4 The symphonies

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Berlioz was no ordinary symphonist. In the course of his career he wrote four works that he himself categorized in that genre, but not one of these is traditional in either form or style. By far the most famous of the group is the *Symphonie fantastique*, a work whose curious autobiographical program and unusual orchestrational effects have kept it alive in the orchestral repertory ever since its première in 1830. The other three symphonies of Berlioz are less well known, but equally non-traditional. *Harold en Italie* makes use of a concerto-like solo viola to help depict recollections of Italy. *Roméo et Juliette* draws heavily on the use of solo and choral singing to reinterpret Shakespeare's drama. And the *Symphonie funèbre et triomphale* is clearly a work for concert band. In many ways these works are not symphonies at all – at least not when measured against the familiar German repertory of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. Berlioz's symphonies frustrate and defy attempts at traditional generic classification by presenting listeners with an exceptional fusion of elements drawn from both opera and symphony. The result is something completely new – an unorthodox hybrid genre for which he coined the term "dramatic symphony."[1]

Symphonie fantastique (1830)

Berlioz's first symphony appeared only three years after the death of Beethoven – a fact that bears keeping in mind as one assesses the remarkable innovations in this work. What shocked and intrigued listeners at the première was the extremely detailed program that Berlioz attached to the work and distributed to the audience in the form of a printed leaflet. That a symphony could be inspired by a "poetic idea" was something Berlioz surely learned from Beethoven, whose Third and Fifth Symphonies he had heard in performance only two years earlier. But that a symphony could be so unreservedly autobiographical and self-confessional, in the manner of contemporary French and English literature (where novels of this type had been popular for some years), was fresh to music at that time. Thus the symphonic exposé of Berlioz's unrequited love for the

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Irish actress Harriet Smithson marked a new fusion of music and literature in the nineteenth century.

Berlioz's relationship to descriptive program music was as misunderstood in his own day as it is today. In an important essay titled "On Imitation in Music," he made clear that it was never his intention to paint pictures or tell stories in music, but rather to explore emotions.[2] The *Symphonie fantastique* is thus not a narration of "an episode in the life of an artist" (the work's original title was *Épisode de la vie d'un artiste*), but a review of the composer's emotional response to particular dramatic situations. Of critical importance to Berlioz's theory of program music was the selection of only those "situations" that inherently lent themselves to musical representation, often through the use of universally understood musical archetypes such as marches, dances, hymns, and the like.

Discussions of the *Fantastique* inevitably settle on one of its most innovative features – the *idée fixe* – a theme specifically associated with the qualities of the beloved woman. Such an association of theme with character naturally calls to mind the musical technique of Wagner, whose Leitmotif system it adumbrates by at least fifteen years. But more important than the existence of such a "character" theme in the symphony is the cyclical manner in which it is employed (which extends the model found in Beethoven's Fifth Symphony) and the transformations it undergoes upon each restatement (as we shall see below). This process of thematic transformation, here deployed for dramatic purposes, was soon to become the basic compositional principle of nineteenth-century avant-garde composers such as Liszt and Wagner.

A year after its first performance, Berlioz revised and expanded the *Fantastique* with the addition of a sequel, *Le Retour à la vie* (later titled *Lélio*), which continues the "story" of the symphony, mixing spoken monologues with musical numbers of different kinds. Although the sequel was well received at its first performance in 1832, it is little-known today and will not be dealt with here.[3]

Movement I: Rêveries, Passions

The intent of this movement is to suggest the general emotions and states of mind experienced by a young artist (i.e., Berlioz) who is tormented by unrequited love. For this reason, it is the least specifically descriptive of the five. Structurally it derives from the traditional first-movement sonata form found in all classical symphonies. A long, slow introduction leads to an Allegro in which Berlioz introduces the *idée fixe* as the main theme (see Ex 4.1) of a sonata form in which a short exposition is followed by sections of development and thematic restatement (recapitulation) in free alternation.

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Example 4.1 *Symphonie fantastique*, first movement, *idée fixe*, bars 71–90.

Example 4.2 *Symphonie fantastique*, second movement, *idée fixe*, transformed, bars 120–130.

Movement II: Un bal

The music of this movement is more programmatically specific than is that of the first movement because the principal theme is a waltz melody that suggests not so much the mood of a party as it does the very sound of the party itself. Near the middle of the movement (at bar 120) appears a statement of a now transformed *idée fixe* (see Ex. 4.2). Its formal function is to create a contrasting interlude – a B section in a large tripartite form. It leads fairly quickly to a reprise of the main dance tune.

