

CHARACTERIZATION IN THE DRAMATIC

WORKS OF

HECTOR BERLIOZ

BY

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**I confirm that the work is my own and that appropriate credit has been
given where reference has been made to the work of others**

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ABSTRACT

Opera is about people in conflict, sung, played and performed in non-realistic fashion; it does not faithfully imitate real life. I claim that nevertheless, opera can enliven the characters and their state of mind, causing the listener-spectator experience a sensation unequalled by other genres. My aim is to show the musical means by which Berlioz achieved characterization. To do this I select three of his dramatic works, created at different periods of his career, and follow some key figures through the action, analyzing their role.

Part One deals with a theoretical approach to characterization, and the multiple components of opera. My investigations use the libretto's role only as a basis for the musical events, and exclude the visual element.

I present nineteenth-century's aesthetic principles and match them with Berlioz's own credo. I compare some aspects of the novel and poetry with opera. From these readings one can sense Berlioz's urge to express inner feelings, their 'psychological essence'. I consider contemporaries' reception of his operas that shows that he was appreciated mainly by a few but first-rank artists. Criticism over the last century is also reviewed, and an assessment is made of the composer's own aesthetic position.

Part Two provides the **Case Studies** of characters and deals with the operas *Benvenuto Cellini*, *La Damnation de Faust*, and *Les Troyens*. I also demonstrate the characterization of different atmospheres and of whole operas.

In *Benvenuto Cellini* I concentrate on the role of Teresa, which shows imaginative use of a motive that represents the essence of her character. This method comes close to a 'Leitmotif'.

In *La Damnation de Faust* there is a focus on the supernatural, relating to Mephisto. Music is Margarita's natural way of expression and personifies her chaste character. Her music contrasts starkly with Mephisto's. In this unstaged opera music plays a special dramaturgical role.

In the opera *Les Troyens* Aeneas is characterized as a fully rounded and complex person. Music takes an active part in the unfolding of Aeneas's development, as he assumes leadership; in each phase of his development, in intimate situations or in authoritative ones, Berlioz found the adequate musical idiom to deepen our comprehension of his motivations.

In conclusion: Characters achieve a 'psychological essence' because they appear as human beings with weaknesses and virtues. Berlioz applied no single method, but a deep understanding both of human nature and of the language of music. It is possible to follow the composer's intentions by listening attentively to the symbolic language in which they are offered.

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PART ONE: THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

CHAPTER I: The Character—in Literature and Music

In Aristotelian poetics, the notion of character is secondary, entirely subsidiary to the notion of action: there may be actions without 'characters', says Aristotle, but not characters without an action; a view taken over by classical theoreticians (Vossius). Later the character, who until then had been only a name, the agent of an action, acquired a psychological consistency, became an individual, a 'person', in short a fully constituted 'being', even should he do nothing and of course even before acting. Characters stopped being subordinate to the action, embodied immediately psychological essences.

Roland Barthes, 'Structural Analysis of Narratives'¹

Introduction

Is it possible for music to enliven a character, to put into relief his/her conflicting desires, worries, and happiness? This question is debatable and indeed, some commentators negate this possibility, while others who incline to believe in music's capability to characterize do not devote serious research to proving it. The problem lies in the fact that while listening to operas by different composers, belonging to various schools of composition, the answers would be diverse. I assume that there is musical characterization in the dramatic works of the nineteenth-century French composer Hector Berlioz (1803-1869). The goal of this study is to find the means by which Berlioz realized the artistically-felt phenomenon of depth of character: in other words, what were the musical means for characterization of persons and of dramatic situations

¹ Roland Barthes, 'Structural Analysis of Narratives' (1966). *Image, Music, Text* (New York, 1989), 104.

in a sample of Berlioz's works. I am not looking, however, for general answers, since I do not conceive a theory that can be widely applied.

Berlioz's reputation rests more on his instrumental output, but his sparkling intellect was more inclined to dramatic subjects even in instrumental genres (*Symphonie fantastique*, *Roméo et Juliette*); and he was interested in the fate of human beings, and their depth of character. This impression ignited my curiosity to find out what are the musical means with which Berlioz gave life to the operas' protagonists. Why do we feel so much with Margarita, Cassandra or Dido? How can we sympathize with Aeneas in his unpopular decision he has to take? What makes Mephisto appear supernatural? The issue is vast, and any claim for the comprehensiveness of this research would be unrealistic. Some aspects of the characters in the operas have already received attention from eminent researchers, nevertheless, few of these attempt at following a character throughout an opera, an activity that can reveal more aspects of his/her personality. For the purpose of being at once thorough enough and not indulging in endless character descriptions, I chose three of Berlioz's dramatic works: *Benvenuto Cellini*, *La Damnation de Faust*, and *Les Troyens*.² Out of each of these compositions I chose to follow one character that attracted my attention, not always the title role or the main figure, but a figure whom it seemed to me Berlioz chose to portray with particular vividness. Other aspects of these operas that attracted my attention were characterization of specific dramatic situations and the atmosphere that envelops the drama.

Berlioz's music transmits eloquence; it reveals implicit meanings not explicitly stated in text whenever text exists. Nevertheless, it is not obvious what it is that causes this sensation. Among the possible meanings of this eloquence must be included an emphasis on the 'psychological essence' of characters, as Barthes put it (see epigraph), which implies depth of character, complexity or roundness, in the sense E.M. Forster suggested (see below). Eloquence occasions, among other things, enlightenment of the inner richness, so that the characteristics of the fictional being are opened up to us as part of a human drama.

As a first stage towards establishing the notion of **musical characterization** I shall try to clarify its nature in the realm of opera in relation to literary characterization. The *Oxford English Dictionary* provides four different definitions for the term 'characterization'.³ Definitions three and four are relevant to this essay, but they bear different meanings: No. 3 has to do with the reception: 'Description of characteristics or essential features; portrayal in words'; and No. 4 with the creative process: 'Creation of fictitious characters'. If we consider these definitions in relation to Molino's tripartition, we conclude that definition 3 is concerned with the 'esthetic' level (reception-description) and definition 4 with the 'poietic' level (the creative).⁴ The example in the Oxford Dictionary for definition four is from A. W. Ward (1883): 'That highest part of the novelist's art, which we call characterisation'. In opera, if the

² After finishing the composition of *Les Troyens* in 1860 it took another two years before Berlioz started composition of his last opera, *Béatrice et Bénédicte*, a comic opera. This opera is not included in the present study because of its different genre, with spoken dialogue.

³ The compact edition (1971).

⁴ See Jean-Jacques Nattiez, *Music and Discourse: Toward a Semiology of Music* (Princeton, 1990), 16.

'creation of fictitious characters' is not the highest, it is a high component of the composer's art, and this is what I seek to illuminate. Thus, the third definition, 'description of characteristics... portrayal in words' is the analyst/critic's task, which I undertake by representing in words Berlioz's achievements, with all the limitations of such a project. This is the actual objective of the thesis, which will explain the 'creation of fictitious characters', as described in the fourth definition above.

I shall use also the term **meaning**, in a more general sense, to include characterization; putting it another way, characterization is one aspect of meaning.

Opera as a multi-disciplinary medium

Opera is arguably not as character-centered as is a novel. The reason is its multi-disciplinary qualities. Opera embraces, music apart, a plot, historical or other, involving characters and psychological drama, its enacting, dancing, stage setting, costume, lighting etc. Librettist and composer are the 'authors', or author when, as sometimes with Berlioz, and always with Wagner, the author of the libretto and the composer of the score are one and the same person. The question that arises is whether any attention can be given to characterization of the individual in a genre that acts in a multi-disciplinary environment, or, is meaning buried under external expressions (sound, acting, text, visual elements)? If we can find characterization in this multi-disciplinary medium, what are the means for realizing it? Or, putting it the other way round, is the spectator-listener able to respond to characterization the way the authors (librettist,

composer) conceived it, in a similar way that an attentive reader of a novel penetrates into the character's nature?⁵

The libretto, as the carrier of abstract ideas and of characterization, is the prime concern of most commentators on meaning in opera (see chapter 2). Vital as work on the libretto must be, however, the balance may be in danger of turning too far from the musical essence of opera.⁶ There exist parallels between opera librettos and literary forms; for instance, in opera the counterpart to the play's spoken monologues is solo singing (as in recitative and arias) and dialogue in recitative and duets. But while they both share the performing aspect, the play is word- and acting-centered, whereas opera is most distinguished by the music sung and played. This point explains much of the difference expected from characterization in these performed arts.

It is generally believed that music is opera's main agent: its *raison d'être* and the most important of the various elements synthesized in opera. David J. Levin claims to the contrary:

If opera has traditionally been seen as a musical genre, and thus as an inappropriate place for literary-critical analysis, *Opera Through Other Eyes* seeks to recast opera criticism by redirecting it, not just to the words, but also to the difficulties that attend them.⁷

I cannot agree with his implied claim that the stress in analysis was on its musical component; on the contrary, my understanding is that most opera commentators refer to

⁵ See chapter 3, on the discrepancy between the authors' intent in the 'trace' and its reception. Jean-Jacques Nattiez, *Music and Discourse* (Princeton, 1990), 16-17

⁶ But see Levin's view, below.

⁷ David J. Levin. 'Introduction'. *Opera Through Other Eyes*. David J. Levin (ed.) (Stanford, 1993), 3-4.

the libretto because it is the carrier of ideas, whether abstract or concrete. The discussions in the book Levin edited surely add to the repertory of useful research, but there is definitely still a lot to discover in opera's most prominent component, namely music. Donald J. Grout claims that an opera libretto furnishes just the broad outlines, but 'Subtle characterization, if it exists at all, is accomplished by means of music rather than dialogue';⁸ but he does not reinforce this with examples.

Is there a general theory that can explain musical characterization, or will it rather be an individual undertaking of each composer or even for each work? Can we be helped in appreciating an opera's qualities by understanding the characterization process? To answer this we must examine the elements of opera and their function (see chapter 2). But first some clarification is required of the concept of characterization, in literary forms, whether written for silent reading or for performance; and of how artists of Berlioz's generation perceived issues of character.

Contemporaries of Berlioz on artistic expression and on characterization

We can learn something about nineteenth-century literary and implicitly about other artistic aesthetics from contemporary authors' writings about their art. I shall exemplify it with some writings of Alfred de Vigny and Victor Hugo.

Alfred de Vigny (1797-1863) was a poet and a friend of Berlioz; they collaborated on the opera *Benvenuto Cellini*.⁹ His view may reflect the ideas floating in the air of the circle of romanticists. For de Vigny narrative serves to achieve an artistic essence,

⁸ Donald J. Grout, *A Short History of Opera*. 2nd ed. (New York, 1965), 4-5.

⁹ In fact De Vigny was the instigator of that opera, since he was the one who drew Berlioz's attention to the *Autobiography* that served as its basis.

which he names *vérité*. For this purpose, one has to collect facts - which he calls the collected *vrai* - and use one's imagination to distil and transform them into a work of art; this is the work of the genius, the romantic *magician*. For de Vigny *vérité* is the essence that the artist extracts and highlights, with a magic touch:

.. Cette vérité toute belle, toute intellectuelle, ... est comme l'âme de tous les arts. ...[la vérité] c'est un ensemble idéal de ses principales formes, une baume envirant de ses parfums les plus purs, un élixir délicieux de ses suc les meilleurs, une harmonie parfaite de ses sons les plus mélodieux; enfin c'est une somme complète de toutes ses valeurs. ... les oeuvres de l'Art ... sont une représentation morale de la vie, les oeuvres dramatiques..¹⁰

This essence, this truthfulness, embodies characterization, states of mind, motivations. For the Romantic artist, the creative process is sublime, it elevates the simple truth to a higher degree, to the essence of being; he observes in people a double existence, the outer and the hidden. This approach will eventually lead to Sigmund Freud's theory of the subconscious. It follows that the master's work of art —for our purpose, limited to characterization in Berlioz's operas—represents the inner life of the character portrayed.

