Hector Berlioz (1803-1869)

Complete Orchestral Works

Austere criticism of the early twentieth century designated Berlioz Romantic in excess, programmatic, an orchestrator with more colour than draughtsmanship, effect than form. In reaction certain of his admirers, 40 years ago, reversed the trend by decrying the programme as salesmanship, and forcing his music onto the Procrustean bed of sonata form. Today we may hope for a more balanced view. Merely because Berlioz was influenced by Beethoven, we no longer expect him to conform to the patterns laid down in the masterpieces of the great Viennese composers. Nor need we condemn the involvement of Berlioz's art with poetry, drama, and real life.

La Damnation de Faust, op. 24

(excerpts)

Menuet des follets
Marche hongroise

The wide selection in this set does not exhaust his range. His output embraces five overtly dramatic works (opera and oratorio) as well as the dramatic symphony Romeo et Juliette, his "architectural" sacred works, and exquisite smaller pieces, including songs. But orchestral works have always been at the centre of public perception of Berlioz, and formed the staple diet of the concert programmes he presented in France, Germany, Russia and England. Huge conceptions like *Roméo et Juliette*, and works of conventional symphonic dimensions like *Harold*, were often represented by extracts: Pilgrims' March, Romeo at the Ball, the Apotheosis (*Grande Symphonie funèbre et triomphale*). And the "Dramatic Legend" *La damnation de Faust* (1846) was similarly raided for self-sufficient and highly characterised extracts like the sinister minuet danced by will o'the wisps under the command of Mephistopheles, and the tremendous Hungarian March, both of which were published separately. Thus in drawing extracts from the epic opera *Les Troyens* (1857–59), this set faithfully follows the composer's trail.

Overtures

Most of Berlioz's orchestral works fall early in his career. A symphony conceived after 1850 was suppressed because he foresaw only trouble and expense in bringing it to completion and performance. Yet the music recorded here extends from his Opus 1 to his last work; for the overture (whether for an opera or as an independent piece for concert performance), is the only important genre Berlioz cultivated from the 1820s to his last decade. All of Berlioz's overtures follow the prevailing nineteenth-century form (used by composers as divergent as Beethoven and Rossini) with a slow section, often too important for an introduction, followed by an *Allegro*. Berlioz's favoured models may have included *Don Giovanni* and the overtures of Weber (*Der Freischûtz*, *Euryanthe* and *Oberon*), but his later overtures adopt a Rossini device, beginning with a fast flourish before presenting a lyrical theme.

Les Francs-juges, op. 3

Though designated Opus 1, the concert overture *Waverley* was preceded by the overture to an opera, *Les Francs-juges*, which Berlioz completed in 1826 but largely destroyed when it was rejected by the theatre. This was his first work to be widely performed, and its blend of the sinister and dramatic, and its episodic form, played a large role in shaping his reputation. The opera concerns the liberation of a German state from the tyrannical rule of Olmerick, reflected in the massive trombone utterance early

on. In the middle of the *Allegro*, the mournful opening is transformed into a long central episode; this unification of slow and fast music became a favoured process, its origins, again, being Beethoven (*Leonora*) and Weber (*Freischütz*). The second theme is treated to a super-Rossini crescendo in the coda, whose optimism is temporarily clouded by renewed trombone threats.

Waverley, op. 1

By contrast *Waverley* (c. 1827) breathes the atmosphere of romance in its lovely cello melody, before an insouciant *Allegro*. A sonata without development, it mingles material from the main theme into the accompaniment of the more lyrical second theme, another Berlioz fingerprint which tums up (as "Reunion of themes") in nearly every major work. Berlioz here reflects the romantic preoccupation with Walter Scott; he copied extracts from the novel into his manuscript, showing the hero melancholy and isolated, then active in love and war. These he struck out, scrawling "fatiguant" (tiresome) in the margin, and by way of programme he headed the published score with a couplet: "Dreams of love and Lady's charms / Give place to honour and to arms."

Le roi Lear, op. 4

Berlioz planned a "Faust" symphony in 1829, a quarter-century before Liszt's; then, in 1830, he diverted his energies to the autobiographical *Symphonie fantastique* and his first Shakespearean work, the fantasy overture *The Tempest*, later included in *Lélio*, He resumed writing overtures in Italy with another Scott title, *Rob Roy*, distinguished by its treatment of "Scots wha hae"; but after performance he decided it was too long for its ideas and declined to publish it. Another overture written during his Italian sojourn, however, was among his most performed works, and boldly tackles the tragedy of *King Lear*. The grandiose bass speech at the opening is surely a homage to Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, just as its appearance in the *Allegro* reflects *Der Freischütz*. The opening represents Lear's division of his kingdom, the powerful basses answered by cringing repetitions of the melody (Goneril and Regan?). The lyrical oboe theme is usually associated with Cordelia, and its rich rescoring for brass in E flat refreshes the main key (C major) and may suggest Cordelia's role as queen of France. The return to the bass theme, punctuated by angry blows of the timpani, Berlioz himself associated with French royal ceremonial. The *Allegro* is less easy to relate to the play; it contrasts violent, undirected energy with tenderness (the second theme, another lyrical oboe melody). After a short development the recapitulation is punctuated by a progressively weaker versions of the bass theme, and a distorted version of the second theme which, according to Berlioz, represents Lear's madness. The overture has been criticised for having too cheerful an ending, but violence is never far away (and it is worth recalling that many versions of the play from the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries contrived a happy ending).