Movement III: Scène aux champs

An introduction to this "scene in the country" imitates the piping of shepherds with a duet between an offstage oboe (probably the first such use of offstage music in a symphony) and an onstage English horn. The main theme then follows at bar 20. A stormy contrasting section, meant to depict the intrusion of thoughts of the beloved, serves as a backdrop for the transformed return of the *idée fixe* (see Ex. 4.3) now heard in upper woodwinds at bar 90.

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Example 4.3 *Symphonie fantastique*, third movement, *idée fixe*, transformed, bars 89–95.

The opening theme returns at bar 131 (it is disguised in the middle of a complex texture) and leads eventually to the final coda in which one of the piping shepherds repeats his opening declaration, but finds no response other than a series of unusual chords played by the timpani and designed to evoke the sound-image of distant thunder (as specifically mentioned in the program).

Movement IV: Marche au supplice

Much as the second movement evokes the image of a grand ball through the use of a waltz, the fourth movement creates the mood of the procession to the scaffold through the use of a march (borrowed, then revised, from his early opera *Les Francs-Juges*). Here again Berlioz relies on musical "archetypes" to project his programmatic intention.

The movement develops with a simple alternation of two themes until a coda is reached at bar131. In these few bars we find a striking antiphonal juxtaposition of the triads of D-flat Major in the brass and woodwinds with G Minor in the strings (bars 154–159) – a tritone relationship indicative of Berlioz's striking harmonic audacity (and one borrowed years later by Musorgsky in the Coronation Scene of *Boris Godunov*). Berlioz then appends to the march a reference to the *idée fixe* as demanded by the program – one final reminiscence of the beloved. On this occasion the theme is not transformed (as it is in the two previous movements); it is rather stated in its original form but truncated at the fifth bar by an abrupt G-Minor chord from the full orchestra – a gesture clearly meant to represent the falling blade of the guillotine, the "coup fatal" of the program. There follows an additional element of gruesome pictorialism in the next three beats of the bar, as a descending G-Minor arpeggio played pizzicato and divided between the various sections of the string family effectively imitates the dropping of the severed head.

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Example 4.4 *Symphonie fantastique*, fifth movement, *idée fixe*, transformed, bars 40–46.

Movement V: Songe d'une nuit du sabbat

While the musical forms controlling the shape of the opening four movements are fairly regular – respectively sonata, ABA, ABA, and rondo (loosely defined) – the "Dream of a Witches' Sabbath" moves much further away from traditional symphonic structures. Here the narrative of the program is mirrored in the sectional through-composed form of the music. Berlioz begins with an introduction depicting the "strange noises" and "groans" of the assembled sorcerers mentioned in his program. The music continues with the arrival of the beloved, come to join the black mass. Her new "trivial and grotesque" character is captured by the most drastic transformation of the *idée fixe* in the entire symphony (see Ex. 4.4).

From here to the end of the movement episodic sections of music correspond closely to the program, which calls attention to a "funeral knell, burlesque parody of the *Dies irae*, Sabbath round-dance, [and] the Sabbath round-dance and the *Dies irae* combined." Especially effective in this last section is Berlioz's use of *col legno* to imitate the rattling of bones.

In all, the *Symphonie fantastique* is one of the most revolutionary works in the entire history of the genre, calling into question as it does the most fundamental assumptions of traditional symphonic rhetoric and design.

Harold en Italie (1834)

Berlioz's second symphony, written in 1834 and scored for the unusual combination of solo viola and orchestra, was inspired both by Byron's dramatic poem *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* and by Berlioz's own recollection of the happy days he spent wandering through the Abruzzi mountains outside Rome during his sojourn there, in 1831 and 1832, as winner

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of the Prix de Rome.[4] Berlioz's own description of the symphony (in chapter 45 of the *Mémoires*) suggests several similarities with the *Fantastique*, including the use of an autobiographical program and a cyclical form based on a repeating motto theme that represents a character in the "drama" (in this case the hero, Harold/Berlioz).