The image of the artist as a magician who transforms 'history' or reality into art is typical of the Romantics. 'Faire l'histoire' is the outer side of artistic expression, while 'créer de la poésie' is the inner. For Victor Hugo (1802-1885), after having consulted the facts of history, of nature, the inspired artist transforms them, as with a magic touch, into artistic expression, through condensation and distillation of facts:

¹⁰ Alfred de Vigny, 'L'effet électrique de la vérité', in *L'Esthétique romantique*, Claude Millet (ed.) (Paris, 1994), 202.

L'art feuillette les siècles, feuillette la nature, interroge les chroniques, s'étudie à reproduire la réalité des faits, surtout celle des moeurs et des caractères... revêt le tout d'une forme poétique et naturelle à la fois, et lui donne cette vie de vérité et de saillie qui enfante l'illusion, ce prestige de réalité qui passionne le spectateur, et le poète le premier, car le poète est de bonne foi. Ainsi, le but de l'art est presque divin: ressusciter, s'il fait de l'histoire; créer s'il fait de la poésie.¹¹

For Hugo the theatre reflects all actual facts and all that exists in the human being, transformed and condensed in the artistic process. The poetic form is faithful to the truth, but at the same time it nourishes the illusion which the spectator is after, as indeed is the poet himself. On characterization Hugo says that when the person portrayed in a spoken play is a complex one the spectator gets a double message: the explicit and implicit, action and conscience. Art opens up for the spectator a double horizon which illuminates the inner and the outer sides of people. The exterior is his speech and action, and the inner is reflected by the asides and the monologues.¹² Thus one experiences the life of action and the inner life of consciousness. In opera, by analogy, the facts subsist in the libretto; is inner life expressed in the music?

Hugo's aesthetic view is exemplified by the search for the characteristic, the essence rather than the sheer beauty: '...si le poète doit choisir dans les choses..., ce n'est pas le beau, c'est le caractéristique'.¹³ The notion of beauty has been occupying aestheticians of music to our days. Whatever the aesthetic viewpoint is, one has to consider contemporary values in order to evaluate nineteenth-century music.

¹¹ Hugo, Preface to *Cromwell*, in op. cit., 188-89.

¹² '...le but multiple de l'art, qui est d'ouvrir au spectateur un double horizon, d'illuminer à la fois l'intérieur et l'extérieur des hommes: l'extérieur, par leurs discours et leurs actions; l'intérieur, par les apartés et les monologues; de croiser, ... dans le même tableau, le drame de la vie et le drame de la conscience'. Ibid.

The search for essence, for the characteristic, results in a patina that penetrates and envelops the whole play,

...comme la sève qui monte de la racine à la dernière feuille de l'arbre. Le drame doit être radicalement imprégné de cette couleur des temps, elle doit en quelque sorte y être dans l'air de façon qu'on ne s'aperçoive qu'en y entrant et qu'en sortant, qu'on a changé de siècle et d'atmosphère.¹⁴

This phenomenon that explains the special characteristics endemic to the individual drama exists also in opera, as was observed by Basevi discussing the notion of *tinta* (see chapter 3). From reading the Romantic artists' *credo*, in literary, visual and musical domains, we perceive the essence of their thinking, their common cause and motives. Although the above-cited authors refer to the spoken play, they were part of a wider artistic tendency, and their ideas reflect other arts as well. Claude Millet wrote about another Romantic expression, that of the allusion of the artist to the fighting soldier. In theatre, the spoken word and gestures are the main weapons with which the actors achieve their goals. The musician d'Ortigue, Berlioz's friend and journalistic colleague, used this 'password' ('mot de passe') of the Romantic fellowship:

Même un romantique plus calme comme le musicologue J. d'Ortigue intitule son essai sur Rossini et sur "les rapports qui existent entre la musique, la littérature et les arts": *De la guerre des dilettanti ou de la révolution opérée par M. Rossini dans l'opéra français*.¹⁵

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Claude Millet, 'Introduction' *L'Esthétique romantique en France, une anthologie*, Millet (ed.) (Paris, 1994), 7, note.

Berlioz used this 'password' when he wrote to the Princesse Carolyne Sayn-Wittgenstein regarding his work on *Les Troyens* which she had encouraged:

...pour ses conquêtes, il faut qu'elle [la music] combatte en personne et non par ses lieutenants, je veux bien qu'elle ait ... de bons vers rangés en bataille, mais il faut qu'elle aille elle-même au feu comme Napoléon, Alexandre.¹⁶

From this it can be seen that Berlioz's thinking expressed here in private and realized in his noblest opera was in accordance with the aesthetic of his contemporary artists of different fields of the arts. Therefore, to understand Berlioz we must understand the romantics' *esprit*.¹⁷ In this study that deals with a multi-disciplinary medium I wish to discern the artistic work of the composer in the 'creation of fictitious characters'. I shall concentrate on musical means while using the libretto as outline. In so doing I hope to find out whether we can discern a method or multiple dislocated means for achieving different objectives. For this end I look for artistic expressions of Berlioz's close friends-artists to find an ethical approach to what art means, its high values of bringing forth the essence; of highlighting the inner part of the human being rather than the external. Their devotion runs parallel with a heroic fighting spirit. In this light we have to understand works of art in their own language.

¹⁶ *Correspondence générale d'Hector Berlioz* (from now on I shall use the common abbreviation CG, including volume number and item number), V, 2163.

¹⁷ This phrase is a paraphrase on an article by James Webster, 'To understand Verdi and Wagner we must understand Mozart'. *19th-Century Music* 11 (1987). I allude to the equivalence to show how important it is to understand predecessors' and contemporaries' ideas in order to better understand Berlioz's attitudes.

CHAPTER II: Elements of Opera

Introduction

In the search for meaning in operatic music, one part of which is characterization, a primary task is to illustrate its elements: the written text set to music, vocal and instrumental music, and the visual representation including gesture.¹ The following is an elaboration of the elements that make up the experience of opera, and the relative contribution of each. The presentation will include considerations of production as well as of operatic conventions that raise expectations; on producing opera without staging, its advantages and disadvantages concerning *La Damnation de Faust*.

The visual element

The visual element has been attractive to a wide audience of opera lovers. To enhance this aspect, opera from its beginning used sophisticated machinery for staging (including *Le merveilleux* and *Deus ex machina*), that in turn encouraged complicated plot and action. The industrial Revolution brought about further technical improvements to enhance scenery, appropriate to the new naturalistic approach.² An important source for our knowledge of production of nineteenth-century opera in France is the *Mémoires* by Dr. Louis Véron, the director of the *Opéra* (1831-5). In his opinion music is secondary to the scenery, or as Kerry Murphy paraphrased his ideas:

¹ On meaning and of characterization see chapter 3.

² On changing plots in the nineteenth century see below.

Music was certainly not portrayed [by Véron] as one of the important features of the opera; if anything it was the weak point in that it would possibly not be understood.³

This contemporary evidence should be taken with 'a grain of salt'; music is the essential element in opera, even if audiences were attracted by visual sensations. Véron's point that music might not be understood perhaps points to his own, and indeed the limitations of understanding of the habitual audience at the Opéra.

The lack of sources for the full identification and assessment of visual elements leaves us with only verbal and musical texts as evidence for the performance aspect. Jean-Jacques Nattiez calls the types of evidence that have come down from the creators to us a 'trace'. Nattiez relates his term 'trace' to Jean Molino's *niveau neutre*, which is the actual text, be it the script or the score, in which:

The symbolic form results from a *Process of creation* that may be described or reconstituted. ...the symbolic form is embodied physically and materially in the form of a *trace* accessible to the five senses. We employ the word *trace* because the poietic process [e.g. creative] cannot immediately be read within its lineaments, since the esthetic process [e.g. reception] is heavily dependent upon the lived experience of the receiver.⁴

It follows that the visual element, as conceived by the opera's creator(s), does not survive to the same degree that words and music survive: even if designs, or actual sets and costumes survive, the movement and gesture of characters are not likely to be recorded. Moreover, even if a limited amount of such information survives through stage directions and production books, it is unlikely to be strictly respected by modern

³ Kerry Murphy, *Hector Berlioz and the Development of French Music Criticism* (Ann Arbor, 1988), 113-4.

⁴ Jean-Jacques Nattiez, *Music and Discourse: Toward a Semiology of Music*. Trans. Carolyn Abbate. (Princeton, 1990), 12.

producers. Berlioz left some 'trace' of a visual conception when he wrote into the score instructions for staging, but producers do not feel obliged to follow these. And, of course, visual elements change from one production to another, depending on changing fashions of staging, local traditions, financial constraints, or the director's concept. Deborah King points to the interpretative aspect of modern productions:

A change in the production practices of opera in the twentieth century that owes its place of importance to the empowered stage director is the new emphasis upon dramaturgical analysis as a means to reinvigorate the operatic repertoire. ...While the material [the artists] analyzed is relatively constant (the score and libretto in various manifestations, historical, literary and cultural documents, including everything from letters to philosophical treatises), the methods by which the various artists interpret the material vary widely. From subjective emotive response to biases of ideological nature, to attempts at "objective" revelations of authorial intention, the modes of interpretation chosen by stage directors in the twentieth century reflect not only particular critical methodologies prevalent in literary analysis during their particular moment of history, but are part of the organic growth and change of the theatrical movements that shape performance practice.⁵

Thus, interpretation may change aspects of the work in different performances; this fact underlines the point that performance is a variable which cannot be attributed to the 'trace'. For Berlioz, music is eloquent and plays a role in dramaturgical considerations. Hence, it is through words and music that we may identify the individual operatic *work*, and my concern will be with the musical part of the 'trace'.

Theoretically, if we had a 'trace' of the visual performance as conceived by the authors, should it modify my approach to characterization? In this case, should the

⁵ Deborah Denise King, 'Operatic Appropriations: Transformations of Stage Direction of Opera in the Twentieth Century'. PhD dissertation (Stanford, 1993), 7.

producer be loyal to the authentic version of the 'trace' in the same way as he must follow the words and score?⁶ Since the visual element has always been open to interpretation, it necessarily must be excluded from this study, which is not to say that it is unimportant. Two singers performing the same role within the same production may certainly change, by voice type or acting, the characterization of the role within the parameters of the words, score, and visual aspect; but this change will not be fundamental.⁷ For these reasons elements of musical interpretation through performance will not form part of my search for characterization.

Libretto

A libretto has mostly the aspect of a play: it is performed (and not read silently). Still there are similarities with the novel, as I will show below. An important aspect of a character is what E. M. Forster called 'round' characters or 'flat' ones, according to the depth of characterization.⁸ Flat characters with only stereotyped characteristics are also sometimes called 'cardboard' characters, or caricatures; they are instantly recognized, but have no deep emotions, or we just do not know about their nature other than what is required for purposes of the novel. Round characters, on the other hand, are put in different, conflicting situations and as a result expose many sides of their personalities.⁹ Although Forster refers to the novel, this aspect of the character is

⁶ Concerning modern productions and characterization, Littlejohn discusses Peter Sellars' version of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, concluding that had Peter Sellars closely considered Mozart's music he would not have interpreted Da Ponte's words the way he did. David Littlejohn, *The Ultimate Art* (Berkeley, 1993), 145-55.

