon and is succeeded by her son, the 16-year-old Pedro V, under regency.

**16 November 1853** In Hannover, Johannes Brahms (20) writes to Robert Schumann (43) thanking him for the glowing article of 28 October.

**17 November 1853** Johannes Brahms (20) arrives in Leipzig to find a city atwitter about the new genius trumpeted in Schumann’s (43) article “Neue Bahnen.”

**19 November 1853** In Leipzig, Raymund and Hermann Härtel hear Johannes Brahms (20) play his Piano Sonata op.1 and the Scherzo in e flat minor op.4, as well as some of his songs. They immediately offer to publish his first four opus numbers.

**22 November 1853** Hector Berlioz (49) conducts *Harold in Italy* with Joseph Joachim in Hannover.

**23 November 1853** Tokugawa Iesada becomes Shogun in Japan.

**24 November 1853** British and French warships arrive at the Bosporus.

The Schumann family leaves Düsseldorf for a concert tour of the Netherlands. They will give 13 concerts over the next 25 days.

**25 November 1853** Boston merchant captain John Heard accidentally discovers the island that bears his name in the south Indian Ocean.

**26 November 1853** *Introduction and Allegro* op.134 for piano and orchestra by Robert Schumann (43) is performed for the first time, in Utrecht, by Clara Schumann (34).

Turkish troops attack Russian positions at Akhaltsikhe (Georgia) but are repulsed.

**27 November 1853** Great Britain and France conclude a defensive alliance with Turkey.

**28 November 1853** Giacomo Meyerbeer (62) is awarded the Orden der Kunst und Wissenschaft by King Maximilian II of Bavaria.

The first of two performances by Hector Berlioz (49) in Hannover takes place. At the first rehearsal, Joseph Joachim, who played *Harold in Italy* on 22 November in Bremen, introduces Berlioz to his friend, Johannes Brahms (20).

**30 November 1853** Russian naval forces destroy the Turkish fleet at Sinop on the Black Sea.

**1 December 1853** Russian forces destroy the main Turkish army at Basgedikler.

*La fuite en Egypte*, a mystère ancien for tenor, chorus and orchestra by Hector Berlioz (49) to his own words, is performed completely for the first time, in Leipzig conducted by the composer. Of all the cities he performs in during this tour, Leipzig gives Berlioz’ music the coolest reception. In the audience are Franz Liszt (42) and Peter Cornelius (28). After the performance, these and other musicians take Berlioz to a restaurant to cheer him up. They are soon joined by Johannes Brahms (20) who just arrived in the city after the concert. See 12 November 1850 and 30 May 1853.

**2 December 1853** *Schnee-Glöcken* op.143, a waltz by Johann Strauss (28), is performed for the first time, in the Sperl Ballroom, Vienna.

**4 December 1853** In Leipzig, Franz Brendel, editor of the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, gives a reception during which Johannes Brahms (20) plays his Piano Sonata in C and Scherzo in e flat minor. Hector Berlioz (49) is present and is effusive in his praise.

**9 December 1853** *Variations on a Theme by Robert Schumann* op.20 for piano by Clara Schumann (34) is performed for the first time, in Rotterdam, by the composer.

**10 December 1853** Hector Berlioz gives one of many very successful concerts at the Leipzig Gewandhaus. A reception hosted by Franz Liszt (42) after the performance includes Johannes Brahms (20), Peter Cornelius (28), Ferdinand David, and several other eminent musicians. The Pauliner Singers serenade him beneath his hotel window. Tomorrow is his 50th birthday.

**11 December 1853** Great Britain annexes Nagpur, one of the Maratha States in India.

Amidst a very successful round of concertizing in Leipzig, Hector Berlioz is given a dinner to celebrate his 50th birthday. He is told “Why don’t you speak German, M. Berlioz? It should be your language--you *are* German.”

**12 December 1853** Hector Berlioz (50) and Marie Recio depart Leipzig for Paris.

Peter Cornelius (28) writes from Weimar, “From the moment I met [Liszt] (42) he has not ceased to be the kindest and most active friend, giving me every day further opportunities of becoming still better acquainted with the noblest heart ever to beat in an artist’s breast. Carried by the overwhelming might of his genius, and by it alone, to a position in the world far above the misery which is generally the lot of artists, it is one of the chief objects of his life, so far as it lies within his power, to give everywhere a helping hand to unrecognized genius or talent.” (Williams, 301)

**15 December 1853** Clara Schumann (34) plays at a party given by the royal family at The Hague. No one pays much attention to her and after a few pieces she storms out. One guest asks Robert Schumann (43), ”And are you musical too?” (Macdonald, *1853*, 178)

**17 December 1853** Piano Sonata no.1 op.1 by Johannes Brahms (20) is performed publicly for the first time, in the Leipzig Gewandhaus by the composer. The work, and Brahms (in his first Leipzig performance) are well received.

In serious financial difficulty, Louis Moreau Gottschalk (24) sets sail from New York for his home in New Orleans.

**18 December 1853** Symphony no.1 by Camille Saint-Saëns (18) is performed for the first time, anonymously in Paris. The composer sits behind Charles Gounod (35) and Hector Berlioz (50) and listens as they discuss the work in glowing terms. After learning the identity of the composer, Gounod will send him a letter saying in part, “...and remember that on Sunday, 18th December 1853, you contracted the obligation of becoming a great master.”

**20 December 1853** Clara Schumann (34) completes her 13 concert tour of the Netherlands in the French Theatre in Amsterdam.

**22 December 1853** Following the disaster at Sinop, the British cabinet decides to send their ships into the Black Sea.

The Schumann family returns to Düsseldorf from their highly successful concert tour of the Netherlands.

**23 December 1853** Marquis Juan de la Pezuela, Captain-General of Cuba, orders that anyone caught importing Africans for slavery will be heavily fined and banished from the island.

**25 December 1853** Russian and Turkish forces clash at Cetate (Romania) on the Danube west of Craiova, without strategic result.

**30 December 1853** The United States purchases 76,788 sq km south of the Gila River from Mexico for $10,000,000 to facilitate the building of a proposed railroad (which will never be built). The agreement is signed today in Mexico City. In the US it is known as the Gadsden Purchase, after James Gadsden, the US minister to Mexico.

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