What Berlioz does not fully explain in his *Mémoires* is the checkered history and evolution of this symphony, which only later in its genesis became associated with Byron. The original reason for undertaking a work for solo viola and orchestra was a request from Paganini, who commissioned Berlioz to write something that would show off his new Stradivarius viola. Berlioz's first idea was for a piece titled *Les Derniers Instants de Marie Stuart* to be scored for solo viola, chorus, and orchestra. At some point this plan was abandoned in favor of a symphony composed after Byron (four movements with solo viola but without the chorus). Paganini eventually rejected the "symphony" on the grounds that it was not sufficiently virtuosic, but he later regretted doing so, after hearing the work in performance.

Movement I: Harold aux montagnes. Scènes de mélancolie, de bonheur et de joie

Several parallels with the first movement of the *Fantastique* are apparent here. Both movements are more traditional than those that follow, being cast in modified sonata forms with slow introductions. And both are less programmatically specific than the others, dealing with the general emotional states of pensive melancholy and impassioned happiness without suggesting any specific dramatic scenario.

The motto theme that represents Harold is first heard in the introduction (see Ex. 4.5). In a way it is the *idée fixe* of this symphony, but unlike its counterpart in the *Fantastique*, this melody is not subjected to transformations when it reappears. In this manner Berlioz creates for Harold an appropriately Byronic detachment from the scenes he observes.

Movement II: Marche de pèlerins chantant la prière du soir

The source for this movement is discussed in chapter 37 of Berlioz's *Mémoires*, where he describes one of his many Italian reminiscences: peasant farmers returning home at the end of the day, passing by the rows of shrines to the Madonna along the tops of the high hills, and "singing litanies, while from somewhere comes the sad jangle of a monastery bell." Like two movements of the *Fantastique*, this movement, too, is based on a universally recognizable musical archetype: a processional hymn. Eight-bar phrases of the pilgrims' canto are punctuated at every cadence with a

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Example 4.5 *Harold en Italie*, first movement, motto theme, bars 38–45.

bell-like chime of horns and harp playing the dissonant note C. This pitch is always resolved to B (fitting the E-Major harmony) at the beginning of the following phrase. The chiming of the "bell" effect is only interrupted by the appearance of the Harold theme in the solo viola. At the end of the movement, C and B are a dozen times juxtaposed until B, as the fifth of the closing tonic triad, finally wins out.

Movement III: Sérénade d'un montagnard des Abbruzes à sa maîtresse

The "Serenade of an Abruzzi Mountaineer to his Sweetheart" is also based on Berlioz's experience traveling in the countryside outside Rome. In chapters 38 and 39 of the *Mémoires* he tells of being awakened one night by a "*ragazzo* with a formidable pair of lungs" who was "roaring out a love song under the window of his *ragazza*." And he describes the music of the *pifferari*, those strolling musicians who come down from the mountains, "armed with bagpipes and *pifferi* (a sort of oboe), to pay homage before the statues of the Madonna." In selecting a mountaineer's serenade for musical depiction in his symphony, Berlioz again resorted to the principle of finding dramatic scenes in which music plays a natural role. His musical rendering of this particular tableau is constructed around two contrasting themes: a quick dance-like melody and a slower, more lyrical serenade. The movement culminates in a triple thematic and metric superimposition, masterfully combining Harold's motto, the rhythm of the dance, and the theme of the serenade (see Ex. 4.6).

Movement IV: Orgie de brigands. Souvenirs des scènes précédentes

The musical model for this "Orgy of brigands," with its "reminiscences of preceding scenes," seems to have been the finale of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. Berlioz borrows from that work the idea of reviewing in the fourth movement themes from the previous three. Between repeated statements of a rhythmically disjunct theme (associated with the brigands),

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Example 4.6 *Harold en Italie*, third movement, thematic superimpositions, bars 167–169.

Berlioz introduces portions of all the earlier main themes including the motto. But here the similarity to Beethoven ends. Rather than introducing a new theme of a hymn-like character, such as we find in the Ninth Symphony, Berlioz leads us back to the brigands' theme (the "filler" between the reminiscences), which then becomes the primary theme of the movement. This G-Minor theme is developed at length before giving way to a contrasting theme in the relative major, and a third theme of more modulatory character. These three themes are then repeated nearly exactly before the key changes to G Major and the movement concludes with a brilliant coda.

Noteworthy here is yet another reappearance of the pilgrims' hymn played by two solo violins and a solo cello, all positioned offstage. The technique recalls the offstage music at the beginning of the third movement of the *Fantastique*, and underlines Berlioz's tendency to blend elements of opera (where such offstage effects are common) into the concert symphony. In chapter 37 of the *Mémoires*, Berlioz speaks to the programmatic intent of the last movement, "where wine, blood, joy and rage mingle in mutual intoxication," and mentions specifically that as the pensive Harold was fleeing in dismay, "a few faint echoes of his evening hymn still hovered on the vibrant air."