⁷ On voice types see chapter 3.

⁸ E.M. Forster, *Aspects of the Novel* (London, 1963), see discussion below.

⁹ See for example Forster's novel *Maurice*, where he depicts the passage from flat to rounded character in the title role's own view: 'Once inside college, his discoveries multiplied. People turned out to be alive. Hitherto he had supposed that they *were* what he *pretended* to be—flat pieces of cardboard stamped with a conventional design—

useful also for opera. Forster's rationale regarding the difference between the novel and the play strengthens the argument of similarity between opera and a play:

In the drama all human happiness and misery does and must take the form of action. Otherwise its existence remains unknown, and this is the great difference between the drama and the novel.¹⁰

This view was repeated by Roland Barthes (see Epigraph to the thesis). Nevertheless, the affinity to the novel indirectly gets some support from Forster, who characterized this aspect of the novel:

The facts in a highly organized novel are often of the nature of *cross correspondences* [my emphasis] and the ideal spectator cannot expect to view them properly until he is sitting up on a hill at the end.¹¹

Opera thus can take a novelistic hill-top view through musical cross-references—reprise of a melody, recapitulation of a section of music, or use of reminiscence motives—any of which may serve to remind the listener of a previous situation in which the motive was heard; with the right compositional procedure it may help characterization. A reminiscence in a novel suggests a *déjà vu* phenomenon, in the way a musical motive can bring up associations with past events.

Peter Conrad suggests another parallel:

but as he strolled about the courts at night and saw through the windows some men singing and others arguing and others at their books, there came by no process of reason a conviction that they were human beings with feelings akin to his own'. (New York, 1987), 30. Original emphasis.

¹⁰ Forster, *Aspects of the Novel*, 80.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 84.

Opera is inefficient as drama simply because it takes so much longer to sing a phrase than to say it. But, novelistically, this may be its justification, for in extending the phrase it allows its characters time to reflect on and absorb the implications of what they are uttering.¹²

Conrad's observation ignores though poetic drama, where one finds long soliloquies and unnaturally long speeches. Hamlet's speech 'To be or not to be' is sometimes referred to as Hamlet's 'aria'. Even if there is some truth in Conrad's remark, surely we do not agree with his statement that 'opera is inefficient as drama', since the comparison of opera with drama appears more persuasive and the distinction between opera and non-dramatic literary forms is more prominent than the resemblance. The sung ensembles, choruses, and the role of the orchestral commentary clearly have no parallel either in the novel or in the play. The novel and the play, like a staged opera, bring to light their main characters in different and conflicting situations. The author of the novel may be present in the scene of action directly or indirectly, with the voice of the author (traditionally the 'omniscient' narrator) or as a participant (the first-person novel, told in the protagonist's voice, excluding the author, and not necessarily omniscient).¹³ Either way the author can manipulate the reader to conceive an idea of the character of a person by disclosing information not in the dialogue form. How is the composer represented in opera, how is he involved in his character's voice?

A strong objection to the comparison with the novel comes from W. H. Auden, the poet and librettist, saying:

¹² Peter Conrad, *Romantic Opera and Literary Form* (Berkeley, 1977), 113.

¹³ For this purpose we assume the first-person narrator to be a protagonist as in *Jane Eyre*.

Opera ... is an imitation of human willfulness; it is rooted in the fact that we not only have feelings but insist upon having them at whatever cost to ourselves. Opera, therefore, cannot present character in the novelist's sense of the word, namely, people who are potentially good *and* bad, active *and* passive, for music is immediate actuality and neither potentiality nor passivity can live in its presence... The quality common to all great operatic roles ... is that each of them is a passionate and willful state of being.¹⁴

Auden's view pinpoints an important operatic characteristic, namely the immediacy or directiveness of sensation and reaction. Nevertheless, a dramatic composer can use procedures that enable him to allude to different states of his being simultaneously, since music can flow in independent layers, for instance vocal and orchestral.

Also remote from the novel is the way in which opera deals with 'real music'. The libretto may contain verses that invite a 'song'. Composers usually set these as closed forms, such as Romance, Barcarole, Ballad. Its narrative content is often outside the main story; it is like a 'story-telling' as Carolyn Abbate affirms. Her examples are Pedrillo's Romanze in *Die Entführung* or the 'veil song' in *Don Carlos*.¹⁵ Abbate rightly claims that:

Narrative song, despite its apparent musical simplicity ... represents one of opera's most elaborate points of tension [because these songs] set up interference with the very idea of progressive musical narration.¹⁶

An example from Berlioz is Margarita's Ballad in *La Damnation*, which is part of a highly dramatic interference with the flow of events (on this see chapter 8).

¹⁴ W. H. Auden, 'Notes on Music and Opera', in *The Dyer's Hand* (London, 1963), 470.

¹⁵ Carolyn Abbate, *Unsung Voices* (Princeton, 1996), 69.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

Until the nineteenth century, libretto plots were usually based on mythological themes. Later, opera abandoned these topics in favour of historical ones. The libretto, conceived for an opera, is a literary genre *sui generis*. It has similarities with both the play and the novel (as discussed above), but this does not make it useful to assess its qualities in the same way as with either of them. There existed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries different national traditions in the world of opera. Dealing with French tradition and remembering de Vigny's statement that art is 'intellectual' (see chapter 1), I can only agree with Stanley Sadie that:

...opera in France, affected by that country's strong traditions of spoken drama, by the nature of the language and the ways in which it has been nurtured, by the ritual and elaboration of court spectacle and by Enlightenment philosophy, has favoured an idiom that permits the words to carry greater weight....¹⁷

Furthermore, the libretto that has a high literary value provokes music to match its value. Yet a libretto cannot be so good that it can do without music for the purpose of characterization: a good libretto leaves space for the music. However, Patrick Smith provides an exceptional example, namely Felice Romani's libretto for Bellini's *Norma*:

The characterization of Norma—at once Druid priestess, leader of her people, woman in love, and mother, imperiously jealous yet forgiving—must stand as a major librettistic triumph and one of the great character portraits in all of opera. The difference from many other such portraits is...its self-sufficiency; that is, its non-dependence on the music for complete realization.¹⁸

¹⁷ Stanley Sadie, 'Prelude', in *History of Opera*. Stanley Sadie (ed.) (Houndsmills and London, 1985), 7.

¹⁸ Patrick Smith, *The Tenth Muse* (London, 1971), 205.

This view is rather perplexing, but as Smith says, he cannot think of other examples of the kind; nevertheless, Bellini's music envelops the text with fittingly moving atmosphere, that undoubtedly strengthens characterization if only (in Peter Kivy's sense) through its sheer beauty.¹⁹

Gluck, in his strenuous efforts to make opera expressive and natural, attributed an extraordinary importance to the words, crediting his librettist Calzabigi with the greater share in the creation of *Orfeo ed Euridice*. He said:

I would be (...) seriously to blame if I were to take the credit for the invention of a new genre of Italian opera, the attempt at which has been vindicated by success: the principal merit belongs to M. de Calzabigi. And if my music has had some acclaim, I must acknowledge my debt to him, because it is he who set me on the path to develop the resources of my art. This writer of invention and ability has, in his poems *Orfeo*, *Alceste*, and *Paride*, followed a path unfamiliar to the Italians. These works are full of those choice situations, and moments of terror and pathos, which provide the composer with opportunity to represent great emotions and to create powerful, moving music. Whatever ability the composer has, he will never write music which rises above mediocrity if the poet does not arouse in him that enthusiasm without which all artistic creation is flat and feeble. ...my music aspires only to achieve the fullest expression and to follow the declamation of the poetry. This is why I never use trills, passage-work, or cadenzas, which the Italians employ in profusion.²⁰

The reason for bringing this long citation is multiple: to put the French style in perspective against Italian tradition, and to point to the aesthetics of the composer Berlioz so greatly admired, Gluck, and his principles with respect to the libretto.

¹⁹ See below, note 25, and chapter 3 for a detailed discussion on Kivy's theory.

²⁰ From a letter to the *Mercure de France*, Feb. 1773, in: Patricia Howard, *Gluck: an Eighteenth-Century Portrait in Letters and Documents* (Oxford, 1995), 106. In another letter to *Mercure de France* it was Calzabigi

Nevertheless, Berlioz explicitly distanced himself from the subservient role Gluck proposed for music. This is evident from his statement:

...quand il [Gluck] dit que la musique d'un drame lyrique n'a d'autre but que d'ajouter à la poésie ce qu'ajoute le coloris au dessin, je crois qu'il se trompe essentiellement.²¹

Schmidgall writes in his 'Introduction' to *Literature as Opera*: '...the most important operatic ingredient of all: eloquently passionate characters....'²² Inasmuch as the librettist furnishes the composer with a libretto in which characters have the potentiality of being multi-faceted persons, so the composer must take over these traits and enhance them with passion; passion of the kind music alone can contribute.

Music

People in opera express themselves in singing. They are surrounded by music - sung or instrumentally played, from the pit or stage. Thus, for the purpose of communication, either among themselves and/or to the audience, they sing; or as Edward T. Cone says: 'true operatic song replaces what in a more naturalistic medium would be ordinary speech'.²³ This 'song' is a kind of a symbolic language that functions as a vehicle for the expression of the characters' personalities, and they participate with musical proficiency and devotion. Cone maintains that by so doing, the characters on stage 'compose' their conversations.²⁴ The composer's authorship is

who wrote (1784) about his share in the success of *Orfeo ed Euridice*, due to the stress on declamatory style, which he claimed he had dictated to Gluck. Ibid, 56.

²¹ Berlioz, *A Travers Chants* (Paris, 1971), 175.

²² Gary Schmidgall. *Literature as Opera* (New York, 1977), 20.

²³ Edward T. Cone. 'The World of Opera and its Inhabitants', in *Music: A View from Delft* (Chicago, 1989), 126.

²⁴ Ibid., 129.

by choosing for the purpose of characterization or any purpose, the kind of music the individual will 'compose'. In literature we assume characterization to be a vital element; it follows that if we feel that operatic people acquire personalities, this is a major achievement on the part of the opera's authors.

The librettist outlines personal characteristics of dramatic persons, possessing feelings and typical traits, and places them in conflicting situations. The composer continues the creative process. Keeping in mind that the libretto was conceived for an opera, or adapted from a play or a novel for this purpose, we may recall Donald J. Grout's view (see chapter 1) that without music the characters remain merely potential, needing music for full realization.

Music's role in opera is diverse:

1. Music incarnates aesthetic value, a quality that attracts attention, fascinates and pleases the ear and mind.
2. Music ignites the imagination through: a) Simple word painting; b) Instrumental colour; c) Vocal style; d) Associations with rhythmic and melodic patterns.
3. Music can participate in: a) Stimulation of dramatic situations, that provoke conflicts; b) Psychological behaviour (using Barthes' term, see epigraph).

