PART VI

Renown

18 Berlioz's impact in France

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"Impact" – the forceful contact or collision of one body against another – is a particularly appropriate word to describe Hector Berlioz's effect upon his contemporaries, whether the composers of his own or of the next generation, the public, or colleagues in the press. Many in France acknowledged the genius of Berlioz the musician, but in his own time true appreciation of his achievement tended to reside mainly with a few ardent admirers, for Berlioz cultivated a style that was so distinctive, subjective, and exploratory that general audiences did not embrace the bulk of his works.

In 1870, only a year after his death, a youthful Adolphe Jullien stressed the personal character of Berlioz's music by characterizing the man and his art as one and the same: "he acts, he thinks, he lives in his works. Each page of his music is made in his own image."[1] Younger composers, intent on building their careers, tended to avoid the risky course of adopting wholesale his innovations and individual style. In 1871 Georges Bizet expressed both the deep admiration and the wariness symptomatic of his generation's attitude toward Berlioz as a model:

> [W]hat makes for success is the talent and not the idea. The public [. . .] only understands the idea later on, but to make it to this "later on" the artist's talent has to make the road accessible to the public, by means of appealing forms, and not to put people off from the start. In such a way Auber, who had so much talent and so few ideas, was almost always understood, while Berlioz, who had genius but no talent, almost never was.[2]

Berlioz foresaw the battles he would face and, early in his career, armed himself with a powerful weapon to advance his reforms – the prose of a well-placed music commentator and critic. Although he made enemies as he carried on a columnist's campaign for serious music, including his own, he was also protected by the powerful owners – the Bertin family – of the respected newspaper that employed him from 1835 to 1863, the *Journal des débats*. Still, even in 1886, when bitterness over the trenchant power of his pen must have begun to recede, the subjectivity and originality of his music limited his place in the repertory of French performing institutions to only a handful of favored works. Oscar Comettant, himself a sometimes dogmatic composer-critic whose taste ran rather to Halévy, Meyerbeer, and Rossini, articulated the conservative point of view:

> No, my dear Berlioz, my dear master, I do not think that your music will ever be played, with the exception of two or three scores whose subjects are marvelously suited to the strengths of your musical and extra-musical imagination, but your genius was great and your discoveries have entered into the public domain of art, which you have thereby enriched; your name will never die and your glory is eternal.[3]

As Comettant predicted, Berlioz's name has never died, but his import in his own country has long been and is still debated. This study examines Berlioz's impact in France by focusing, first, on the assessments made at the time of his death. It then considers the renaissance of the eighteen-seventies (spearheaded by such figures as the composer-critic Ernest Reyer and the conductors Édouard Colonne and Jules Pasdeloup), the semi-canonization by supporters in 1886 (who characterized him as a French ancestor and as a bulwark against the Wagnerian invasion), and the appraisals made on the centenary of his birth in 1903. Composers' reactions in France and elsewhere give us further insight into the nature of Berlioz's standing during these three decades, as do certain works of those composers, touched by Berlioz's conception of the work of art, by his unique style, or by the musical gestures and sonorities of his individual movements.

In the twentieth century scholarly texts and reference books have widely recognized that composers in the Western tradition, French and not French, adopted certain general aspects of Berlioz's style.[4] His orchestration treatise as well as his revelation of the "boundless expressive potential of the orchestra" were seminal.[5] Carl Dahlhaus credits him with the "emancipation of timbre," one of the decisive evolutionary features of the nineteenth century.[6] Berlioz's striking use of thematic transformation and program provided models for later programmatic symphonies, symphonic poems, and cyclic works: a standard textbook would have us believe that "All subsequent composers of program music, including Strauss and Debussy, would be indebted to him."[7] But Jacques Barzun underlines a paradox: Berlioz did indeed influence "all those who came after," but he did so "without being imitated by any."[8]