Despite the fact that only the first movement in *Harold* conforms to structural symphonic norms, and that thereafter Berlioz finds musical forms that suit both the programmatic intent of the work and the musical material he conceived for its conveyance, one might nevertheless argue that *Harold en Italie* is the most traditional of all Berlioz's symphonies. It has a regular four-movement structure, and the ordering of the movements replicates the traditional Beethovenian sequence of a sonata allegro beginning, a contrasting slow movement, a scherzo, and an energetic finale. Overall the work represents a further evolution of Berlioz's conception of the dramatic symphony, one in which abstract

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musical design and programmatic meaning are brought into close balance.

Roméo et Juliette (1839)

It is possible that the idea of writing a symphony on the subject of *Romeo and Juliet* first occurred to Berlioz after he attended the series of Shakespearean productions mounted in Paris by the English troupe of which Harriet Smithson was the leading actress, during the 1827–1828 season. (Both the *Symphonie fantastique* and *Roméo et Juliette* would thus owe their inceptions to the same theatrical events.) The project was given further impetus in 1832 when Berlioz, still in Italy as the winner of the Prix de Rome, attended a production of Bellini's *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* which so offended his sensibilities, with its lack of attention to what he (mistakenly) thought was its Shakespearean source, that he wrote a bitter critique in which he listed all the essential ingredients of any musical adaptation of this play, none of which could be found in Bellini's opera.[5]

Actual work on a large-scale musical-dramatic work on this subject had to wait several more years, however, until Paganini stepped back into Berlioz's life. The great virtuoso returned to Paris in 1838, after having forsaken the viola "concerto" he had commissioned from Berlioz four years earlier, *Harold en Italie*. When Paganini finally heard *Harold* for the first time, he was so overwhelmed with admiration for the work and with remorse for his rejection of such a masterpiece that he sent Berlioz a check for 20,000 francs. This lavish sum of money – far more than Berlioz's usual annual income – facilitated the payment of many of his long-outstanding debts and the reduction of his work-load as music critic for daily and weekly press. In January 1839 Berlioz sent a scenario of *Roméo et Juliette* to Émile Deschamps for poeticizing. By September the symphony was complete.

The broad design of the new symphony was revolutionary: seven movements in all, some vocal, others purely instrumental. In its structure *Roméo et Juliette* is Berlioz's most perfect synthesis of operatic and symphonic elements – the apotheosis of his notion of "dramatic symphony." As always, he began work by identifying those scenes in his drama which he felt were inherently musical, after which he addressed the problem of how best to attach the program to the music. For *Roméo et Juliette* Berlioz rejected both the detailed written program of the *Fantastique* and the simple movement-titles of *Harold*, and substituted in their place vocal texts in the form of arias, recitatives, and choruses.[6]

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Movement Ia: Introduction (Combats – Tumulte – Intervention du Prince)

The symphony begins with an instrumental introduction that evokes, first, the street fighting between the families of the Capulets and Montagues, and then, in an operatic passage of trombone recitative, the intervention of the Prince of Verona attempting to restore peace.

Ib: Prologue

Much of the opening of the story of Romeo and Juliet is narrated in an unusual choral recitative. Fearing, perhaps, that such a long recitative might lack sufficient musical interest, Berlioz cleverly adds a series of foreshadowings of themes from later instrumental sections of the work – a technique that may be said to mirror that of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, but in reverse. This allows the listener to associate the subsequent themes with a particular dramatic message.

Ic: Strophes

The choral recitative is interrupted by the alto soloist, who contemplates the nature of first love in a simple aria-like number that Berlioz calls "strophes" – a form borrowed from opéra comique.

Id: Scherzetto

After the choral recitative returns to introduce the subject, Shakespeare's Queen Mab is described by a solo tenor and small choir in a sprightly aria accompanied by flute, piccolo, violas, and cellos. The section closes with the return of the choral recitative hinting at the death of the lovers (with a musical foreshadowing of the fifth-movement funeral march) and narrating the reconciliation of the two families that is achieved, after so much spilling of blood and tears, at the end of the drama.