Characterization is achieved among other means by beautiful arias that may hold up the action: musical expansion of this kind may, indeed, be in or out of character, and it may change or develop a characterization already established. But for Peter Kivy beauty

per se has authority: he argues that beauty gives life and eloquence to the character.²⁵ Kivy's point of view about beauty as a means of characterization is indeed controversial: while he speaks of the incapacity of music in opera to characterize (to animate is his term),²⁶ he claims that it is the sheer beauty of music that "animates", or in our terms characterizes, and thus provides eloquence to the individual. This argument may appear self-contradictory, and it is problematic from yet another point of view. Will the villain then be portrayed with 'offensive' music? or is the ugly eloquent also? We usually assume that dissonant music has the connotations of grief, evil, or a difficult situation, but we would not necessarily qualify it as music without beauty. Should we listen to a symphony or opera, just waiting for a beautiful tune to come along? What about the rest of the notes which are not qualified as beautiful?

Music's capacity for word painting is a tradition considered antiquated by Berlioz's time. He found though some justification for its application for descriptive, imitative use, if the subject matter demands it, as in Haydn's *Creation*. For Berlioz, Haydn did not debase his style when, according to the poem, he applied musical imitation using: 'des bruits gracieux comme les roulement des colombes, imitation qui, d'ailleurs, est d'une grande vérité.'²⁷ In his *La Damnation de Faust* Berlioz himself used this kind of imitation for Mephisto's evocation of the lovers' rendezvous (see chapter 8).

Instrumental 'colour' is the musical means on which Berlioz was most keen, and in which he was acknowledged as a great innovator. His *Grand Traité d'Instrumentation*

²⁵ Peter Kivy, 'How did Mozart do it?' in *The Fine Art of Repetition* (Cambridge, 1993), 166, 174.

²⁶ In this essay 'characterization' has the higher implication of Kivy's word animation, since for me animation is too closely associated with the flat characters of film animation.

is not just a technical book about the various instruments' capacity, but an aesthetic treatise in which Berlioz explained for each instrument what kind of feelings it can evoke. For example when Berlioz writes on the cor anglais he says (about the second movement of his *Symphonie fantastique*) that the achievement of the sentiment he wanted to induce was by virtue of this instrument:

Le sentiment d'absence, d'oubli, d'isolement douloureux qui naissent dans l'âme de certains auditeurs à l'évocation de cette mélodie abandonnée, n'auraient pas le quart de leur force si elle était chantée par un autre instrument que le cor anglais.²⁸

Berlioz's use of the term 'sung' by an instrument is revealing.

Vocal style contributes to the kind of message the composer wishes to transmit through the singer. Whether it is declamatory, as in recitative, or arioso, or florid as in aria, is a consideration of narrativity versus expressiveness. Traditionally florid style was an exposure of the talent of a singer, and is Italian. Vocal style is also a consideration of characterization; for example, Aeneas's first entry could have been a simple recitative, as a preparation for an excited aria, but Berlioz chose the orchestrally accompanied arioso for dramatic reasons (see chapter 9). It was the reform of Gluck which blurred the total division between recitative and aria, to make them flow more naturally one into the other.

²⁷ *Revue et Gazette musicale*, 1.1837. Cited in: Gérard Condé (ed.), *Cauchemars et Passions* (Paris, 1981), 124.

²⁸ Berlioz, *Grand Traité d'Instrumentation et d'Orchestration moderne* (Paris, 1855), 124.

I considered ... that the ensemble of instruments should be formed with reference to the interest and feeling, without leaving that sharp division in the dialogue between aria and recitative.²⁹

The concept of **associative means** was much developed by Leonard Ratner, on the basis of eighteenth-century commentators. Ratner elaborated a theory that explains how instrumental music is associated with aspects of daily life to evoke extra-musical meaning, for which he uses the term 'topics'. This concept of 'topics' has originated a school of thought concerning eighteenth-century music.³⁰ Wye J. Allanbrook extended the notion of topics, using the rhythmic gestures to explain meaning in Mozart's operas.³¹ Ratner referred to topics in opera as well in his chapter on *Don Giovanni*. He finds mutual influence between opera and instrumental music concerning topics, especially the aria form.³²

Characterization of dramatic situations, and of human behaviour, includes states of mind and this kind of characterization is the core of this thesis. People in the play or in the opera respond to dramatic conflicts in unexpected ways, imitating real life; they manifest their reactions in the libretto and in music, both contributing to characterization; in deeds—as in the drama, or in contemplation—as in poetic drama (see above), or in operatic aria. Opera has other subtle musical means for characterization, as I intend to show in the case studies. This endeavour gets support from Kerman who claims that:

²⁹ Gluck to Archduke Leopold of Tuscany, Vienna, 1769, in *Alceste* (Vienna, 1769), xi-xii. Cited in Patricia Howard, *Gluck, An Eighteenth-Century Portrait in Letters and Documents* (Oxford, 1995), 85.

³⁰ Leonard G. Ratner, *Classic Music* (New York, 1980).

³¹ Wye J. Allanbrook, *Rhythmic Gesture in Mozart* (Chicago, 1983).

³² Ratner, op. cit., 397-411; 285.

In fact the effort to pinpoint what it is in the music that makes for this “reality” may cause the critic more trouble than articulating almost any other criteria. The effort is usually worth the trouble.³³

Since Kerman made this statement research has moved forward, but specific research into musical characterization has not much developed.

Staged versus concert opera—the case of *La Damnation de Faust*

Ideally all the three principal components of opera work together for the goal of musical-visual-dramatic experience. But this is not always the case. Following a libretto is hardly ever possible in today’s darkened theatres; the problem is usually solved with projected text. Musical communication is also at risk from the action on stage. Staging adds to splendour, enlivens the depiction of historical events; by these means it attracts an audience. On the other hand it might be argued that it distracts the mind from the music by overlaying the historic ‘trace’ with interpretation. Characterization does not necessarily gain from copious staging, although it may benefit from appropriate staging, which respects the original ambience. Thus, a concert performance of opera, while it loses the visual aspect, may gain in comprehension of both text and music, since the listener is likely to be more attentive to them. It has already been suggested that staging is not part of the ‘trace’; it is interpretative.

Berlioz wrote in February 1829 to his friend Humbert Ferrand about his great desire to compose a ‘descriptive symphony’ on *Faust*.³⁴ Although the concept was possibly converted into his *Symphonie fantastique*, it illustrates Berlioz’s passion for this literary

³³ Joseph Kerman, *Opera as Drama* (Berkeley, 1988), 215.

model and his willingness, that early, to interpret dramas without scenery.³⁵ Berlioz first entitled his *La Damnation de Faust* (1845-46) 'Opéra de concert', a term he later dismissed in favour of *légende dramatique*.³⁶ In any case this opera was conceived by the composer to be played without staging, albeit being an opera in all other respects. Later, Berlioz even considered making an operatic version. On 19 December 1847 he wrote from London that it was well advancing:

Quant à *Faust*, il n'est pas gravé, et il se développe même en ce moment d'une façon effrayante, car Scribe l'arrange en grand opéra pour notre saison prochaine de Londres. Il sera présenté ici, avec un luxe rassurant pour la musique.. .³⁷

Nothing came of this idea, but it is clear that the work would have been different in many respects.³⁸ Whatever Berlioz's intention may have been, for *La Damnation de Faust* the operatic 'text' exists, replete with all the essential components of opera, with even some stage directions. It could be staged, and in fact very often is, in spite of the composer's intention. As I hope to suggest later on, the characters are sensitively portrayed as in Berlioz's 'true' operas, or maybe more so.

³⁴ CG I, 232.

³⁵ Jeffrey Langford treats that point in 'The Dramatic symphonies of Berlioz and Outgrowth of the French Operatic Tradition', *The Musical Quarterly* 69 (1983), 85-103. Langford maintains that his symphonies were 'the product of a sublimated desire to write opera' (the author's own annotation to the entry in *Hector Berlioz. A Guide to Research*, Jeffrey Langford and Jane Denker Graves (eds) (New York, 1989), 209, John Warrack brings forth the idea of drama in musical terms in his article 'Berlioz and the "Theatre of the Mind"', in *Essays on music. an Anthology from 'The Listener'* (1964), Felix Aprahamian (ed.) (London, 1967), 49-52.

³⁶ On March 1846 Berlioz wrote to his sister Nanci, describing his current work on an *Opéra de concert* in four acts. The use of *opéra de concert* thus early in the compositional history of the work strongly suggests that it was never intended for the stage. See NBE 8b, 457.

³⁷ CG III, 489.

³⁸ See Julian Rushton, 'Foreword' in *Hector Berlioz*, NBE. 8b, 457.

Role of operatic convention

Fundamental to opera, more than to other dramatic forms, is the element of illusion, the 'make believe'. The opera spectator/listener comes to the theatre, I would assume, to take part in a different world from his own. Lindenberger goes as far as claiming that:

In the opera house we know we must take the aria [Orpheus's lament in Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice*] as a lament as soon as we hear the words, and even if ... we fail to understand them, we get our cues from a variety of sources such as the libretto, the synopsis, the singer's gestures, our knowledge of the myth that Gluck was using, and the sight of Euridice falling dead a moment before.³⁹

From all these enumerated elements I suggest that Berlioz would count for the interpretation of music's message, apart from intuitive intelligent listening, only on the knowledge of the myth and on understanding of the sung text. To make his intention explicit Berlioz used a variety of means that require active and intelligent listening, which nonetheless, do not take away the pleasure of illusion.

Is it characterization alone that is illusory in opera, as Kivy maintains? He uses the term 'illusion' for a different purpose. He maintains that the notion of characterization is virtually impossible in opera, but the sensation of 'character depth' is achieved through 'illusion' '...[which is equivalent to] "aesthetic" or "artistic effect"'.⁴⁰ Let us remember Hugo's statement (paraphrased here), concerning the artist's aim, cited more fully in chapter 1: Art surveys the centuries, studies them to reproduce facts,

³⁹ Herbert Lindenberger, *Opera. the Extravagant Art*, (Ithaca, 1984), 132.

⁴⁰ Kivy, op. cit., 171.

customs and characters, and bestows on them poetic and natural forms, thus giving them a real life; this illusion is the passionate concern of both the spectator and the poet.

People on any kind of stage behave differently from the real world, but there is a significant difference between spoken theatre and opera. While actors in the spoken play expressing their grief will say it in text and gesture, the opera singer will sing as his or her normative way of expression, for example by singing expansively while dying, substituting for the comprehension of the words an eloquence of musical language. If an actor in a film or play sings, it is a departure from the norm of speech communication. In opera all the parameters of singing are part of the normal mode of communication. Hence it is normal for musical expansion to accompany, for instance, the death of the character; the eloquence of musical language requires time to make its mark. In opera we enter an enchanted world; part of its charm is the artificial, exaggerated presentation, embedded in musical surroundings. Once this premise is accepted by the listener/spectator, operatic language, including characterization, becomes both natural and articulate.

This is implicitly what Grout and Kerman claim, contrary to Kivy's argument that the sheer beauty of music contains the power to give life to the 'dramatis personae'.⁴¹ Kivy's controversial point of view touches upon aesthetic matters, that bring up a wide scope of different interpretations of what is meaning in music. I shall present a selection of those that point to the course that musical meaning took up to the

⁴¹ Donald J. Grout, *A Short History of Opera*. Second edition (New York, 1965), 4-5. Joseph Kerman, *Opera as Drama* (Berkeley, 1988), 215 (see above, p. 27). Kivy, *The Fine Art of Repetition* (Chicago, 1993), 165.

nineteenth century (see chapter 4), when composers treated music as a symbolic language, in a way not known before and maybe exhausted by this generation.