In an opera-loving culture, Berlioz moved toward a new symphonic concept by synthesizing the arts in symphonies and mixed-genre pieces, despite a muse "strongly rooted in the Gallic vocal tradition."[9] Initially inspired by Beethoven, he stood apart from the German-dominated mainstream and marked the end of a tradition stemming from Gluck and Lesueur. Hugh Macdonald stresses this isolation in noting that Berlioz should be seen "for what he was and what he did rather than for where he stood in relation to others. [. . .] In France Berlioz's style effectively had no influence on the succeeding generations."[10] Julian Rushton's study of Berlioz's musical language, on the other hand, finds a way to reconcile Barzun's and Macdonald's statements: because Berlioz never repeated his own inventions, "he produced no *class* of works capable of serving as a general model for others," even if *one work* could have a "specific influence" upon another (my emphasis). At the same time, like Barzun, Rushton points to "a certain general influence" that he limits to the French school of the generation that followed Berlioz, which included Gounod, Saint-Saëns, Bizet, and Chabrier. And finally, like Macdonald, he acknowledges Berlioz's isolation and concludes that we cannot neatly relate him to the trends of the nineteenth century, since he "stands perpendicular to the line of their development and is not part of them."[11]

In the wake of Berlioz's death

The first large body of articles to assess Berlioz's career cluster in the weeks and months immediately after his death on 8 March 1869. With emphases and perspectives quite different from those of modern critics, their authors, too, speak to Berlioz's originality and his place in history, though their views are clearly influenced by the near immediacy of his publications and personality. Writers in these newspapers and periodicals, for example, all refer to his importance as a critic, although Berlioz had resigned from this position at the *Débats* some six years before his death. Though *Les Troyens* was finally staged in a mutilated version at the same time, in 1863, his earlier program symphonies and mixed-genre works – which, except via excerpts, had receded from the concert stage in Paris – formed the basis of most generalizations about his music. Berlioz as innovator in orchestration and in "descriptive" music, Berlioz as an erudite and indefatigable reformer armed for battle, Berlioz as a "Germanic" figure, unappreciated at home but beloved abroad – these are the principal themes that were enumerated in 1869.[12] Partisans complained that Berlioz had never been adequately recognized in France, but some, like Gustave Chadeuil, pointedly referred to the numerous official honors that should have tempered Berlioz's bitterness: "Despite all the injustices he suffered, he died as librarian of the Conservatoire, member of the Institute, officer of the Legion of Honor, and knight of innumerable orders."[13] Still, on virtually every issue, this one included, the attitudes of the writers ranged from fervent support to open hostility.

Berlioz's own prose occasionally served as the basis for appraisals of his achievement. Mathieu de Monter, for example, based his description of Berlioz's style on precisely what the composer had written in the Postscript of the *Mémoires*:

> In Berlioz the composer, men of the next generation have before them a bold style that enlarges the number of constituent elements in art: a veritable luxuriance of melodies, [. . .] inward intensity, rhythmic impetus, unexpectedness, sincerity, and passionate expression bent on reproducing the inner meaning of its subject, even when that subject is the opposite of passion.[14]

Many expressed admiration for Berlioz's lifelong battle on behalf of his beliefs, and yet, in a substantial portion of the 1869 notices, it is easy to sense an uncomfortable ambivalence. In his extended essay, published on the anniversary of Berlioz's death, even Adolphe Jullien expressed admiration with reserve:

> Berlioz yielded too often to the desire to write descriptive and imitative music; too often he wanted to use sounds to express inexpressible feelings. Enamored of originality, always on the lookout for new combinations, Berlioz, next to many inspired pages, left others on which one is too conscious of the researcher.[15]

Oscar Comettant, while conceding originality, also maintained a certain distance from Berlioz's aesthetic:

> Whatever may be posterity's judgment of Berlioz's work, he will remain one of the boldest personalities of the romantic school of music, one of the most poetic and original minds of our century. His whole life was a fight for the triumph of a musical poetics that can be disapproved of, but that he nonetheless invented and that has had no lack of imitators, beginning with Richard Wagner.[16]

In 1869, attempts to situate Berlioz in the history of music often depended on a list of German composers – perhaps an acknowledgment that his principal achievements lay outside the realm of opera as well as a tacit admission that he had brought to French music both the seriousness of German orchestral music and the enriched orchestral palette of Weber. As Daniel Bernard remarked, "Berlioz will have his appointed place, well above Cherubini, and immediately behind Weber and Beethoven."[17] On the other hand, Armand de Pontmartin, writer for the royalist *Gazette de France* and no friend to Berlioz, located him entirely outside the pale, as have some modern writers, finding it impossible "to assign him a clearly defined place between Beethoven and Mendelssohn [or] between Rossini and Meyerbeer," and yet finding it "completely unjust to call him a musical 'outcast.'"[18] Despite evident respect for his intellect, some blamed his lack of success in France on what was perceived as the essentially non-French character of his music: "Berlioz the musician too often spoke a foreign language, and I think that the striking pages spread among his works can be likened to those unusual and powerful turns of phrase that foreigners sometimes transmit from their idiom to ours."[19]