Movement II: Roméo seul – Tristesse – Bruit lointain de bal et de concert – Grande Fête chez Capulet

The opening of this purely instrumental movement consists of a slow introduction based on three contrasting themes. The first of these depicts Romeo's loneliness through an unaccompanied violin melody which, in its chromaticism and rhythmic irregularity, perfectly captures the aimless wandering of Romeo's spirit at this point in the play. The ensuing section consists of a lyric oboe melody (marked Larghetto espressivo and possibly indicative, as the title suggests, of concert sounds heard from afar) followed by a dance-like Allegro. Eventually the oboe melody is superimposed in augmentation over the principal dance tune. Such thematic superimpositions are a regular and important part of Berlioz's symphonic style (we find them in the *Fantastique* and in *Harold*, too), and the dramatic contrasts that they produce through direct juxtaposition are yet another example of Berlioz's operatic inclinations.

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Movement III: Scène d'amour

This movement carries a detailed subtitle that is akin to a stage direction: "Serene night – The Capulets' garden is silent and deserted. The young Capulets, leaving the ball, pass by while singing reminiscences of the music of the ball." It opens with a choral introduction to the purely instrumental love scene that follows. Here again Berlioz employs the operatic device of offstage music: two male choruses are placed in the wings in such a way as to suggest that Romeo, from his hiding place in the Capulets' garden, hears distant revelers returning home after the ball.

The fact that the love scene which follows was scored by Berlioz for orchestra alone (rather than for vocal soloists, in a wearisomely traditional operatic duet) requires some explanation – something Berlioz anticipated in the preface to the published score. Here he comments that the absence of voices is partly the result of needing to try a new mode of expression for a sort of dramatic scene that the best masters had already treated thousands of times as a vocal duet. Furthermore, he adds, in a kind of manifesto,

> the very sublimity of this love made its depiction so dangerous for the composer that he had to offer his imagination a latitude that the precise meaning of sung words would not have allowed, and thus to turn to the language of instrumental music – a language that is richer, more varied, less restricted, and by its very vagueness incomparably more powerful in such a case.[7]

The movement is cast in a free form in which varied repetitions of three main themes (one for Romeo, one for Juliet, and one composite theme containing parts of both) alternate with linking sections of contrasting material (see Ex. 4.7).

Movement IV: La Reine Mab, ou la Fée des songes

Marked "Scherzo" and fulfilling to some extent the function of a regular symphonic component, this movement – "Queen Mab, or the Enchantress of Dreams" – is cast in a traditional ABA form (scherzo–trio–scherzo) whose fine points, on close inspection, are far from conventional. The scherzo portion comprises a statement of the main theme followed by two varied repetitions. The "trio" brings a contrast of key and meter before the varied return of the opening material.

Movement V: Convoi funèbre de Juliette

This funeral march is based not on Shakespeare, but on a bowdlerized version of *Romeo and Juliet* made by the English actor David Garrick, which included a number of such "improvements" of the original text. Berlioz describes the music in a subtitle: "A fugal march, at first

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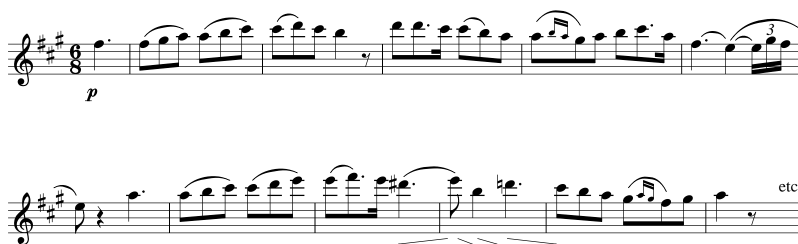
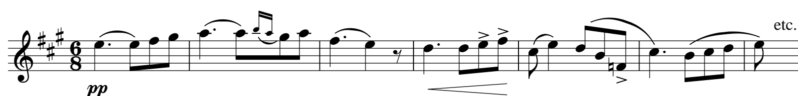
Example 4.7a *Roméo et Juliette*, *Scène d'amour*, "Romeo," bars 146–155.

Example 4.7b *Roméo et Juliette*, *Scène d'amour*, "Juliet," bars 248–259.



Example 4.7c *Roméo et Juliette*, *Scène d'amour*, composite theme, bars 322–328.



instrumental, with a psalmody on one single note in the chorus, then *vocal*, with the psalmody in the orchestra." Accordingly, set against the intricate fugue, based on a long, sinuous, chromatic subject, is a choral chant on the note E that periodically punctuates the fabric of the fugue with short two- or three-bar interjections. At the midpoint of the movement Berlioz reverses the roles of orchestra and chorus, placing the fugue in the chorus while the orchestra takes over the chant-like recitation of the note E.