Conclusions

This chapter has cleared the road and leveled the surface for the main task of studying characterization. It answers the question of what has come down to us from the authors to be weighed in analytical terms. What is the origin of the text, its sources, its value as a source and the outcome as a libretto. Its importance is basic to the understanding of the psychological state of characters. We now have the tools to answer questions that will serve as starting point for musical analyses, and will be considered in the case studies.

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CHAPTER III: The Essence of Operatic Characterization— from Theory to Practice

Introduction

The debate about whether music can support meaning by now belongs to the past. Western composers have attempted to communicate with their audience in various ways; these have been discussed by Suzanne Langer, and Leonard Meyer, to name just two of those not mentioned in this study. Recent critical thinking is heavily in favour of believing in the meaningfulness of music. I shall delineate selective opinions on this issue, from the early eighteenth century, through Berlioz's time to our own, in order to demonstrate the transition of thoughts and their applicability in my research. A significant shift in the pattern of thinking of critics is seen in the fact that the first group is concerned with music of its own time. The nineteenth century began to show interest in past time (Gothic, Renaissance; but also predictions of the music of the future); this trend culminates in our own time, and leads to specialization in fields such as semiotics, ethnomusicology, various analytical approaches. I shall review critiques published through the ages, according to the following aspects:

- Eighteenth-century criticism and the tradition of French music, that might have served for Berlioz as a source.
- Nineteenth-century criticism will enhance our appreciation of *Zeitgeist*, in which Berlioz took part in a very particular way.

- Twentieth-century criticism has broadened the scope of research. I shall deal with critique of the Romantic period, in different fields such as semiology or the deciphering of signs, theoretical questions of meaning and of narrativity in music, and phenomenology or music's phenomena interpreted.

Views concerning meaning

The eighteenth century

An early view concerning meaning in music was stated by the French philosopher Jean-Baptiste Du Bos (1670-1742), whose pioneering role in the field of aesthetics rests on his valuing the expression of feelings as the core of Art. Contrary to much eighteenth-century aesthetics, Du Bos wrote about feelings aroused in the symphonies (meaning purely instrumental music within an opera) of contemporary operatic repertoire, referring to Lully. He compared their effect to the import aroused by Corneille's or Racine's verses.

Do not we ourselves feel that these airs make such impressions on us as the musicians desire? Do we not perceive that these symphonies inflame us, calm us, soften us, and in short, operate upon us as effectually almost as Corneille's or Racine's verses?¹

Du Bos understood and communicated music's role as superior in certain cases to words, which are incapable of arousing feelings:

¹ Jean-Baptiste Du Bos, 'Réflexions critiques sur la Poésie et sur la Peinture' (Paris, 1719) in *Music and Aesthetics in the Eighteenth and Early-Nineteenth Centuries*, Peter Le Huray and James Day (eds) (Cambridge, 1981), 18.

...instrumental music has been used everywhere throughout the ages to move men's hearts and to awaken in them certain feelings, notably on those occasions when no way is known of inspiring them with words.²

Concerning opera, Du Bos's attitude is distinctive in that for him instrumental music within an opera does not assume a merely accompanying role, and we might possibly consider this penchant as a French trait, as opposed to Italian obsession with melodic ornamentation.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) in his *Essai sur l'Origine des Langues* (1760) suggested that in opera 'music, tracing emotion, made fruitful alliances with other (verbal or dramatic) realms. Music would thus strive to transcend itself'.³ Abbate interprets Rousseau's view thus: 'Operatic music above all had the potential to be an ideal music, expressive in translating and exalting what was represented in the visual and textual systems.'⁴ This interpretation lies at the core of the question of meaning for my investigation. If music reproduces (or translates) the visual and textual systems, is it redundant? and if it exalts them, then how does it do so?

The nineteenth century

The tendency in the nineteenth century to impart further meaning to the language of music resulted in development and propagation of different musical genres that support meaning, such as song, programme symphony, ballad, and song without words. In a

² Ibid., 20.

³ Cited by Abbate, 'Analysis of Opera' in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, 1, 116.

⁴ Ibid.

letter to a friend, Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847) expressed the idea that music communicates meaning even more precisely than words:

... People complain that music has so many meanings; they aren't sure what to think when they are listening to it; and yet after all, everyone understands words. I am quite the opposite. I feel not only with whole speeches, but even with individual words, that they have so many meanings, they are so imprecise, so easy to misunderstand in comparison with music, which fills one's soul with a thousand better things than words. A piece of music that I love expresses thoughts to me that are not too *imprecise* to be framed in words, but too *precise*. So I find that attempts to express such thoughts in words may have some point to them, but they are also unsatisfying ...they just cannot manage any better.⁵

On the other end of the scale stands Eduard Hanslick (1825-1904). To him, as Nicholas Cook has put it:

The aesthetic beauty of a piece of music depends not upon the emotions that the music stimulates, but upon the objective properties of the composition itself. Hence "... the most essential condition to the aesthetic enjoyment of music is that of listening to a composition for its own sake... The moment music is used as a means to induce certain states of mind... it ceases to be an art in a purely musical sense".⁶ Later Robin George Collingwood (1889-1943) and Theodor Adorno (1903-1969) took over this attitude, maintaining that music can express only itself; they 'repeatedly denied the validity of programme music ...[which] intrudes upon the listener's freedom of imagination.'⁷

If this minority line were accepted it would be impossible to confer any meaning on music, including characterization. But despite his intellectual rigour and his power of

⁵ Felix Mendelssohn, Letter to Marc André Souchay, 15 October 1842, in *Music and Aesthetics in the Eighteenth and Early-Nineteenth Centuries*, Peter Le Huray and James Day (eds) (Cambridge, 1981), 311.

⁶ Nicholas Cook. *Music, Imagination, and Culture* (Oxford, 1992), 15.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 14.

argument, Hanslick did not persuade us that meaning can be excluded; and his ideas have little relevance since he has so little to say on music with words.

The twentieth century

Twentieth-century music theoreticians look back at the music of time past, analyzing and interpreting it in new ways. Investigations involve knowledge of the style of the period, fashions and current thinking, alongside music analysis. New venues for interpreting meaning enlarge and deepen our understanding of music of the past. A recent example of such research is that of Owen Jander, who developed a theory of symbolic meaning of the birds' calls and the representation of the brook in Beethoven's sixth symphony.⁸ Jander presents evidence from contemporaries' remarks, sketch notations with Beethoven's words attached to the notes, orchestration (e.g. the violas hiding and silencing the Goldfinch's [sic.] call),⁹ rhythmic groupings that invert the 'fate' motive pattern from Beethoven's fifth symphony.¹⁰ Jander recruits, for his purpose, a symbolic analysis of paintings in order to reveal cryptic messages, and uses for that end Beethoven's own writings (e.g. the 'Heiligenstadt Testament'), meaningful harmonic procedures, or sonata form considerations, thus endowing the passage with symbolic meanings, even richer than those implied in the titles of the movements. Jander shows another example of meaning in the instrumental part in a Lied by Schubert:

⁸ Owen Jander, 'The Prophetic Conversation in Beethoven's "Scene by the Brook"'. *Musical Quarterly* 77 (1993), 508.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 520-22.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

The idea of a series of musical figures meant to express the moods of a brook—these moods intended to correspond to the moods of a human being—finds its most elaborate manifestation in Franz Schubert's *Die schöne Müllerin...*¹¹

Jander's systematic study nevertheless concludes with an open invitation to listening:

'One leaves it to the listener to figure out the situation.'¹²

Berlioz himself, after using titles for his *Symphonie fantastique*, later pondered the problem of giving titles to symphonic movements, on which he never uttered his last word. The instigation came from Beethoven's 'Pastoral' symphony.

On the manner in which instrumental music can be 'read' as a narrative, not in the sense of telling a story but in the sense of events that develop, transform and have a direction and aim, there are some enlightening thoughts. Anthony Newcomb states:

Following a story and following a work of music entail the same basic activity: the interpretation of a succession of events, possibly quite heterogeneous events, as a meaningful configuration. Such organized successions are historically and culturally bounded.¹³

Carolyn Abbate refers to the term 'narrative' as 'a course of events and emotional convolutions acted out in music'.¹⁴ Abbate reviews diverse historical and contemporary attitudes to narrativity.¹⁵ Jean-Jacques Nattiez asked a question 'Can One Speak of

¹¹ Ibid., 518.

¹² Ibid., 555.

¹³ Anthony Newcomb, 'Schumann and Late Eighteenth-Century Narrative Strategies', *19th-Century Music*, 11 (1987), 165.

¹⁴ Carolyn Abbate, *Unsung Voices* (Princeton, 1996), 23.

¹⁵ Ibid., especially pp. 21-24.

Narrativity in Music?'.¹⁶ After reviewing current trends, and stating that implied narrativity depends on *Zeitgeist*, on cultural environment, so that it has no objective sense, he then brings to the fore Jean-Paul's novel *vis-à-vis* Schumann's *Carnaval*, where

... the sounds make audible the soul of the fictional characters....Schumann [takes a] stand on the complementary relationships of music and literature ... music is a transcendental art [therefore it] has the capacity to evoke.¹⁷

He concludes:

With the specific means of music and without necessarily trying to "relate something", the composer can aim to present to us, in music, an attitude which it is then the responsibility of historical and cultural exegesis to interpret.¹⁸

This implies that analysis of music that intends to bear meaning, needs context; it is not universal. In opera, untexted music—such as preludes, interludes and postludes—frames texted music, or is framed by it. The attitude Nattiez presents can interest us for these 'islands' of instrumental music in Berlioz's operas.

A quite solitary modern opinion that negates the ability of music to characterize is that of Peter Kivy (see chapter 2). Kivy himself, in his book *The Fine Art of Repetition*, cites a discussion with Wye J. Allanbrook, Mary Hunter, and Paul Robinson, where he

¹⁶ Jean-Jacques Nattiez, 'Can One Speak of Narrativity in Music?', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 115 (1990), 240-254.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 256.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 257.

says: 'character depth cannot be musically imparted'.¹⁹ Kivy's reply to the debaters' partly published responses follows:

If what is proposed as the animating [in Kivy's term, meaning characterization in our term] quality is something that only the "experts" and "connoisseurs" have heard, then it simply does not answer my question, which is: What makes Mozart's characters live for opera lovers? Although perhaps it does answer the question: What makes Mozart's characters "live" for experts and connoisseurs?²⁰

In my opinion one cannot dismiss the notion that experts can hear more in depth even in matters of 'beauty', let alone in what makes it beautiful, or/and meaningful. The 'experts' can enhance the capacity of the layman to hear things profoundly.

Kivy seems to overlook some 'characterization' (in his sense) accomplished in the libretto, which it would be futile for music to repeat. By this I mean that the information provided by the libretto liberates the composer from the necessity to use stereotypes, those that Kivy allows to be characterized through musical conventions; in his words:

...music can, in very obvious ways, *characterize*. ...Mozart had at his disposal, for that purpose, the whole arsenal of operatic conventions, and musical materials by which one could make it immediately apparent to an audience the kind of personage presently holding forth.²¹

While composers do use these stock conventions as signifiers, these tools are indeed redundant, while also being 'flat', except that the music strikes us more vividly than

¹⁹ Kivy, *The Fine Art of Repetition*, (Cambridge, 1993), 179.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 181.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 162.

words. As music these signifiers double the words and gestures or costume (in performance we do not need to understand every word). The libretto itself surpasses Kivy's 'characterization', namely introducing characters' social rank, circumstance etc., by exposing them in diversified and conflicting situations and providing them with text that reveals feelings, consequently drawing the general lines from which a deeper musical process can start, the process I deal with in this study.