Berlioz's great success in Germany, in contrast to his lonely prestige in France, was commonly mentioned at the time of his death. David de Closel deftly sketched Berlioz's isolation with metaphors: "In Paris he manifested the sadness of a missionary among the savages; he was Jesus among the Jews. A stranger among us, he appeared truly at ease only in Germany."[20] A more thoughtful and knowledgeable critic, Arthur Pougin, attributed this situation to national taste and training: "The Germans, whose temperament and musical abilities have developed differently from ours, truly knew how to appreciate the worth of this eminent man, and Berlioz was always welcomed by them as one of the most original, most personal, and most valiant artists that this century has produced."[21]

Wagner was the only living German composer regularly compared to Berlioz in 1869, and Berlioz's enemies made a point of stressing this controversial tie. Closel felt Berlioz had abandoned melody in favor of harmony (like Wagner) and had thus betrayed his audience: "Berlioz was our French Wagner. Those waves of erudite, complex harmonies upon which there is not even one knot of melody per hour – they caused displeasure and led one to exclaim (creating a wall between the composer and the listener): 'I don't understand!' "[22] Even Berlioz's adversaries could not have foreseen the extent to which his voice would soon be combined with, subsumed under, or muted by the widespread adoption of Wagnerian rhetoric and syntax. Pontmartin made the prophetic observation that "for the last eight or ten years in Europe Wagner has usurped or conquered that importance, that breadth, that burning zeal of the musical revolutionary, of the musician of the future, which Berlioz ardently dreamed of but pursued in vain." He felt that Beethoven's shadow had stood in the way of Berlioz's career at the beginning, and that Wagner's had done the same at the end.[23]

Since the authors of the obituaries in the newspapers and music periodicals were virtually all music and/or drama critics, it is not surprising that they made reference to Berlioz's journalism. Berlioz himself called his journalistic duties his "ball and chain"; he told his sister on 11 May 1856 (when making the rounds to members of the Académie des Beaux-Arts), "My articles have done me more harm than good; someone was saying to me again yesterday that without them I should have been elected to the Institute eight or ten years ago."[24] Philarète Chasles, among others, agreed that this was indeed the principal reason for Berlioz's difficulty:

> It is specifically his ardent, violent, acid-tipped, vengeful, and militant polemics, attacked and attacking in turn; it is his prejudice, his use of the newspaper as a weapon of attack and defense; his epigrams, satire, and irony – which diminished and weakened Berlioz. If his talent, or rather his genius, resisted this, it is because he had a great deal of it.[25]

Closel remarked that while Berlioz's music was not always understood, his criticism was, because with his pen Berlioz could wash and dissect a work like a body on a marble table.[26] In the low-budget, small-format *Petit Journal*, Timothée Trimm made it clear that he liked the artist more than the man; characterizing Berlioz as a soaring eagle who, as a bird of prey, could also make use of his beak and claws.[27] The Marquis de Thémines, himself a librettist and translator, admired the talent of the critic but sniped that his "impartiality was not always up to the level of his competence."[28] Others pointed out that his position at the respected *Journal des débats* (widely read by members of the élite and haute bourgeoisie) gave Berlioz considerable power that he used to great advantage: Berlioz had

> remarkable talent as a writer, which he did not hesitate to press into service to second his ambitions as a composer and which, when settled into the fortress of his feature article in the *Journal des débats*, he could use each morning to rally the troops, defeat his enemies, glorify his doctrines [. . .], recruit the artists whom he needed, or take revenge upon those whom he resented.[29]

Evaluations of Berlioz's accomplishments as a musician and of his impact on other composers were relatively sparse in 1869, when, as we have seen, writers focused more on the man and the critic. Still, the more thoughtful ones, like Pougin, discussed Berlioz's particular interest in program music: "[Berlioz] persuaded himself that music must have a subject, a program, and that the triumph of art was to express this program by means of colorful effects, be it with the help of voices and words or with instruments alone."[30] Compliments to Berlioz's musical achievement tended to refer either to individual works or to orchestration in general, where he was characterized as having "a genius for *sonority*, just as certain painters have a natural genius for chiaroscuro."[31] When Félicien David, successor to Berlioz at the Académie des Beaux-Arts, read the obligatory tribute to his predecessor, he, too, took up this line of praise:

> While in the search for melody he manifested an indomitable repugnance for banal ideas and conventional forms, in his orchestration he showed himself to be a bold and powerful innovator, and achieved the rank of a true master. It is by this that he gained the right to be admired; it is by this that he lives and will live for a long time.[32]

Berlioz's staunchest supporters in the press – Ernest Reyer of the *Journal des débats* and Johannès Weber of *Le Temps* – foresaw a resurgence of interest in Berlioz's music. Reyer, a close friend to Berlioz and himself a respected composer, summarized the views of the opposing camp and predicted their eventual enlightenment:

> If those who deny the progress made by Hector Berlioz in orchestration and in the variety of new elements that he introduced into symphonic music; if those who reproach him for the oddity of his rhythmic combinations and rebuke him for the childishness of the imitative effects that are found in some of his compositions; if those who accuse him of lacking melody and wanting all sense of the dramatic; if those people live a few years longer, as I sincerely hope they do, then they will witness a reaction that will enlighten them on the true worth of their judgments.

Reyer's goal in the eighteen-seventies was to return Berlioz's work to the repertory full and uncut: the public "must get to know it not in fragmentary or mutilated form, but complete and in all its perfection."[33]

Johannès Weber, another composer-critic who supported a Berlioz revival, also predicted a turnaround:

> I've always been convinced that there will eventually be a reaction in Berlioz's favor. [. . .] This reaction will result from two things: the composer's own merit, and French chauvinism. [. . .] The time will come when everyone will call Berlioz, and with reason, the French Beethoven.[34]

"The French Beethoven," whatever its literal significance, is a fine compliment. Is it not difficult to imagine a candidate for that title other than Berlioz?

The Berlioz revival

Johannès Weber claimed that the rehabilitation of Berlioz began as soon as he was placed in the grave: the "defiance" and "turbulence" of his reception, at the Pasdeloup concerts, had now turned to "reserve" and "respect."[35] Near the beginning of the revival, Ernest Reyer wondered whether the effects of the Franco-Prussian War were helping to resuscitate Berlioz for a populace stung by military defeat: "Would the war that banned Richard Wagner have led us directly to Berlioz?"[36] And in the following decade Adolphe Jullien speculated that "without the War of 1870 and the sudden awakening of national spirit," the public "would have gone straight over to Richard Wagner, after tossing a few bravos of condolence to the author of *Roméo*."[37]

The Berlioz revival, though tirelessly encouraged by Reyer, did not begin with the memorial concert that he and Henry Litolff organized at the Opéra on 22 March 1870: the audience there was reserved and respectful to the point that, as one reviewer remarked, Berlioz would have "preferred to be less venerated and more *disrespectfully* applauded."[38] The movement ought rather to be dated from the time at which Pasdeloup began frequently to program Berlioz's works. Colonne joined suit, and so, too, did Lamoureux and the Concerts du Conservatoire. Brief selections gave way to longer sections and, by the mid-eighteen-seventies, to complete works, including the first three symphonies and, most successful of all, *La Damnation de Faust.*[39] In fact the winter of 1877 featured rival performances of the *Damnation* by both Pasdeloup and Colonne. A failure in earlier decades, it suddenly became a favorite – perhaps rendered more palatable by the public's familiarity with Gounod's now celebrated opera, perhaps by the demise of critics' personal grudges.[40]

Frequent performances of some of Berlioz's works did continue into the next decade, but of the larger works only *La Damnation de Faust* and the *Symphonie fantastique* were securely in the repertory by the eighteen-eighties. Still, prior to 1878 the Berlioz revival was so remarkable that Arthur Pougin noted "a considerable reversal of opinion" when he updated Fétis's *Biographie universelle des musiciens*: "[T]oday the crowd rushes to hear Berlioz's works whether they are presented at the Concerts populaires, the Châtelet concerts, or even those at the Conservatoire."[41]

Comparisons with Wagner become gradually more frequent in the Berlioz literature in the eighteen-eighties and nineties and largely displace references to all other composers. In 1883, for example, Georges Noufflard classified Berlioz as the precursor to *all* modern music and asserted that his work contained all the elements that would be assembled and systematically coordinated in Wagner's music dramas.[42] Reviewing the book, Johannès Weber vehemently disagreed, finding that the two composers were similar in only certain general and personal characteristics.[43]