Movement VI: Roméo au tombeau des Capulets. Invocation – Réveil de Juliette
Berlioz's full title for the movement ("Romeo at the tomb of the Capulets; Invocation; Awakening of Juliet; Delirious joy, despair, ultimate anguish and death of the two lovers") again implies something Shakespeare did not write: in this case David Garrick's idea for the awakening of Juliet

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before the poison taken by Romeo has had time to take effect. The two lovers are thus momentarily reunited for the tragic realization that Romeo poisoned himself needlessly.

Berlioz's music for this powerful scene is highly descriptive, unfolding in an episodic through-composed fashion, with rapid transformations of earlier themes combined with new material. Violent musical contrasts evoke the impetuous arrival of Romeo, his despair over finding Juliet "dead," his delirious joy upon her awakening, and the terrible agony of the lovers' death. Here, as elsewhere throughout his symphonies, the logic of Berlioz's musical discourse is not traditionally symphonic, but rather operatic, or balletic; the logic is that of a music, as it were, to be acted.

Movement VII: Final

The mixture of genres that characterizes all of Berlioz's symphonies is nowhere more in evidence than here in the finale, whose subtitle again reads like a stage direction: "The crowd rushes to the cemetery; Quarrel of Capulets and Montagues; Recitative and aria of Friar Laurence; Oath of reconciliation." At this point in his symphony Berlioz steps fully into the world of opera, combining multiple choruses and soloist with the orchestra in an extended ensemble-finale whose musical continuity may be heard as modeled after that found in French grand opera of the time, but whose dramatic scenario (which departs from both Shakespeare and Garrick) was that of Berlioz and his librettist, or of Berlioz alone.

Grande Symphonie funèbre et triomphale (1840)

Berlioz's last work in the symphonic genre was no less unusual than any of his other symphonies, due in part to its ceremonial purpose. In the summer of 1840 the then Minister of the Interior, Charles de Rémusat, asked Berlioz to provide music for the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the three-day revolution of July 1830. At this ceremony, the remains of the victims of the revolution were to be exhumed and transported for reburial beneath a new monument erected especially for this purpose in the Place de la Bastille. Music was needed for the procession, for the interment, and for the conclusion of the ceremony – all of which was, of course, to take place outdoors. What was needed was thus something loud and simple, yet grandiose and effective. The model for such a work was to be found not in Berlioz's earlier symphonies, but in the colossal, patriotic music written for occasional outdoor celebrations during the period of the Revolution and the Napoleonic Empire. Although this particular kind of patriotic music had long been dead by the time Berlioz

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came to musical maturity, aspects of its grandiose style lived on in much of his music, including the *Requiem* and, of course, this *Symphonie funèbre et triomphale.*

Berlioz's preoccupation with some kind of a military work dates back at least ten years prior to the writing of the *Symphonie funèbre.* As early as 1831, while he was studying in Italy, he conceived of a large oratorio to be titled *Le Dernier Jour du monde.* The following year, while traveling home from Italy, he was again struck by the desire to write something large and ceremonial. His new plan was for a two-part Napoleonic symphony with chorus to be called *Le Retour de l'armée d'Italie: Symphonie militaire.* Although this work reached the sketching stage, a completed symphony never materialized. All of these aborted plans and unused sketches at last materialized into something more concrete in 1835 – a planned seven-movement symphony celebrating "the memory of the illustrious men of France" with the title *Fête musicale funèbre.* Two movements were actually completed when Berlioz abandoned plans for such a monumental work, using instead what he had already written in two other new works: the cantata *Le Cinq mai* (1835) and the *Symphonie funèbre.* The speed with which he was able to complete this new symphony – forty hours, if we are to believe what Berlioz told his father in a letter of 30 July 1840 – was further increased by the borrowing of material from his abandoned opera *Les Francs-Juges* for use in the second movement. While the job of writing the symphony was thus made easier with such borrowed material, Berlioz did have to face the task of recasting his earlier ideas in the only medium appropriate for a parade: a military wind band.