Benvenuto Cellini

Carnaval romain, op. 9

After returning from Italy, Berlioz began a series of works (from *Harold* to *Roméo*) with Italian backgrounds. These with the Requiem occupied him for most of the remaining 1830s. Central to this activity was his first performed opera, *Benvenuto Cellini* (1838), loosely based on the life of the sixteenth-century Florentine sculptor, Berlioz composed a brilliant overture in which the main *Allegro* theme, surely a portrait of the mercurial hero, precedes the slow section; the latter includes a love theme and a sombre bass-register melody associated in the opera with the Pope. This theme duly reappears near the end of the *Allegro*, combined with brilliant material from the main thematic group, making a tremendous climax. When the opera failed in Paris, Berlioz transcribed the saltarello chorus from the finale to Act II for the *Allegro* of the *Roman Carnival* overture (1844). For his slow section he took the love duet, playing the melody three times in different keys with the sounds of the carnival

gradually becoming audible; towards the end this theme is revived in jaunty imitation before the glittering climax.

Le corsaire, op. 21

Béatrice et Bénédict

Not surprisingly, Berlioz planned a companion for the concert hall, calling it the *Tower of Nice*. But, like *Rob Roy*, it appeared too diffuse, and was set aside, to be reclaimed as *The Red Rover* (*Le corsaire rouge*) after Fennimore Cooper; only when Berlioz omitted "rouge" on publication (1852) did this splendid overture acquire an association with Byron's drama. It includes perhaps Berlioz's most resourceful mingling of a lyrical melody with the main *Allegro*. Its form appears capricious, but makes excellent sense in performance; as for a programme, given its unmistakably marine character, the listener can exercise imagination, and perhaps regret that this proved to be Berlioz's last symphonic work for the concert hall. Béatrice et Bénédict (1862), however, rounds off the overtures with its delicious combinations of themes drawn from many different numbers in the opera, forming one of the nineteenth century's comic masterpieces.

Symphonies

Symphonie fantastique, op. 14

1. Rêveries. Passions (Largo – Allegro agitato ed appassionato assai)
2. Un bal (Valse: Allegro non troppo)
3. Scène aux champs (Adagio)
4. Marche au supplice (Allegretto non troppo) –
5. Songe d'une nuit du Sabbat (Larghetto – Allegro – Ronde du Sabbat: Poco meno mosso)

Lélio ou Le retour à la vie, op. 14b

1. Le pêcheur (Goethe/Duboys)
2. Chœur d'ombres (Berlioz)
3. Chanson de brigands (Berlioz)
4. Chant de bonheur (Berlioz)
5. La harpe éolienne – Souvenirs
6. Fantaisie sur la Tempête de Shakespeare (Berlioz)

By contrast with the overtures, Berlioz's four symphonies fall almost within a decade, and follow divergent patterns of form and programmatic content. He embarked on this adventure when the symphony was almost entirely neglected by French composers; and the fact that Beethoven provided a model ready to hand in the repertoire of the Conservatoire concerts only makes Berlioz's originality the more striking. He designed his first symphony in five movements, differently disposed from those of Beethoven's five-movement Pastoral, with a waltz and march surrounding the central slow movement. He called it "Episode in the Life of an Artist", subheaded "Fantastic Symphony", and furnished it with a program me in which he traces his own obsession with the Irish Shake spearean actress Harriet Smithson. The first movement is slow: fast (reveries, passions), ending with an attempt at religious consolation; the second is a ball at which the beloved is glimpsed; the third is a pastoral meditation disturbed by images of the beloved, the mental storm matched by intimations of thunder. Berlioz then conceived the dream of a failed suicide through opium. He witnesses his own execution; then a witches' sabbath, where his beloved is a zealous participant, and where the entertainment includes a sordid parody of religion and musical decorum, represented by the *Dies irae* plainchant and a strict but uproarious fugue.

Berlioz devised this work at white heat early in 1830 as a testament of his artistic belief. Not surprisingly, he made use of good material to hand: he used a melody from an early song for the opening, one from a discarded Mass for the slow movement, a march intended for *Les Francs-juges* for the fourth movement, and throughout, for *idée fixe*, a melody which had done service in the 1828 cantata *Herminie*. This latter appears in every movement, representing the beloved woman as an ideal, as a dancer, and as a vision; a method of organisation of profound importance for the development of nineteenth-century programme music. But Berlioz, typically, never returned to the literal form of the work which has proved by far his most popular (many conductors, indeed, begin and end their Berlioz repertoire with the *Fantastique*). Berlioz pursued his artistic manifesto during his Italian sojourn (1831–32); he conceived an awakening from the opium nightmare and a gradual return to artistic composure. Rather than a symphony, he embodied this "Return to Life" in a monologue later called *Lélio*, with music much, if not all, taken from earlier works. The Goethe song *Der Fischer* includes a citation of the *idée fixe*, so that the siren who draws the hero to a watery grave is associated with the beloved; dark thoughts bring *Hamlet* to mind for the profoundly moving chorus of shades. Disgusted with the civilisation which sees fit to correct masterpieces (a palpable hit on Fétis, who emended the works of Beethoven, as well as the bowdlerisation of Shakespeare), the speaker desires escape to the wild, reflected in the exultant, Byronic song of the brigands. He seeks solitary happiness and a serene death in which this "Chant de bonheur" is whispered over his grave to the accompaniment of an Aeolian harp. But life calls him; he attends a rehearsal of his *Tempest*, and apart from a final, exhausted reference to the *idée fixe* Lélio ends with this colourful response to a play perhaps more philosophical than Berlioz then appreciated. But he delightfully conjures Miranda, the storm, ardent Ferdinand, lumpish Caliban, elusive Ariel (note the high-pitched piano duet, an unprecedented orchestration), and of course Prospero.