The statue of Berlioz

Wagner's shadow was present, though not welcomed, at the inauguration of Alfred Lenoir's statue of Berlioz in the Square Vintimille, on 17 October 1886. In the seventeen years since his death, the press had gradually shifted away from focusing on personal qualities to concentrating on artistic characteristics, from emphasizing German qualities to concentrating on French ones, and from speaking in a reserved manner to articulating views with more enthusiasm.[44] Two parts of the ceremony excited particular comment in the press. One was Reyer's moving tribute to his friend, whom he acknowledged as a man of both principle and genius:

> Berlioz did not produce students, but he did produce disciples – and we are among them. If we took no lessons with him, if he did not teach us directly, he did offer us a great deal of instruction – by demonstrating himself that an artist's primary duty is to maintain his dignity, particularly in his relations with others as imposed upon him by the necessities of his career. He told us that to genuflect before those brought to power merely by chance was to demonstrate a shameful weakness, and that to make concessions to popular taste was to manifest nothing but cowardice.

Though Reyer referred to the asperity of Berlioz's pen, he credited Berlioz with a "great and legitimate influence on the musicians" of the generation following his death:

> Who among us [. . .] has not profited from the precious innovations that came from his instrumental palette! Who among us has not felt himself irresistibly drawn to the cult of ideal beauty by the eulogistic praises he sang in honor of some of the most glorious and noble representatives of our art – of Gluck and Beethoven, of Spontini and Weber?[45]

While Reyer's speech was widely praised for its sincerity and power, Charles Grandmougin's poem, "À Berlioz," recited by an actor from the Comédie française, was found inappropriate for its mention of Richard Wagner. (In his eleventh stanza, Grandmougin refers to Wagner's triumph and urges that France defend her native son from this imminent invasion.[46]) Albert Wolff snarled that Berlioz was "great enough through his own genius to stand on his own without a dig at Wagner by a meek poet who has probably never heard *Lohengrin*."[47] Fourcaud, elevating Berlioz to the status of "veritable restorer and founder of our school of music," replaced the comparison to Wagner with a new one – to two literary giants – of his own:

> [W]e are overwhelmed by the power of [Berlioz's] poetry [. . .] What he felt, we feel. [. . .] From this moment onward we must say of him what we say of Balzac and Victor Hugo in literature: all composers owe him something. He is no longer a solitary figure; he is an ancestor.[48]

Saint-Saëns, too, suggested that promoting Berlioz was a patriotic gesture: "true patriotism consists of bringing our own richness to light."[49]

But not everyone who attended the inauguration was willing to hail Berlioz as the father and exemplar of modern French music. The anonymous writer for *Le Petit Journal* pointed out that the majority of the public still did not understand his music, and, reflecting the view of his humble readership, asserted that in fact Berlioz was no martyr: he had had success, his music had been heard, he had had a regular newspaper column, and he had had access to the major institutions.[50] Taking a different tack, the conservative critic Simon Boubée conceded that Berlioz's works had brought colorful elements to the French tradition, but blamed him for inducing young composers erroneously to view the art of music as nothing more than the art of "description."[51]

To the centenary

Assessments over the next seventeen years, to the centenary of 1903, include Adolphe Jullien's monumental and richly illustrated study, the first based on extensive use of primary sources. Jullien concentrated more on determining what Berlioz himself had accomplished than on what he had inspired others to do.[52] In 1890 Hippeau called Berlioz the "leader" of French music, but admitted that French composers were little willing to acknowledge his stature because of Wagner's growing artistic presence.[53] Lavoix's history of music in France (1891) also designates Berlioz the head of the French Romantic school.[54] But reviewing this book and elsewhere, Johannès Weber continued his refusal to see Berlioz as the progenitor of modern French music, saying that he was rather merely the creator of the (possibly "spurious") genre of the "dramatic symphony":

> Berlioz was Berlioz. That is his glory, but let us surely not crown him head of a school, for if we do, then woe to art! There are men who, despite their genius or their talent, should never be accorded this title. Meyerbeer and Berlioz are among them.[55]

At the time of the centenary celebrations in 1903, a few scholars examined Berlioz's achievement from the point of view of its impact upon other musicians. In the grand *Livre d'or du centenaire*, Eugène de Solenière noted that Berlioz's ideas, writings, and actions had at least as much influence as had his music, and rehearsed in new words the old idea that his presence in the work of younger composers was muted because of the simultaneous presence of Wagner:

> Berlioz was a revolutionary whose cries were covered by those of another revolutionary whose voice was stronger than his. In fact they did not say the same things, but they had the same hatreds, the same aversions, the same animosities, and while using different means for different purposes, they essentially fought for the same ideals. Thus was Berlioz Wagner's precursor.[56]

Julien Tiersot, one of the early fine Berlioz specialists, also admitted that the brilliance of Wagner's star dimmed Berlioz's radiance soon after the posthumous revival of the eighteen-seventies and eighties had brought him to glory. But for Tiersot, "the eclipse he suffered by the approach of the brighter star that was Wagner was far from total, and was only temporary."[57] To underline Berlioz's importance as an artist, Tiersot made sport of Wagner while evoking the figure of one of Berlioz's earliest musical gods:

> Berlioz was no *Uebermensch.* He always remained on earth [...] Leaving Wagner alone in outer space, Berlioz remained among us, holding out his hand to the greatest of all, to the hero of genius and suffering, to his first and true forebear, Beethoven.
>
> In their everlasting song, united as son to father, Berlioz and he have expressed the purest, most sincere and most profound essence of humanity.[58]

Camille Saint-Saëns used equally exalted terms to glorify Berlioz in the temple of high art. In a speech prepared to be read in Berlioz's home town of La Côte-Saint-André at the time of the hundredth anniversary of his birth, he wrote that "il est Lui," the capital L suggesting god-like stature, and went on:

> [H]e was the incomparable initiator of the entire generation to which I belong. He opened the golden door through which soared into and invaded the world that host of dazzling and enchanting fairies that is modern orchestration; he offered the admirable example of a life entirely devoted to pure art. Glory to him, glory forever.[59]

Composers on Berlioz

As we have seen, few critics considered Berlioz's music to have served as a model for the works of other composers. Today, it would be difficult to write a book on *After Berlioz* that would deal with later composers' readings and misreadings of Berlioz's principal compositions – as Mark Evan Bonds has done, for the composer of the Ninth Symphony, in *After Beethoven.*[60] Where might we find the "anxiety" of Berlioz's influence? At the peak of his career, Charles Gounod chose candidly to take on a subject strongly associated with Berlioz, *Roméo et Juliette* – and Berlioz's reaction confirms that he felt a challenge: "Have you not read the numerous newspapers which spoke of my score of *Roméo et Juliette* in comparison with Gounod's opera," he wrote to his friend Ferrand on 11 June 1867, "and in a way that could hardly be flattering to him?" The press referred to the challenge as well, though Gustave Bertrand, for one, felt that Gounod had deliberately avoided a head-on confrontation.[61]

Some in the press found memories of Berlioz's setting to be distracting, especially in the introduction and in the Queen Mab aria, where Gounod seems in fact to have concentrated obeisance to his predecessor. For Reyer, the unaccompanied chorus of the introduction was analogous to Berlioz's in the general sense of the form.[62] But fugal exposition, choral recitation, and instrumentation suggest that Gounod's reading of Berlioz was rather more explicit. This is not the place to consider Gounod's larger debt to Berlioz – there is Eugène Scribe's libretto, *La Nonne sanglante*, which Berlioz worked on in the early eighteen-forties, and which Gounod set in 1853; and there is *Faust* – but debt, as we learn from Gounod's generous preface to the *Lettres intimes*, there clearly was.[63]

Nor is it the place to consider others whom one might wish to speak of under Harold Bloom's famous title. Georges Bizet owned the full score of *L'Enfance du Christ*, so one might logically wish to relate the flute and harp sonority, the tessitura of the opening melody, the quiet dynamics, the slow tempo and, especially, the mood of utter peace of the prelude to Act III of *Carmen* to the trio for two flutes and harp performed by the young Ishmaelites in Part III of *L'Enfance du Christ* – even if some similarities evaporate upon closer analysis. It is easier to link a piece such as Franck's March of the Moabites in his oratorio *Ruth* (revised in 1871) to the Pilgrims' March of *Harold en Italie*, since not just the atmosphere but the form and pedal points all indicate that model.[64] Are these "anxious" incidents of influence?