Characterization of individuals is a possibility which Kivy denies; I shall argue, however, through the details of the case studies, that beauty is insufficient for characterization, refuting Kivy's claim: 'The answer I have given to my question (What makes Mozart's character live for opera lovers?)...is: musical beauty, eloquence of musical expression'.²² I agree with Robinson, who 'can see no meaningful correlation between musical beauty and character's depth'.²³ A recent article by Joseph P. Swain about Mozart's late operas explains how text and music complement each other for expressive ends. This permits musical irony: a character in disguise, pretending to have different traits than his own plays around with characterization of himself.²⁴

²² Kivy, op. cit., 181.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Joseph P. Swain. 'Musical Disguises in Mozart's Late Comedies'. *The Opera Quarterly* 13 (1997), 55.

The application of meaning to opera: from plot to libretto to music

Plot - Libretto

The librettist's tasks are to organize the plot into dramatic situations, to phrase the text into dialogues and monologues, in rhymed or unrhymed verse or prose, and to add stage directions. In what way is the libretto insufficient by itself, so that it needs music? Why is there no character depth in a libretto, as in a novel or a play? Whatever the reason may be, the fact is that a play or a poem, let alone the novel or other prose form, cannot directly be used for an opera without extensive adaptation. Patrick Smith says: 'The power to create character musically meant that a well-cut cardboard could be used as a starting point'.²⁵ This implies that the libretto presents 'flat' characters and music gives another dimension to them. Notwithstanding, a good librettist is he who 'managed to inject personality into the work they performed'.²⁶ And indeed, for Verdi, 'if the drama [in the libretto] is vital then the musical values will follow naturally and be fulfilled'.²⁷ But Abramo Basevi, Verdi's contemporary biographer and critic, wrote on *Simon Boccanegra*: 'I had to read Piave's libretto no fewer than *six times* carefully before I could make head or tail of it—or thought that I could'.²⁸ One of the problems, as the Verdi-Piave case shows, is finding the good matching of librettist-composer (see also Gluck's comment on Calzabigi, chapter 2).

²⁵ Patrick J. Smith, *The Tenth Muse* (London, 1971), xx.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, xxii.

²⁷ Gary Schmidgall, *Literature as Opera* (New York, 1977), 190.

²⁸ Abramo Basevi, "'Simon Boccanegra", A study of the operas of Giuseppe Verdi'. Trans Walter Graunberg, in *'Simone Boccanegra'*, Studio sulle opere di Giuseppe Verdi (Firenze, 1859), Ch. 19, 259-80. In: *Music Analysis in the Nineteenth Century*, vol 2, Hermeneutic approaches. Ian Bent (ed) (Cambridge, 1994), 200.

Berlioz knew the drawbacks of librettists; when he had librettists prepare his first opera *Benvenuto Cellini* he asked assistance from the poet Alfred de Vigny to help devise dramatic material from the *Autobiography* of the sixteenth-century artist. For *La Damnation de Faust* he was helped by Almere Gandonnière and took sections from Nerval's translation of Goethe's poem; for his next operas *Les Troyens* and *Béatrice et Bénédict*, he prepared his own librettos, using literary models from Virgil and Shakespeare which he deeply cherished.

The adaptation and musical setting by Berlioz are faithful to the source in its spirit (in spite of the addition of lines from Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* to *Les Troyens*). Two obvious reasons for that are his adoration for both these poets, and his life-long stand that a work of an artist is his own and no one has the right to change it. In the case of *La Damnation* Berlioz declared that his composition is vaguely based on Goethe, therefore he believed he could make changes even in the spirit of the work. A different case is the libretto for Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*, based on a poem by Pushkin, prepared by the composer and Shilovsky; the result is an extreme example of:

Difference in tone and dramatic effect [...that] exists between "Onegin" and its operatic counterpart. ...We find in the music just what Pushkin's critic had expected: a lush, dreamily sentimental romanticism. In the poem this romanticism is specked and seared by acid of irony and ridicule.²⁹

Operas may be adapted from a novel, as was the case with Berlioz's unfinished opera *La Nonne Sanglante*, after M. G. Lewis, and the early (lost) *Estelle et Némorin* after Florian. Another opera inspired by a novel is *Werther* (1892) by Jules Massenet,

²⁹ Schmidgall, op. cit., 219.

after Goethe. This novel is actually a series of letters that express extreme states of mind. Walter Scott inspired librettists, for example, as Schmidgall says:

The metamorphosis of Walter Scott's *Bride of Lammermoor* (1819) into *Lucia di Lammermoor* (1835) represents one of the happiest lyric translations in the history of opera, especially because its story focuses upon the "other" great *bel canto* theme, passionate love plighted and thwarted, but also because Donizetti's best-known opera ... happens to be based upon one of the most highly regarded of the thirty-two epoch-making and epoch-delighting Waverley novels.³⁰

Although still in prose, an exceptional model for an opera is the *Autobiography* by Benvenuto Cellini, that first inspired Léon de Wailly, who incited Berlioz who was stimulated by the spirit of freedom of expression of its protagonist. However, other operas have been based upon the lives of artists, such as *Alessandro Stradella* by Flotow (1844).

Performance aspects

Contrary to actors in a spoken play, who are not strictly bound to reproduce the text in a given time-span, opera singers must utter the text on the pitches and within the time allocated, since it is set to measured notes. They can only very sparingly improvise pauses, since music controls these also; hence the power of the singer to convince is through vocal artistry in all its aspects. Indeed singers articulate their dramatic roles with a wide range of voice qualities. Is the singer also supposed to be an actor? Singers tend to act while singing and it surely adds to the spectacle if the singer

³⁰ Ibid., 133.

can use bodily gestures. But Kivy points to the practical impediment caused by this practice, namely that acting interferes with singing:

...it (is) impossible to sing well if you are “saw[ing] the air too much with your hand” and transacting too much stage business. ... too much acting distracts from its essentially musical nature. ...musical “gesture” [substitutes] for physical gesture in the world of opera in the form of the expressive orchestra’.³¹

Modern productions tend to demand a lot of acting skill, but singing remains the singer’s main task; the composer cannot fully count either on acting ability or on the full comprehension of the sung words by the singer (who is frequently not using his or her native tongue) or by the audience. This is another reason for assuming that composers have attempted to convey meanings and characterization through signs entrusted to the music, whether sung or played on instruments.

Musical characterization

‘Three-dimensional’ personalities that inhabit opera, exhibiting their inner life, their various characteristics, do get from the audience the right response; conversely, mere stereotypes cannot attract an audience’s affection. That is why characterization is essential.

³¹ Kivy, op. cit., 156

Coloristic aspects in opera and the visual art

The visual arts have also been brought into comparison with music. Gluck compared the composer's art to the painter's brush which adds colour to lines drawn by the artist.³² The coloristic association is still relevant to the nineteenth-century musical critic of Verdi's operas, Abramo Basevi, who speaks about the *tinta* that characterizes individual operas.

Since, as we have shown above, the libretto has too few words to convince and there is too little detail, it must therefore be music that renders opera convincing. Kerman defined the issue thus:

There seem to be three principal means by which music can contribute to drama. The most obvious is the area of characterization.... A second agency has to do with action ... A third contribution of music, though more ineffable....is what we mean, ultimately, when we say that music imbues atmosphere.³³

The first attribute is our main concern. But even regarding Kerman's third attribute, what he suggested as ineffable, is less problematic, looking at what it is that imbues atmosphere. Considering atmosphere which embraces characterization of a whole opera, Gilles de Van observed the procedure of bestowing a certain colour to a whole opera, thus also solving the problem of unity in Verdi:

³² See C. W. von Gluck. 'Alceste [1769] *Dedication*' in Oliver Strunk, *Source Readings in Music History*, vol. 4 (1981), 100.

³³ Kerman, *Opera as Drama*, revised edition (Berkeley, 1988), 215. See chapter 2, p. 27.

...en effet, la “tinta” est perceptible à la représentation, même si le spectateur ne peut l’expliquer que comme un sentiment confus de cohérence et d’homogénéité.³⁴

Basevi had already made reference to Verdi’s intention to confer this characteristic colour and unity, speaking of *tinta*, or *colorito*. Basevi explained Verdi’s term *tinta* thus:

The music finds ... in the general concept of the drama a *point d’appui*, a center towards which the various pieces that make up the opera more or less converge, and thus arises what is called the *colorito*, or the *tinta generale*. But the attainment of that *colorito* is not the end that the musician aims at but rather the means for suitably associating, with respect to the drama, the various pieces of which the opera is composed.³⁵

Basevi’s observation is in line with what Hugo had said about the atmosphere of the whole work of art. *Couleur locale* in Hugo’s view is not a momentary flavour that illustrates vividly a local colour, a custom, or a rite, but is rather a peculiarity that impregnates the whole composition (see chapter 1, especially his allusion to the tree’s sap, and the fact that one realizes the ‘tinta’ only when entering or quitting the premise of the work of art). It is thus similar to the concept *tinta*, which has found a place in recent opera criticism, and will accordingly be used here.

³⁴ Gilles de Van, ‘La Notion de “Tinta”: Mémoire Confuse et Affinités Thématiques dans les Opéras de Verdi’. *Revue de Musicologie* 76 (1990), 189.

³⁵ A. Basevi, *Studio sulle opere di Giuseppe Verdi* (Firenze, 1859), 114-5. Trans. and cited in: H.S. Powers, “La solita forma” and “The Uses of Conventions”. *Acta Musicologica* 59 (1987), 67.

Components of the performing forces: voices, orchestra

Voices

Not only good voices, well trained, but also those suitable for the role, capable of imitating the proper type of person the singer represents, are vital for the opera's characterization. A voice type is by itself a compositional decision that determines an aspect of character. Voice types are commonly classed as soprano, mezzo-soprano, alto, tenor, baritone and bass. They are, however, further classified according to their tone quality or favoured repertoire (for instance, lyric soprano, coloratura soprano, soprano lirico spinto).³⁶ Certain vocal types have been traditionally associated with types of characters; thus one might argue that the librettist has a hand in assigning a role to a voice type. Conventions create expectations; for instance the baritone is often the villain, the deep bass is the father or priest, the tenor is the hero/lover. Within these classes, voices also differ according to their expressive ability—lyrical, exuberant coloratura, or *bel canto* style. Berlioz, wishing to broaden the range for expressive purposes, demands from a tenor as much grace as force.³⁷ Vocal styles extend the range of the ability of the voice as an expressive tool. It is natural to feel a particular solidarity with the effort made by a singer. The extreme high and low registers within each voice-type express special dramatic situations, because of the additional tension.

But when the physical effort raises expectations from a singer as from an acrobat, the dramatic effect is spoiled. Berlioz wrote, in his often cynical manner, about 'la voix

³⁶ Charles Koechlin, *Traité de l'Orchestration* (Paris, 1954-46). Vol. 1 offers a detailed account, including different voice types in each category.