Harold en Italie, op. 16
Symphony with viola solo

1a. Harold aux montagnes (Adagio)
1b. Harold aux montagnes (Allegro)
2. Marche des pèlerins (Allegretto)
3. Sérénade (Allegro assai – Allegretto)
4. Orgie de brigands (Allegro frenetico – Adagio – Allegro, Tempo I)

Réverie et Caprice, op, 8
Romance for violin and orchestra

Harold en Italie (1834) represents another approach to symphonism. It resulted from a proposal from Paganini that Berlioz should write a viola concerto, but the viola part proved too slight for the virtuosa ("I must play all the time!"). Berlioz conceived the viola (Harold) as an isolated commentator, with its own melody (or *idée fixe*); this combines with the main themes of the central movements, scenes of picturesque Italy, religious and amorous (the Abruzzi mountaineer was a friend of Berlioz who features in his Memoirs, and the bagpipes are a remarkably good imitation). The first movement begins in sombre mood, with a fugue, before the introduction of the viola and its melody; the *Allegro* is based on a different melody, also introduced by the soloist, and a sprightly melody with a Scotch character which, indeed, featured in the abandoned *Rob Roy*. The final Byronic orgy of brigands is an imaginary scene adumbrated in *Lélio*; the viola is unable to participate, but begins by reminiscences of earlier movements, rudely banished by the orchestra. Near the end the pilgrims, joined by the viola/Harold, are heard in the distance, but the symphony ends in uproar.

Berlioz's only other concerto-like composition, *Rêverie et Caprice* for violin, explains its form by its title (there are two reveries, and two caprices). It is a resourceful transcription of an aria first intended for *Benvenuto Cellini*.

Roméo et Juliette, op. 17

Dramatic Symphony after Shakespeare's Tragedy

Part I

Introduction
Prologue: "D'anciennes haines endormies"
Strophe 1: "Premiers transports que nul n'oublie"
Strophe 2: "Heureux enfants aux cœurs de flame"
Récitatif et Scherzetto: "Bientôt de Roméo" – "Mab! la messagère" – "Bientôt la mort est souveraine"

Part II

Roméo seul – Tristesse – Concert et bal –
Grande fête chez les Capulets

Part III

"Ohé! Capulets! Bonsoir, bonsoir!"
Scène d'amour

Part IV

Scherzo: La reine Mab ou la fée des songes
Convoi funèbre de Juliette: "Jetez des fleurs pour la vierge expirée!"
Roméo au tombeau des Capulets
Finale. Chœurs et Récitatif du Père Laurence: "Quoi! Roméo de retour!"
Finale. Air du Père Laurence: "Pauvres enfants que je pleure" – "Mai s notre sang rougit leur glaive"
Finale. Serment de réconciliation: "Jurez donc"

Had *Benvenuto Cellini* not fallen, Berlioz might have been approached to write another opera; then perhaps *Roméo et Juliette* (1839) might have taken a different form. He associated the play, of course, with Harriet, although he saw her first as Ophelia; and he had almost certainly planned to write something based on it ten years before. He even mentioned to Mendelssohn, in Rome, that the Queen Mab speech would make an excellent topic for a scherzo. Thus when Paganini, moved by hearing Harold, offered a substantial gift of money, Berlioz felt able to reduce his other income-generating activities and throw himself into this "sea of poetry".

The result is his most original symphony, if symphony it is; or his most original opera, in that the theatrical aspects, including the voices of the lovers, are left to the imagination. Berlioz wrote that the language of instrumental music, for something as hackneyed as a love duet, offered fewer restrictions and greater depth of expression through its very imprecision; and he poured out his love for this most tender of tragedies in his greatest slow movement. But this is no abstract symphony in disguise; nor does the music fun parallel with the play. Berlioz preferred to develop specific scenes to their full musical potential, while leaving out many, indeed most, of the others. Moreover he framed the central love story by expansive treatment of the family feud, altering the emphasis of the close so that reconciliation is brought about not by the secular Prince of Verona, but the holy friar Lawrence.