Over the years many French composers expressed opinions of Berlioz, though not always in the public arena. Near the beginning of the Berlioz revival, a teenaged Ernest Chausson confided an emotional bond to his diary:

> I feel that even if the whole world were against me my admiration would always remain the same. How could I not love the man who has caused me to shed tears, who has surely procured for me the sweetest pleasures that life has to offer?[65]

Repeating what then became the standard assessment, Alfred Bruneau judged Berlioz to be the intellectual father of the symphony in France and the initiator of diverse and colorful forms of program music; but he reserved his highest tribute for Berlioz's character:

> For today's composers, for his sons, he is a marvelous and incomparable professor of energy and courage. It is in this way, I believe, that Berlioz will most lastingly exert his estimable influence on our art.[66]

In the later eighteen-eighties, Wagner's presence obviously loomed large in French musical circles. But the mature Emmanuel Chabrier found no difficulty in expressing admiration for Berlioz:

> Berlioz, a Frenchman above all else (he was not old hat in his era!), put variety, color, and rhythm into the *Damnation*, *Roméo* and *L'Enfance du Christ*. They lack unity, you say? I say *merde!* If to be number one you absolutely have to be boring, then I prefer to be number two, three, four, ten, or twenty; indeed, I prefer to have ten colors on my palette and to grind up all the different keys. . . I want beauty everywhere and beauty takes a thousand different forms.[67]

The leading composers of the following generation, sometimes willing to acknowledge aspects of Berlioz's mastery, tended to recoil from his harmony, forms, and romantic excesses. In the anniversary year of 1903 Claude Debussy claimed that Berlioz had always found his greatest admirers among non-musicians and denied that he had had any influence at all on modern musicians, with only a single exception:

> Because of his concern with color and curiosities, Berlioz was immediately adopted by the painters; indeed one can say without irony that Berlioz was always the musician preferred by those who did not know music very well.
> [. . .] Professional musicians are still horrified by his harmonic "liberties" (which they call "awkwardnesses"), and by his "go-to-hell" forms. Is this the reason that his influence on modern music is practically nil? and that he will remain essentially unique? In France, only in Gustave Charpentier do I see the possibility that one might find a little of this influence.[68]

Elsewhere Debussy claimed that he did not find much that was particularly "French" in Berlioz.[69]

Maurice Ravel also disparaged Berlioz's methodology:

> My contention is that Berlioz was the only composer of genius who conceived his melodies without hearing their harmonization, and proceeded to discover this harmonization afterwards.[70]

Like Debussy, he claimed that Berlioz's influence was practically non-existent. And yet some of his contemporaries saw Ravel's own technique as stemming in part from Berlioz. Writing in 1913, Gaston Carraud suggested that

> the influence of Berlioz – even given the differences between their temperaments and their works – appears in the limitless virtuosity of [Ravel's] orchestral writing, in the pursuit and accumulation of surprising effects, and in the frequent use of extra-musical means.[71]

Another contemporary, Charles Koechlin, who admired Berlioz and used his *Traité d'instrumentation* as a model for his own, took issue with the specific point that Ravel had raised:

> I am convinced that if composers . . . made more use of *writing a melody first* (without worrying about its harmonization), they would write more alive and significant music. Berlioz worked thus: people may joke about this, but I have never found it at all ridiculous, and I have often followed his example without having had any cause to regret it.[72]

Berlioz's enormous impact on the history of orchestration has never been contested. Composers of France, Germany, Russia, and elsewhere found inspiration for instrumental sonorities both in his works and in his celebrated *Traité d'instrumentation.* Virtually all the biographies of later nineteenth-century musicians – among them Mahler, Elgar, Delius, Busoni, d'Indy, Debussy, and Puccini – mention that their subjects read and profited from the treatise. Musorgsky, for example, kept the treatise with him until his death.[73] Richard Strauss made his own version of the book, in 1904, updating Alfred Dörffel's translation (of 1864) by adding to Berlioz's original sixty-six examples eighty-four of his own, selected from his own works along with some by Liszt, Marschner, Verdi, Debussy, and, overwhelmingly, Wagner.