³⁷ Joël-Marie Foquet, 'Les Voix de Persée'. *L'Avant-Scène Opéra* 142 (1991), 88-89.

de poitrine' versus 'la voix de tête'. The former was made to please the audience, which comes to hear the excessive effort a singer exercises:

[Quoi qu'il en soit, il n'y a rien qui ait la faveur du public comme le fameux ut de poitrine.] En voyant les efforts [d'un ténor qui a eu son heure de gloire] pour arracher de son larynx torturé des notes hautes telles que le si naturel et l'ut de poitrine, on s'effraie des accidents auxquels is s'expose. Sa voix se brise et l'on s'attend à chaque instant à voir aussi se rompre dans sa gorge un nerf ou un vaisseau sanguin et le malheureux chanteur tomber suffoquer sur le théâtre. ...Tout l'intérêt de la reprise de Guillaume Tell reside pour eux dans cet ut diamant, dans cet ut introuvable. La pièce, la partition, les chœurs, l'orchestre, les chanteurs ne sont rien, rien que l'encadrement malheureusement nécessaire de l'ut pyramidal. Quelle misère!³⁸

It is not to say that Berlioz did not attribute qualities of value to the voice type, and to the particular abilities of singers, but the motivation of vocal effects must be dramatic-musical and not merely intended to expose the singers' capability and thus appeal to popular (read debased) taste.

Instruments

The early development of musical instruments and of orchestral size in opera was dramatic, from the affective figured bass line, which accompanied the voices throughout in Caccini's *Euridice* (1600), to Monteverdi's *Orfeo* (1607), which already required 30 players, '...listed next to the *dramatis personae*, implying that the instrumental ensemble is a vital part of the opera'.³⁹ In the eighteenth century the

³⁸ Berlioz, *Journal des Débats*, 17 May 1837 in *Cauchemars et Passions*. Condé (ed.). (Paris, 1981), 261. Square brackets appear in Condé, as his additions.

³⁹ John Spitzer, Neal Zaslaw 'Orchestra', in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera* (1992). Stanley Sadie (ed.), vol. 3, 719.

orchestra attained a standard composition that was the same from Handel to Mozart,⁴⁰ though the instruments were differently deployed. Along with the development of opera, the composition of the orchestra changed, and the instruments started assuming affective roles, as Berlioz described in his *Grand Traité d'Instrumentation et d'Orchestration*.⁴¹ In his treatise Berlioz introduced numerous excerpts of instrumental passages from operas by Gluck, Mozart, Spontini, Weber, Beethoven, Méhul, Rossini, Meyerbeer, and Halévy; but for purely orchestral music he only quotes himself and Beethoven. This selection illustrates the great importance Berlioz attached to orchestral sections within operas and their instrumentation. We tend to classify certain musical instruments as singing ones, such as the cello or the clarinet, that are said to imitate the human voice. Berlioz indeed used such instruments as the cor anglais as personified voices (in the scène d'amour in *Roméo et Juliette*, and Margarita's 'Romance' in *La Damnation*), or he knew, in his personal way, how to imbue human qualities to strings (as in the 'Love scene' in *Roméo et Juliette*).

The use of musical instruments in French tradition, known to Berlioz, occasionally served as a marker for a character. This is the case in *La Dame Blanche* (1825) by François-Marie Boieldieu.⁴² The White Lady Anna's music is preceded by harp arpeggios. One can think of the viola in *Harold en Italie* as an instrument representing an imaginary character, or of Andromache's pantomime in *Les Troyens* in which the clarinet represents her, a visible character who does not sing.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 723.

⁴¹ Hector Berlioz, *Grand Traité d'Instrumentation* (Paris, 1843).

Benjamin Perl has demonstrated how instruments assume dramatic roles in Berlioz's operas.⁴³ Perl summarizes the progress from classical opera with unrealistic personages, whose character can be observed through action manifested in recitatives and arias, to the musical drama of the nineteenth century, where people appear more realistic; sometimes the words reflect one side of their being while the orchestra reveals another, inner side:

Dans le drame musical ... se manifeste une tension entre les personnages, plutôt vraisemblable et d'une apparence réaliste, perçus à leurs paroles et gestes d'un côté, et leur monde intérieurs, représenté par l'orchestre, de l'autre.⁴⁴

Perl also finds important differences between Berlioz's older contemporaries and Berlioz's own use of the orchestra. He finds that the new techniques of colour and continuity existed already in Spontini, Halévy, Meyerbeer, or Donizetti in isolated instances, while in Berlioz every orchestral detail is carefully planned to give the right colour.⁴⁵

Changes in the technical facilities and improvements of musical instruments and the composition of the orchestra influenced opera and *vice versa*, as Cone states:

⁴² For Berlioz Boieldieu was considered old fashioned in appreciation of new music; his idea on Beethoven and the new music was that it is inconceivable, according to his *Mémoires*, 123.

⁴³ Benjamin Perl, 'L'Orchestre dans les Opéras de Berlioz et de ses Contemporains', Thèse de doctorat de 3^e cycle, L'Université des Sciences Humaines de Strasbourg, 1989, 2 vols.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, 188.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 190.

By applying dramatic methods to instruments as individuals, Berlioz evolves new forms and new sounds. One reason that his orchestra seems so alive is that he treats it as if it *were* alive.⁴⁶

Ratner has shown that sound *per se* is a compositional tool, more decisive for the Romantic composer than before. Ratner exemplifies his point with the orchestral role in the Romantic period with Berlioz's overture to *Les Francs-Juges* (1826), arranged for brass instruments, which Berlioz heard in his visit to Prussia. Ratner states that:

...the work had already many striking effects of instrumentation. [Berlioz was] astonished by "S.A.R. [qui] ...avait eu la courtoisie de faire commencer le concert par l'ouverture des *Francs-Juges*, que je n'avais jamais entendue ainsi arrangée pour des instruments à vent. Ils étaient là trois cent vingt hommes ..., et ils exécutèrent ce morceau difficile avec une précision merveilleuse et cette verve furibonde... Le solo des instruments de cuivre, dans l'introduction, fut surtout foudroyant, exécuté par quinze grands trombones basses, dix-huit ou vingt trombones ténors et altos, douze bass-tubas et une fourmilière de trompettes etc...".⁴⁷

Ratner concludes that:

... such physical amplification of sound prefigures the electronic amplification of our time; each is addressed to the same purpose—to create an overpowering effect of sound.⁴⁸

Sonorous values, in addition to melody, harmony or counterpoint, give colour and range of dynamics, elements of which may recur as cross-references, serving dramatic purposes; these capabilities were exploited as never before in the nineteenth century, and as Ratner demonstrated, function for rhetorical purposes. Peter Kivy confines the

⁴⁶ Edward T. Cone, 'Inside the Saint's Head' (1971) in *Music: A View from Delft* (Chicago, 1989), 242.

⁴⁷ Leonard G. Ratner, *Romantic Music. Sound and Syntax* (New York, 1992), 75. The Berlioz citation is from Berlioz's *Mémoires*, 394. I took the liberty to cite the original and not the translation as in Ratner.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

orchestra's role to the function equivalent to the actor's gesture.⁴⁹ I shall claim that the orchestra's role is pertinent to the dramatic characterization in other ways as well.

Conclusions

The following are the premises that will contribute to explaining characterization and which will be used as a basis for further investigation:

- French tradition established meaning in purely instrumental music; music transcends itself; musical instruments assume quasi independent role in conveying meaning.
- Instrumental music needs context to be decoded.
- The libretto has to include dramatic situations; nevertheless a good source alone is not sufficient, and should leave room for music to add its specific contribution.
- Voice types and voice techniques help characterize mainly through conventions.
- Orchestra substitutes bodily gesture, as part of its transmission of meaning.
- Opera's *tinta* contributes to its uniqueness, and provides unity.

These premises are of general interest for the subject of opera and meaning. But for each particular case, the means will be different; opera displays a specialization of means for dramatic ends. To understand Berlioz's music, one has to be acquainted with his credo as manifested in his writings (illustrated in chapter 5), but first, I shall

⁴⁹ Kivy, op. cit, 157.

produce a selection of comments on his style, from contemporaries and from modern research (see chapter 4).

CHAPTER IV: Criticism of Berlioz

Introduction

This chapter deals with criticism of Berlioz's music in his own time and in ours, and in particular of the three operas which are the concern of this thesis, *Benvenuto Cellini*, *La Damnation de Faust*, and *Les Troyens*. The nineteenth-century criticism may illuminate whether and how eccentric and novel, in the opinion of critics, Berlioz's output could be, and help speculate if criticism had an effect on his creative process. The twentieth-century criticism will show that modern interest in Berlioz is reflected in today's research. I shall concentrate on research dealing with musical characterization in the above-mentioned operas and on some modern research tools.¹ My interest focuses on interpretation of musical phenomena that have extra-musical interest.

Views of Berlioz's contemporaries

Reviews of operas by contemporary critics enhance our understanding of the ambience in which the composer was active. Did the often-hostile reception affect his creative forces? One answer to this question comes from Joseph d'Ortigue, who said:

¹ For my research I exclude those studies which deal with purely musical theory.

He [Berlioz] will continue to fight the good fight, but there will always be a gulf between the way in which the mass of the public conceives of art—owing to the theories commonly taught—and the way M. Berlioz conceives it.²

We may assume that some of the antagonistic critics were often driven by political incentives of the official Administration rather than by artistic ones, or their critique was based on personal rivalry or animosity. Some were just ignorant or envious or both. The case of Fétis can count for some of these options, as in the example of his critique of *Harold en Italie*, told by Berlioz in his *Mémoires*. Fétis claimed that two notes in the *Marche des Pèlerins* do not fit into the harmony, meaning the two harp notes that represent the bells, and which enter at the end of each phrase. Berlioz answered: ‘...je ne suis qu’un simple homme et M. Fétis n’est qu’un pauvre musicien, car les deux fameuses notes entrent toujours, au contraire, dans l’harmonie’.³ From caricatures and criticism the picture of Berlioz is of an extrovert, forceful, noisy and extravagant. Caricaturists called his concerts ‘monstrous’.⁴ On the other hand he was admired by leading artists of the new Romantic movement such as Liszt, Hugo, Gautier, D’Ortigue, De Vigny, Nerval, Heine, Gounod and others.

Some critics attempted objectivity. Peter Bloom presents, in the ‘Preface’ to *Berlioz Studies*, an article that was hitherto unknown, published in *Le Temps*, in December 1830. Although the writer speaks favourably of this new discovery of a musician, some of his compliments are ambiguous. He finds, for example, the overture to *Les Francs-Juges* lacking expressiveness, softness. His instrumentation is correct but confused. His

² Cited in Jacques Barzun. *Berlioz and His Century* (Chicago, 1982), 243.

³ Berlioz, *Mémoires* (Paris, 1991), 303.

thinking is always choleric. He lacks softness, sweet passions.⁵ With all this, the writer ends with a prophecy: 'M. Berlioz, s'il répond à ce début, sera un jour digne de prendre place auprès de Beethowe [sic]'.⁶ In 1838 the comparison with Beethoven came up again, this time from Paganini, who declared in the presence of other musicians that Berlioz did go farther than Beethoven.⁷ This prophecy has not come true in the view of the modern world; Berlioz has not been accepted as a genius in the way Beethoven was; he is still widely underrated, and as in his life-time he is a stranger for his own countrymen.