Given the scenes he wished to illustrate, he chose his means with more of an eye to appropriateness than homogeneity. The symphony is also designed, like Beethoven's Ninth, to

withhold its full forces until the end. Thus after an orchestra I battle and the restoration of order by the Prince (unison brass), the Prologue uses a very small chorus and two soloists to explain what we have heard and direct our attention to what will follow. It was indeed a new concept, the sung programme with thematic catalogue; it covers movements II to V but says little of the sixth movement and finale. In movement II "Romeo alone" is a ravishing exploration of unfocused adolescent yearning; after a fragment of ball music, an oboe theme offers a vision, perhaps of Juliet. With the ball in full flood, this theme returns, superimposed upon the dance – another "reunion of themes" – at the central climax. Movement III, the love scene, is introduced by a reminiscence of the dance sung by young Capulets; then the orchestra alone explores the declarations of love, the fear and the joy, the departure of Romeo.

For movement IV, Berlioz returned to an earlier scene for inspiration. He adopted the standard ternary scherzo form, but the slower middle section or "trio" is accompanied by scuttling sounds derived from the first section, and the reprise of the opening is rapidly transformed by the intervention of new ideas: a horn fanfare, the snoring of a soldier, spooky dance music, ideas clearly anticipated in the sung programme. The mood change for movement V is as complete as its change of key (E minor after F major); ignoring all the intervening scenes (marriage, death of Tybalt, second love scene) Berlioz introduces a fuller Capulet chorus to mourn Juliet, dead only in appearance thanks to Lawrence's potion. Movement VI is Berlioz's most programmatic composition, vividly reflecting the narrative of Garrick's popular adaptation of the play: Romeo enters the tomb, sings a heartfelt lament, then takes poison; Juliet awakes; their rapturous reunion is ended when the poison takes effect, and Juliet stabs herself. These events can only be explained, and the families brought to their senses, by representation of the final scene in terms of an operatic scene for solo bass and double chorus, ending with the magnificently uplifting oath.

Other Works

Grande Symphonie funèbre et triomphale, op. 15

1. Marche funèbre (Moderato un poco lento)
2. Oraison funèbre (Adagio non tanto – Andantino un poco lento e sostenuto)
3. Apothéose (Allegro non troppo e pomposo)

Tristia, op. 18

(excerpts)

3. Marche funèbre pour la dernière scène d'Hamlet (Allegretto moderato)

Berlioz ended his symphonic catalogue with an occasional work designed for outdoor ceremonial performance. The *Grande Symphonie funèbre et triomphale* (1840) was commissioned for the tenth anniversary of the 1830 July revolution and was played at the inauguration of the Bastille column. Again, a simple programme resides in the movement titles: funeral march, funeral oration, apotheosis. The March is one of the composer's simplest and most magnificent conceptions. The trombone solo which follows is largely based on material conceived for *Les Francs-juges*, and the finale is a joyous march which, rather than sublimity, attains the exultant spirit of revolution.

Berlioz wrote an even finer funeral march intended for performance with *Hamlet*; a piece of Nordic character which penetrates, despite the objectivity of ritual, into the heart of the tragedy which most obsessed Berlioz and his romantic contemporaries.

Les Troyens il Carthage

Prelude from: Les Troyens à Carthage: Part II, act 3

Les Troyens (Act IV)
No 29: Chasse royale et orage – Pantomime
No 32: Marche pour l'entrée de la reine
No 33: Ballets:
- a: Pas des Almées
- b: Danse des esclaves
- c: Pas d'esclaves nubiennes

Equally sombre is the late Prelude (1863) written for *Les Troyens à Carthage*, the truncated version (Acts III to V) of *Les Troyens* which was eventually performed. It is an elegy for the heroic defence of Troy, based on the passionate duet of Cassandra and Chorœbus in Act I. The remaining selections are drawn from the idyllic Act IV, First comes the symphonic interlude, or Pantomime, during which Dido and Aeneas, caught in a storm while hunting, consummate their love in a cave. The music depicts not this love but the serene landscape overwhelmed by a raging storm; nymphs, dryads, huntsmen, stricken with panic; and a climactic chorus of mythical creatures bellowing at Aeneas that his destiny lies not here, but in Italy. The March for the Queen's entry is a delicate reminiscence of the Trojan national anthem, said to have been inspired by "God Save the Queen". The royal divertissement includes two luscious ballets, well contrasted despite being in G major and 6/8 time, and a piece of delicious exoticism (Dance of the Nubian Slaves).

Julian Rushton

Romantic – With a pessimistic difference

Berlioz's Sacred Works and Symphonic Dramas

Though obviously a central figure of the Romantic movement, Berlioz stands rather outside his time, and it could scarcely have been otherwise. The major French composer of his generation, he was possessed of powerful originality, abrasive intelligence and stubborn integrity, and hence could only be at odds with contemporary opinion and taste in an age of Meyerbeer and Auber. So his career as a composer in Paris was one of occasional solitary triumphs but of many unfulfilled hopes and frustrations. And his relation to Romanticism was not quite what formerly was assumed. Of course, he shared the passions of his age and responded to its discoveries, avidly reading (in French translations) Shakespeare, Goethe, Walter Scott, Hoffmann and De Quincey, as so many others did.