In a period when most critics heard nothing but echoes of Wagner in modern scores, Ernest Reyer heard Berlioz. In the rich polyphony and large orchestra of Chabrier's *Gwendolyne* (1886), for example, many heard *Die Meistersinger.* But because, in the brilliant overture, Chabrier had placed the love theme (from Gwendoline's aria) above a rapid and persistent rhythm in order to insert light into an otherwise dark picture, Reyer rather found a sonic response to Berlioz's overture to *Les Francs-Juges.*[74]

In the year of Strauss's version of the *Traité d'instrumentation*, Berlioz's one-time disciple Saint-Saëns felt he had to defend his *maître* from the pen of Gabriel Fauré, who in a review of a performance of the overture to *Benvenuto Cellini* had attacked the work's supposedly uninspired themes, contorted form, and vulgar sonority. He asked Fauré whether people ever spoke of the vulgarities and platitudes in *Tannhäuse*r and *Lohengrin* and suggested to him that the procedure at the climactic section of the Berlioz – where the trombones in unison play the grand theme from the Adagio while the violins play the lively second theme from the Allegro – was appropriated by Wagner and on this account alone merited "a certain deference."[75]

From Berlioz's death to the hundredth anniversary of his birth and beyond, composers and critics most regularly associated with Berlioz the broad notion of "descriptive orchestral music" – music characterized by the presence of an autobiographical subject, by the use of a recurring theme representative of a person or idea, and by the impression of narrative or theatrical or visual intent. Urged on by Balakirev, Tchaikovsky provided one of the most successful tributes to Berlioz in his *Manfred Symphony* (1885): here, as in *Harold en Italie*, a recurring theme represents the wandering of the Byronic hero; and here, as in *Harold*, an opening melancholy is supplanted by a closing bacchanal.[76]

Harold was also the model (Debussy would have agreed) for Gustave Charpentier's *Impressions d'Italie* (1887–1889). With its detailed program, homage to Berlioz seems clearly intended, as the youthful composer allied himself with the "French school" just as Berlioz was first being dubbed the leader and the ancestor of all French musicians. The reviewer for *Le Ménestrel* makes the comparison explicit:

> In these two compositions the viola plays a role of primary importance and is used to translate similar emotions; in both works there is a serenade and a march across the mountains; there is also a musical description of the feelings one has at the summit. [. . .] As in Berlioz's composition, we find in the finale reminiscences of the previous movements.[77]

Liszt's symphonic poems derive from Berlioz, it is often said, and Strauss's *Ein Heldenleben* (1899) is as much a descendant of Berlioz's symphonies as of any of Liszt's descriptive compositions. Mahler, too, was a champion of Berlioz, and some suggest that his own programmatic symphonies hearken back to the composer of the *Symphonie fantastique* (with which Mahler made a splash as conductor in Vienna and New York). And the list goes on. For in all biographies, including the modern ones by Barzun, Bloom, Cairns, Macdonald, and others, and in the more narrowly focused studies of the music by Primmer and Rushton, among others, Berlioz's "impact" is treated in various ways that cannot help but reflect how these authors simply happen to hear music "after" Berlioz.

In his authoritative life-and-works, Holoman makes a point that would suggest a separate study – and that is that "by 1870 royalty and empire were all but things of the past, as was their ceremonial music."[78] The advent of the Third Republic did indeed mark a decrescendo of formal, stately occasions of the sort for which Berlioz had provided appropriate musical monuments with such works as the *Requiem* and the *Te Deum*. Napoléon III never did a great deal on behalf of our composer, but had he remained in power, others might well have looked to Berlioz for precedents to whatever sorts of grand ceremonial music the aging emperor might have required.

Scholars, musicians, and commentators have never wholly agreed on the extent of Berlioz's impact in France. At first, the residue of his acerbic pen colored the assessment of his achievement and encouraged the portrayal (as he did himself) of an artist isolated from the mass. As memories faded, bitterness was replaced by respect for his integrity as an artist. But in the matter of musical style, Berlioz's habits were so personal and so controversial that composers of younger generations largely avoided or shied away from open emulation. When Berlioz's imagination touched other musicians, it was in the realm of sonority, color, and idea. Of course a concern with sonority does not obscure an individual style. Thus works so typically German as Strauss's, so Russian as Tchaikovsky's, or even so Wagnerian as Franck's, can be seen to acknowledge Berlioz, as it were, without obscuring national or personal character.

Berlioz achieved a broadened concept of genre, a new legitimacy in France for orchestral music as a vehicle for serious expression, and a widespread acceptance of an infinitely enriched palette of instrumental color. If he did not preside over a school of composition, he nonetheless opened minds to many possibilities little explored.