The performance in parade was apparently a disaster, for almost nothing of the work could actually be heard. The first movement lost its effectiveness because those stationed along the parade route could hear only a few bars of the music as the band marched by. The acoustics at the Place de la Bastille, where the remaining movements were performed, were impossible, and the last movement was completely obliterated by the exit of the National Guard, marching off to their own drum cadence. Nevertheless, the work was extremely well received. Audiences, conservative critics, and even Berlioz's usual detractors all agreed that this was perhaps the best thing he had written to date. But the work's popularity might have been predicted on the basis of its immediate accessibility and overall simplicity of style – all hallmarks of traditional French patriotic music.

In addition to the original version for band, Berlioz also made a version for concert performance, in 1842, which added a traditional orchestral string section and appended a choral finale to the *Apothéose.* The text for the chorus, by Antoni Deschamps, expresses the simple senti-

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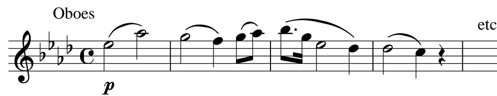
Example 4.8a *Symphonie funèbre et triomphale*, first movement, bars 4–7.

Example 4.8b *Symphonie funèbre et triomphale*, first movement, second theme, bars 95–98.



ment of "glory and triumph to these heroes." The *Symphonie funèbre* thus lacks the dramatic implications and autobiographical overtones of the three earlier symphonies (and of the logical successor to *Roméo et Juliette*, which is *La Damnation de Faust*); but it is a no less fitting conclusion – in its own unorthodox way – to Berlioz's experiments in the category of symphonic music. We learn from an amusing anecdote in chapter 59 of the *Mémoires* that in 1852 Berlioz did in fact contemplate the writing of another symphony. But the near certainty of losing money on producing it caused him to abandon the dream.

Movement I: Marche funèbre

The opening funeral march may be seen as a simplified sonata form based on two distinct themes in the contrasting keys of F Minor and A-flat Major (see Ex. 4.8).

The middle section of the movement (bars 125–155) functions as much as an area of musical contrast and retransition as it does of development in the traditional sense. Overall, the style of the movement, while generally simple and grand, is peculiarly intricate for parade music: it is not really surprising that the long-drawn-out twenty-bar first theme alone, with its expressive sonorities and subtle linear details, failed in the out-of-doors to create the effect Berlioz had hoped for.

Movement II: Oraison funèbre

Here again Berlioz borrows a form and style from the world of opera, as this movement (taken over from *Les Francs-Juges*) is essentially a recitative and aria for solo trombone accompanied by the rest of the band. The aria itself, which captures the quality of a religious sermon, is cast in non-repeating four-bar phrases to produce a through-composed effect.

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Movement III: Apothéose

The main theme of the up-tempo march-like finale is in a rondo-like, rounded binary form (aaba). Its presentation is followed by a lengthy section that combines elements of development and contrast, leading to a reprise of the opening theme combined with Berlioz's appended chorus. It is odd that this three-movement symphony begins in F Minor and concludes in B-flat Major, and one cannot know if this is the result of premeditation – one more Berliozian "first" in the area of what was later called "progressive tonality" – or rather of self-borrowing from disparate source materials.

*

That Berlioz held such an untraditional view of the symphony can hardly be attributed to his experience and training in France, where symphonies were generally of little interest to composers and to the public. Nor can it be attributed to his early exposure to the works of Beethoven (which Berlioz does not better, of course, but does transcend). It is more likely that Berlioz invested the instrumental genre with elements of musical theatre simply because his was an inherently dramatic musical talent. Had the administration of the Paris Opéra been more favorably disposed toward the young Berlioz as a potential composer for the theatre, one suspects that his career would have taken a totally different track. The invention of the "dramatic symphony," therefore, might be viewed as one of those happy accidents of history, the significance of which was to become clear only years later. Berlioz's friend Liszt, for one, embraced the idea of the dramatic program as a controlling formal element in music. And at the end of the century, Richard Strauss unabashedly adopted Berlioz's principle of music as autobiography. But the most influential of Berlioz's innovations was undoubtedly the *idée fixe* – the unification of a large symphonic work through the repetition of a theme subjected to continual transformation. Hardly a composer in the later nineteenth century, from Wagner to Mahler, could be said to be free of this basic principle of Berlioz's musical construction. So while the "dramatic symphony" itself, as a blend of opera and symphony, had no direct progeny, aspects of Berlioz's symphonic style may be seen to have inspired many of the most important developments that flowered throughout the remainder of the century.

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