But he did so in his own way, that is with reservations that lead us to regard him as a Romantic with one foot decidedly in the Classical camp. (In this respect he was like Chopin.) The fact remains that as the leading French representative in his period of the art which, because of its powers of suggestion and association, is the Romantic art *par excellence*, Berlioz's affiliations with the movement are extremely impressive and he was in the vanguard of those who sought to liberate art from the limitations of academicism so that it could express life truthfully. Rather as Victor Hugo advocated the fusion of the sublime and the grotesque in his preface to *Cromwell* (1827), Berlioz regarded contrast, the essence of life, as central to art and in 1865 wrote: "*Music lives only by contrasts.*" Certainly there is much contrast, some of it extreme, in the works that make up this collection.

His textures often combine opposites in a way that could almost be a transmutation into sound of Delacroix's ideas about painting. For Berlioz the orchestra was an infinitely subtle medium, and in his use of instrumental colour as a means of expression, even as a dimension of composition, he was a revolutionary rather than a Romantic. And in his rhythmic innovations and preoccupation with acoustic and spatial problems he broke with the past as much as anyone can. His entire art, in church

and concert hall as well as in the theatre, tended towards drama. Yet despite his profound admiration of Shakespeare what interested Berlioz was not the expressive licence and freeing of all traditional restraints which most of his contemporaries saw in the plays, but a definite concept of form. And it was typical of Berlioz that he damned his Faust in a work that charts the failure of the Romantic dream and shows that Hell is inborn in man. In his youth Berlioz may have accepted Rousseau's abolition of Hell, yet the idea of redemption which is found in so much Romantic art was foreign to him and in due course his fundamental pessimism asserted itself. His greatest work, *Les Troyens*, embodies a far older and tragic sense of life and a heroic, altogether pre-Romantic and hierarchical idea of human society.

In comparison with some of his contemporaries Berlioz's output is relatively small, made up of about a dozen large works plus concert overtures, songs, occasional pieces for ceremonial occasions and early cantatas written for the Prix de Rome competition during his student years. Often a considerable period elapsed between completion and performance of a major project. Few composers had to persist in their creative work in the face of so much official discouragement, misunderstanding and lack of support.

Requiem

Grande messe des morts, Op. 5

1. Requiem – Kyrie
2. Dies irae – Tuba mirum
3. Quid sum miser
4. Rex tremendae
5. Quaerens me
6. Lacrimosa
7. Domine, Jesu Christe
8. Hostias
9. Sanctus
10. Agnus Dei

Te Deum

for triple chorus, tenor solo, orchestra and organ, Op. 22

Te Deum laudamus
Tibi omnes
Dignare
Christe, Rex gloriae
Te ergo quaesumus
Judex crederis

L'enfance du Christ

Trilogie sacrée, Op. 25
Text: Hector Berlioz

Part I: Le songe d'Herode

"Dans la crèche, en ce temps, Jésus venait de naître"
(Le Récitant)

Scene 1

Marche nocturne

"Qui vient?"
(Un Centurion, Polydorus)

(Reprise de la marche nocturne)

Scene 2

Air d'Herode
"Toujours ce rêve!" – "Ô misère des rois!"
(Hérode)

Scene 3

"Seigneur!"
(Polydorus, Hérode)

Scene 4

Chœur de Devins
"Les sages de Judée"
(Les Devins, Hérode)

(Évolutions cabalistiques)

"La voix dit vrai, Seigneur"
(Les Devins, Hérode)

"Eh bien, par le fer qu'ils périssent!"
(Hérode, Les Devins)

Scene 5

Duo
"Ô mon cher fils, donne cette herbe tender"
(Marie, Joseph)

Scene 6

Chœur d'Anges invisibles
"Joseph! Marie! Écoutez-nous"
(Les Anges, Marie, Joseph)

Part II: La fuite en Égypte

Ouverture

Adieux des Bergers à la Sainte Famille
"Il s'en va loin de la terre"
(Le Chœur)

Le repas de la Sainte Famille
"Les pèlerins étant venus"
(Le Récitant, Les Anges)

Part III: L'arrivée à Saïs

"Depuis trois jours, malgré l'ardeur du vent"
(Le Récitant)

Scene 1

Duo
"Dans cette ville immense"
(Marie, Joseph, Les Romains, Les Égyptiens)

Scene 2

"Entrez, entrez, pauvres Hébreux!"
(Le Père de famille)

"Grands dieux! Quelle détresse!"
(Le Père de famille. Les Ismaélites)

(Les Ismaélites se dispersent)

"Sur vos traits fatigués"
(Le Père de famille, Joseph, Le Chœur)

Trio pour deux flûtes et harpe:
Allegro moderato – Andante espressivo
Allegro vivo
Andante

"Vous pleurez, jeune mère"
(Le Père de famille, Marie, Joseph, Le Chœur)

Épilogue

Lento (Instrumental)
"Ce fut ainsi que par un infidèl"
(Le Récitant)

Ô mon âme, pour toi que reste-t-il à faire"
(Le Récitant, Le Chœur)

Les nuits d'été, Op. 7
Text: Théophile Gautier

1. Villanelle
"Quand viendra la saison nouvelle"

2. Le spectre de la rose
"Soulève ta paupière close"

3. Sur les lagunes – Lamento
"Ma belle amie est morte"

4. Absence
"Reviens, reviens, ma bien-aimée!"

5. Au cimetière – Clair de lune
"Connaissez-vous la blanche tombe"

6. L'île inconnue
"Dites, la jeune belle"

Berlioz's religious works demonstrate the extreme contrasts in his style, once taken to be contradictions. The Requiem (the *Grande messe des morts*) of 1837 and what may be termed his "Babylonian" and "Ninevite" Te Deum (1855) are the two pieces which have been mainly responsible

for tales about the noise and vast numbers of performers demanded by his music. They should be compared with *L'enfance du Christ* (1855) and *Les nuits d'été* (1841). The former is a gentle, delicate score, quite untypical of mid-nineteenth-century religious art, descending from the intimate oratorios of Lesueur (who had been one of his teachers at the Paris Conservatoire) but also owing something to the socially conscious aspects of the French Catholic revival. In another class again is *Les nuits d'été*, with its long and subtle melodic lines for the solo voice and ever sensitive orchestration.

La damnation de Faust

Légende dramatique en quatre parties, Op. 24
Text: Hector Berlioz, Almire Gandonnière, Gérard de Nerval

Part I
Scene 1

"Le vieil hiver"
(Faust)

Ronde des Paysans
"Les bergers quittent leurs troupeaux"
(Chœur des Paysans, Faust)

Scene 2

"Mais d'un éclat guerrier"
(Faust)

Marche hongroise

Part II

Scene 3

"Sans regrets j'ai quitté les riantes campagnes"
(Faust)

Chant de la Fête de Pâques
"Christ vient de ressusciter!"
(Le Chœur, Faust)

"Hélas! doux chants du ciel"
(Faust)

Scene 4

"Ô pure émotion!"
(Méphistophélès, Faust)

Scene 5

Chœur de Buveurs
"À boire encor!"
(Le Chœur, Méphistophélàs, Brander)

Chanson de Brander
"Certain rat, dans une cuisine"
(Brander, Le Chœur, Méphistophélès)

Fugue sur le thème de la chanson de Brander
”Amen”
(Brander, Le Chœur)

”Vrai Dieu, messieurs”
(Méphistophélès, Le Chœur)

Chanson de Méphistophélès
“Une puce gentille”
(Méphistcphélès, Le Chœur)

“Assez! fuyons ces lieux”
(Faust, Méphistophélès)

Scene 6

Air de Méphistophélès
“Voici des roses”
(Méphistophélès)

Songe de Faust
”Dors! heureux Faust”
(Chœur de Gnomes et de Sylphes, Méphistophélès, Faust)

Ballet des Sylphes

Scene 7

”Margarita!”
(Faust, Méphistophélès)

Chœur de Soldats et Chanson d’Étudiants
”Villes entourées”
(Le Chœur)

”Jam nox stellata velamina pandit”
(Le Chœur)

Part III
(Prélude: La retraite)

Scene 8

Air de Faust
“Merci, doux crépuscule!”
(Faust)

Scene 9

“Je I’entends!”
(Méphistophélès, Faust)

Scene 10

“Que l’air est étouffant!”
(Marguerite)

Le roi de Thulé (Chanson gothique)
“Autrefois un roi de Thulé”
(Marguerite)

Scene 11

Évocation
“Esprits des flammes inconstantes”
(Méphistophélès)

Menuet des Follets

Scene 12

“Maintenant chantons à cette belle”
(Méphistophélès)

Sérénade de Méphistophélès
“Devant la maison”
(Méphistophélès, Le Chœur)

Scene 13

“Grands dieux!”
(Marguerite)

Trio el Chœur (Duo)
“Ange adoré”
(Faust, Marguerite)

Scene 14

“Allons, il est trop tard!”
(Méphistophélès, Marguerite. Faust, Le Chœur)

“Je connais donc enfin”
(Faust, Méphistophélès, Marguerite, Le Chœur)

Part IV
Scene 15

Romance
“D’amour l’ardente flame”
(Marguerite)

“Au son des trompettes”
(Le Chœur, Marguerite)

Scene 16

Invocation à la Nature
“Nature immense”
(Faust)

Scene 17

Récitatif et Chasse
“À la voûte azurée”
(Méphistophélès, Faust)

Scene 18

La course à l'abîme
"Dans mon chœur retentit sa voix"
(Faust, Le Chœur, Méphistophélès)

Scene 19

Pandaemonium
"Has! Irimiru Karabrao!"
(Le Chœur, Méphistophélès)

"Tradioun marexil"
(Le Chœur)

Scene 20

Épilogue sur la terre
"Alars, l'Enfer se tut"
(Quelques Voix, Petit Chœur)

Scene 21

Le Ciel
"Laus! Laus!"
(Le Chœur, Une Voix)

Apothéose de Marguerite
"Remonte au ciel, âme naïve"
(Le Chœur, Une Voix)

La damnation de Faust (1846) was described by Berlioz during composition as an *opéra de concert* but finally appeared as a *légende dramatique*. Its text is from Gerard de Nerval's translation of Goethe's *Faust* Part 1, and Berlioz makes use of the rejected *Huit scènes de Faust* of 1828–29 with various additions, such as his magnificent orchestration of the "Rákóczy" March. It portrays Faust as a yearning, aspiring soul overpowered by the immensity of nature and finally damned by his own weaknesses, which Mephistopheles both represents and fatally exploits. Had he wanted to adapt it for the stage Berlioz would surely have made considerable alterations. However, from as early as 1893 it has repeatedly been seen in the theatre, usually to inconclusive effect, and as its impact depends strongly on the listener's imagination it is best heard in the concert hall or on the gramophone.

Romeo et Juliette

Symphonie dramatique d'après la tragédie de Shakespeare, Op. 17
Text: Emile Deschamps

Part I

Introduction
Combats – Tumulte – Intervention du Prince
(Instrumental)

Prologue
"D'anciennes haines endormies"
(Contralto solo, Petit Chœur)

Strophes
"Premiers transports que nul n'oublie!"

"Heureux enfants aux cœurs de flamme"
(Contralto solo, Petit Chœur)

Scherzetto
"Bientôt de Roméo" – "Mab, la messagère" – "Bientôt la mort est souveraine"
(Ténor solo, Le Chœur)

Part II
Roméo seul – Tristesse – Con cert et bal –
Grande fête chez les Capulets
(Instrumental)

Part III
Scène d'amour: Nuit sereine – Le jardin de Capulet silencieux et désert – Les jeunes Capulets, sortant de la fête, passent en chantant des réminiscences de la musique du bal.

"Ohé, Capulets! Bonsoir, bonsoir!"
(Double Chœur)

Scène d'amour
(Instrumental)

Part IV
Scherzo
La reine Mab, ou la fée des songes
(Instrumental)

Convoi funèbre de Juliette
"Jetez des fleurs"
(Le Chœur)

Roméo au tombeau des Capulets
lnvocation – Réveil de Juliette.
Joie délirante, désespoir; dernières angoisses et mort des deux amants
(Instrumental)

Finale
La foule accourt au cimetière – Rixe des Capulets et des Montagus – Récitatif et air du Père Laurence – Serment de réconciliation

"Quoi! Roméo de retour!"
(Le Chœur)

Récitatif
"Je vais dévoiler le rnystère!"
(Le Père Laurence, Le Chœur)

Air
"Pauvres enfants que je pleure"
(Le Père Laurence)

"Mais notre sang rougit leur glaive"
(Le Chœur, Le Père Laurence)

Serment
"Jurez donc par l'auguste symbole"
(Le Père Laurence, Le Chœur)

Apart from concert and operatic overture, Berlioz's other main works are large orchestral compositions with or without voices, and only the first of these, his *Symphonie fantastique* (1830), is a true symphony. *Harold en Italie* (1834) crosses symphony with concerto and has a considerable viola obbligato, while the *Grande symphonie funèbre et triomphale* (1840) is for wind instruments only.

Berlioz's other symphony, *Roméo et Juliette* (1839) was subtitled *Symphonie dramatique* and may be said to cross orchestral and operatic composition. The text, by Emile Deschamps, is based on Garrick's version of Shakespeare – which is what Berlioz had seen at the Odéon in 1827 – but he conveys the main parts of the drama in purely orchestral terms. The chief instrumental movements, "Grande fête chez Capulet", "Scène d'amour" and "La reine Mab", are framed by an elaborate vocal introduction and finale. The introduction portrays the conflict of Montagues and Capulets and suggests the coming drama with choral recitative and sections for tenor and contralto. However, the instrumental movements represent the action more powerfully than voices, Berlioz explained in his preface. Particularly in the "Scene d'amour" the soloistically treated instruments take the place of operatic voices. A complex sequence of vocal movements makes up the finale and translates us from the play's subjective emotions to the world of action and resolution. Juliet's funeral procession, the scene where Romeo comes to the vault, the death of the lovers, Friar Laurence's explanation and the reconciliation of the two families are shown in music that is more operatic than symphonic.

Lélio, ou le retour à la vie
Monodrame Iyrique, Op. 14b

1. Le pêcheur
(Albert Duboys after Goethe)
"L'onde frémit, l'onde s'agite"

2. Chœur des ombres
(Berlioz)
"Froid de la mort, nuit de la tombe"

3. Chanson de brigands
(Berlioz)
"J'aurais cent ans à vivre encore"

4. Chant de bonheur
(Berlioz)
"Ô mon bonheur, ma vie"

5. La harpe éolienne – Souvenirs
(Instrumental)

6. Fantaisie sur la Tempête de Shakespeare
(Berlioz)
"Miranda! Miranda!"

A curious case is *Lélio, ou Le retour à la vie* (1831–32) which Berlioz finally subtitled *Monodrame lyrique*, having at the first performance called it *Le retour à la vie, melologue en six parties*. Of these the first is *Le pêcheur*, Albert Duboys's version of a ballade by Goethe, while the next three are from cantatas written for the Prix de Rome in 1827 and 1829 – one of which we shall

meet again. Fifth comes *La harpe éolienne* for orchestra, adapted from *La mort d'Orphée*, and last is Berlioz's *Fantaisie sur la Tempête de Shakespeare* for chorus and orchestra, first heard in 1830. In other words, to the forces of the *Symphonie fantastique* are added singers and also a narrator. In the *Symphonie* the love obsession ends with a Witches' Sabbath, but now Berlioz brings his hero out of the opium dream, gives him a voice and shows how he adjusted to life through the healing power of music and of creative fantasy. The narrator recites and acts in front of a curtain behind which are concealed the singers and instrumentalists. Unfortunately, however, the result does not hang together. The diverse origins of the movements explain their failure to establish the unity which so powerfully marks the *Symphonie*, Requiem, Te Deum and several other works of Berlioz. Even so, *Lélio* takes an unusual position in the space occupied by music and literature with something like equality.

Herminie
Scène lyrique
Text: Pierre Vieillard

Récit: "Quel trouble te poursuit"
Air: "Ah! Si de la tendresse"
Récit: "Que dis-je?"
Air: "Arrête! Arrête! Cher Tancrède"
Récit: "Que Clorinde est heureuse!"
Air: "Venez, venez, terribles armes!"
Prière: "Dieu des chrétiens!"
"Venez, venez, terribles armes!"

La mort de Cléopâtre
Scène lyrique
Text: Pierre Vieillard

"C'en est donc fait!"
"Ah! Qu'ils sont loin"
Méditation: "Grands Pharaons"
"Non! ... non, de vos demeures funèbres"
"Dieux du Nil"

Two of Berlioz's Prix de Rome cantatas are included here, the rather conventional *Herminie* having gained second Prize in 1828. But *La mort de Cléopâtre*, his entry for the following year, ought to have won first prize, being very dramatic and glancing towards his subsequent tragic heroines, Juliet, Cassandra and Dido. The passage where Cleopatra invokes the spirits of the Pharaohs has great power, and when he adapted a section of this work for *Lélio* Berlioz wrote of its "*sombre orchestration, broad, sinister harmony, lugubrious melody ... a great voice breathing a menacing lament in the mysterious stillness of the night*".

* * * * *

If Berlioz's style was long misunderstood, it was because it differs greatly from that of his contemporaries and because his antecedents such as Spontini and Lesueur have remained unfamiliar to the public. But he was the true founder of the modern orchestra, as his insistence on the numbers of instruments required well shows. These were not for volume but for sonority: he knew that it took many string players to achieve a true *pianissimo*, and he needed additional wind instruments to have unified tone colours on a chord. Occasions when volume for volume's sake is demanded are few in his music, and more characteristic are passages with extremely delicate scoring, as in the "Scène

d'amour" of *Roméo et Juliette*, or in the ball sequence of the same work, the "Grande fête chez Capulet", with the festive brilliance of violins and woodwind in their highest registers. Berlioz was the first major composer to employ fully the improvements in instruments, especially the French woodwind and brass instruments, that had arisen from the technological innovations of the Industrial Revolution.

Probably because of the satirical "Amen" fugue in *La damnation de Faust*, Berlioz was long regarded as against counterpoint. In fact his contrapuntal point of departure was the finale of Beethoven's Symphony No. 9, and the quantity of fugal passages in his works – of which the finale of the *Symphonie fantastique* and the introductions to *Harold en Italie* and *Roméo et Juliette* are representative – should long since have discredited any notion that Berlioz was anti-contrapuntal. Indeed the opening chorus of the Te Deum is as sound contrapuntally as anything that could be found in Mendelssohn.

Berlioz's great melodic gifts have sometimes escaped listeners because his lines are often long, asymmetrical and hence can seem arbitrary, although they seldom are. His melodies often have wonderful flexibility, and he liked to reharmonise them when they reappeared. Berlioz's harmony was highly original, partly because of his free use of diminished-seventh chords as modulatory pivots and his love of modal progressions to the third and sixth degrees of the scale. He made sensitive use of orchestral timbres to underline harmonic change or to reinforce part writing.

Yet rhythm is the most exciting aspect of Berlioz's music, and in his *Mémoires* (Paris, 1870) he repeatedly complained about the inadequacies of orchestral musicians in dealing with his rhythmic writing. It was not so much his use of syncopation or rhythmic experiments like the 7/4 metre of the dance of the soothsayers in *L'enfance du Christ* that makes his rhythmic language so original, but the subtle "sprung rhythms", the cross-rhythms, the entrances where the performers do not expect them.

This is related to Berlioz's form, which is loose yet logical. His use of the recurrent *idée fixe* in the *Symphonie fantastique* and *Lélio* and the recapitulation of previously heard themes in *Harold en Italie* and the Requiem (deriving from the last movement of Beethoven's Symphony No. 9) were replaced by less obvious and systematic procedures in his later scores. Rhythm and tempo have structural functions in Berlioz whereas tonality plays a less significant organising role in his music than it did in the works of his German contemporaries. He shares with Chopin responsibility for weakening the effect of tonality as a major formal device in music.

5 Songs

La belle voyageuse, Op. 2 No. 4

Légende irlandaise
(Thomas Gounet, after Thomas Moore)
"Elle s'en va seulette"

Le chasseur danois, Op. 19 No. 6

(Adolphe de Leuven)
"Entendez-vous, dans la bruyère"

La captive, Op. 12

Rêverie
(Victor Hugo)
"Si je n'étais captive"

Le jeune pâtre breton, Op, 13 No. 4
(Auguste Brizeux)
“Dès que la grive est éveillée”

Zaïde, Op. 19 No. 4
Boléro
(Roger de Beauvoir)
”Ma ville, ma belle ville”

Max Harrison