Was Berlioz's musical language, expressive and supportive of meaning, at least understood by some open-minded amateurs, or was his effort to communicate meaning a solitary enterprise? The answer is not unanimous. Whereas Berlioz enjoyed successful reception for his *Symphonie fantastique*, *Requiem*, *Roméo et Juliette*, *Harold en Italie*, and *L'Enfance du Christ*, he suffered as an opera composer from the failure of his first finished opera *Benvenuto Cellini* (see chapter 7). *La Damnation de Faust* enjoyed only two performances in Paris (1846), with a half empty hall, after which he conducted it in Russia and Germany with far more success.⁸ The genre of 'Opéra de Concert' was not well received in Paris until after Berlioz's death. The opera *Les Troyens* was not accepted as a whole; if there was success it was only for the second part (*Les Troyens à Carthage*), after he had to split the work in two, a painful decision by itself. It is not

⁴ *Charivari*, see Kern D. Holoman, *Berlioz* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1989), 508.

⁵ Peter Bloom, 'Preface'. in *Berlioz Studies*, Peter Bloom (ed.) (Cambridge, 1992), xii-xiii. The writer of this review is unknown, although Bloom provides some possible authors.

⁶ *Ibid.*, xiii-xiv.

⁷ CG II, 602.

surprising that the older contemporaries objected to his novelties, but the younger generation of composers was also not always in his favour, as Holoman says: 'the less good ones found him frightening and aloof, and succeeding generations trod gently, if at all, in the direction of the Berlioz style'.⁹

Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849) found Berlioz's counterpoint problematic, compared with Mozart, which is of course not surprising. He said:

[In Mozart] Each of the parts has its own movement, which, while still according with the others, keeps on with its own melody and follows it perfectly; *there* is your counterpoint ... The harmonies of Berlioz are overlaid like a veneer; he fills in the intervals as best he can.¹⁰

Rushton puts this citation in context when he says:

It was natural that Chopin, a keyboard genius and an instinctive master of counterpoint, should hear Berlioz's harmony as inorganic... Berlioz's music appears less purely contrapuntal than Chopin's, but more independently linear; ... Consequently the harmonic events of *expressive value* [emphasis mine] adhere more to one line than another....¹¹

This is to show Berlioz's concern for being expressive of the subject matter: his compositional process aims at truthfulness of expression, procedures can be novel or traditional. However, Robert Schumann (1810-1856), despite reservations about the programme of the *Symphonie fantastique*, showed more understanding of Berlioz's

⁸ See Julian Rushton, 'Introduction', NBE 8b, 457-8.

⁹ Holoman, *op. cit.*, 511.

¹⁰ Eugène Delacroix, reporting the views of Chopin in *Journal*, 7 April 1849. Cited in Rushton, *The Musical Language* (1983), 169. Similar observations are reported by Chopin's students Jorgens Eigeldinger (paper read at the IMS Congress, London 1997).

¹¹ Rushton, *op. cit.*, 179.

language. For example in his pioneering article on this symphony he writes, concerning the use of rhythm: ‘...music is trying to return to its origins, when it was not yet bound by the law of downbeat, and to achieve on its own a prose style or a higher poetic articulation’.¹²

From these examples concerning Berlioz’s style in general, I shall move on to more specific views of his contemporaries concerning the compositions studied in this thesis.

Benvenuto Cellini

Franz Liszt (1811-1886) was a friend who greatly assisted Berlioz in often difficult times. Peter Bloom quotes Liszt:

In October 1, 1838, Franz Liszt inquired from Italy about the fate of *Benvenuto Cellini*: “Je n’ai pu lire qu’un ou deux rendus comte [sic] fort peu bienveillants, et les lettres que j’ai reçue de Paris m’annoncent toutes un insuccès décidé. Je ne puis vous dire la peine que cette nouvelle me fait. Pauvre Berlioz! Pauvre homme de génie!” Long a supporter of Berlioz and his opera, whose revival in 1852 he would promote, Liszt realized early on that a preponderance of negative reviews meant failure at the Opéra.¹³

In 1839 Liszt wrote in the *Revue et Gazette Musicale* about Benvenuto Cellini the sculptor, Perseus and Berlioz, in which he praises Berlioz the artist, comparing him to the two other geniuses (see chapter 7, where I cite this letter). In his *Mémoires* Berlioz wrote that Paganini had just come back from Sardinia when the opera *Benvenuto Cellini* was persecuted (égorgé). His reaction was:

¹² Robert Schumann, ‘A Symphony by Berlioz’. *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* (July-August, 1835). Trans. Edward T. Cone, in: *Hector Berlioz, Fantastic Symphony*, Edward T. Cone (ed.) (New York, Norton, 1971), 237.

Si j'étais directeur de l'Opéra, j'engagerais aujourd'hui même ce jeune homme pour m'écrire trois autres partitions, je lui en donnerais le prix d'avance et je ferais un marché d'or.¹⁴

Box office failure apart, people of great minds understood the opera's message. The press was divergent, as can be seen in the volume on *Benvenuto Cellini, Dossier de Presse Parisienne (1838)*,¹⁵ a sample of which I shall cite here.

Théophile Gautier (1811-1872), one of the authors associated with the Romantic movement, wrote on *Benvenuto Cellini* in *La Presse* on 17.9.1838, associating Berlioz the 'musical reformer' with Victor Hugo, the literary reformer. Both introduced deviations from traditional techniques in order to enhance their art:

... de même que Victor Hugo déplace ses césures, enjambe d'un vers sur l'autre et varie, par toutes sortes d'artifices, la monotonie de la période poétique, Hector Berlioz change de temps, trompe l'oreille qui attendait un retour symétrique et ponctue à son gré la phrase musicale; comme le poète qui a doublé la richesse des rimes, pour que le vers regagnât en couleur ce qu'il perdait en cadence; le novateur musicien a nourri et serré son orchestration; il a fait chanter les instruments beaucoup plus qu'on ne l'avait fait avant lui et, par l'abondance et la variété des dessins, il a compensé amplement le manque de rythme de certaines portions.¹⁶

Both artists' deviations from the normal contributed to interest, to reducing of monotony, to giving colour, by avoiding the expected.

¹³ See: *Hector Berlioz. Benvenuto Cellini. Dossier de Presse Parisienne (1838)*. Peter Bloom (ed.) (N.P. 1996), v-vi.

¹⁴ Berlioz, *Mémoires*, 291.

¹⁵ Peter Bloom (ed.), op. cit. (N.P., 1995).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 115-16.

On the other end of the scale we find a critique by Henri Blaze in *La Revue des Deux Mondes* of 1.10.1838, entitled 'De l'École fantastique et de M. Berlioz'.¹⁷ In it one finds declarations about the 'blasphemy' of novelty such as:

Il y a des esprits turbulents que toute tradition inquiète; il suffit qu'une chose tienne à la terre depuis des siècles, pour qu'ils s'efforcent de l'en arracher: le monde finirait par n'être qu'un désert si on les laissait faire.¹⁸

To him Berlioz broke the rules just for the sake of novelty. Nevertheless, there were few commentators who accepted novelty with moderation. One is Jules Morel who wrote for *La France Musicale*, 16.9.1838, about Berlioz's penchant for irregular phrases, and unorthodox rhythms, believing that all is permitted to the composer. When questioning whether this system is positive or negative, he admits that he knows neither absolute good nor bad. In any case, he says, time will judge its merits.¹⁹ In fact, conservatism for its own sake was for Berlioz Philistinism; but he did not refute the use of traditional methods where appropriate.

La Damnation de Faust

The two Paris performances of 1848 went almost unnoticed, with empty halls. After the performance in Dresden, 25.4.1854, Berlioz wrote to his friend Robert Griepenkerl, who was a dramaturg and professor of linguistics and German literature, and a defender, in his writings, of the Romantic music,²⁰ that all his colleagues were furious

¹⁷ Ibid, 151-174.

¹⁸ Ibid, 167.

¹⁹ Ibid, 60.

²⁰ Berlioz, *Mémoires*, 368, note.

about the German critics who expressed their view that Berlioz is 'un calculateur de notes sans idées'.²¹ In these critics German nationalism rears its head; they are all furious about Berlioz's 'audacity' at blaming Mephisto

... en le faisant tromper Faust... Car Méphistophélès est un démon vertueux et honnête qui ne manque pas à sa parole. ... De plus ce naïf rédacteur proteste *solemnement* contre la chanson des Étudiants, en assurant que jamais des Étudiants allemands ne sont allés *quaerentes puellas per urbem* ... *O Sancta simplicitas!* ... il faut que j'aie lu cela pour le croire!.²²

These critics also write about his musical style: '[il] manque de force créatrice et d'invention musicale',²³ a view that by any criteria seems unfounded.

Léon Kreutzer engaged himself to attack Berlioz's opponents.²⁴ In his defence of Berlioz's choice to write music accompanied by text, or bearing titles, he admits that even his partisans—who are those who defend all good music—would indeed prefer to hear more 'pure' music. For Kreutzer music has an advantage over poetry in expressing dramatic ends because of its ability to expose different ideas simultaneously. To make his point he analyses *La Damnation*. One of the reasons for its failure to his mind is the complexity of the rhythm 'C'est évidemment un choc rythmique dont résulte un effet absolument défendu par l'imperturbable logique des MM. les professeurs du

²¹ CG IV, 1750.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid., note.

²⁴ *La Gazette musicale* 22 (1855), 10-12.

Conservatoire'.²⁵ It seems that the difficulties Berlioz had encountered in *Benvenuto Cellini* persisted.

Les Troyens à Carthage

Les Troyens was never performed as a whole opera in Berlioz's lifetime. Its mutilated second part, *Les Troyens à Carthage*, was first performed on 4.11.1863, and got 20 performances thereafter. The critiques of these performances can only partly contribute to Berlioz's real achievement, because of the mutilations that critics were not aware of.²⁶ We can still gain some insight from reading these reviews.

Louis Roger wrote in *L'Univers musicale*, 12.11.1863, that he was disappointed because he expected from this composer '[une] abondance de couleur, ... une profusion d'idées qu'on cherche inutilement dans la pièce de M. Berlioz'.²⁷ Roger adds that the failure is caused by the dramatic weakness, but as a symphonist Berlioz's talent is unequivocal. When he lets the instruments speak in his mysterious language, without the influence of text, his superiority is incontestable.²⁸ Such an idea is quite contrary to Berlioz's inclinations, but it was a common perception that he excelled only as an instrumental composer.

Joseph d'Ortigue wrote for the *Journal des Débats*, on 9.11.1863, a warm admiring article, not without some sporadic criticisms, which are illuminating coming from

²⁵ Op. cit., 11. This commentator expressed his view concerning the *Marche hongrois* that it is Berlioz's own.

²⁶ See Louise Goldberg, 'Performance History and Critical Opinion', in: *Hector Berlioz, Les Troyens*. Ian Kemp (ed.) (Cambridge, 1988), 181-195.

²⁷ Frank Heidelberger (ed.), *Les Troyens à Carthage. Dossier de Presse (1863)* (N.P., 1995), 169.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 171.

someone who was an old friend. D'Ortigue spoke of the choice of subject, which has become old-fashioned by that time, but he said that Berlioz was looking for the kind of expression that suited heroic persons. His libretto furnishes dramatic situations for the music, which expresses these sentiments successfully; the epic mood is expressed by the choruses. The Royal Hunt, which is in the second Act of this version, was given without staging. Consequently Berlioz thought it would be better to play it during the intermission, for those who wished to listen were those who had his great symphonies in mind; they could do so while the others could walk a little longer in the foyer.

Apparemment M. Berlioz a jugé que cette symphonie serait inintelligible sans la fantasmagorie de la scène. Quand donc M. Berlioz reviendra-t-il de cette erreur (erreur de son esprit seulement) qu'une symphonie a besoin d'un programme?²⁹

D'Ortigue alludes now to a subconscious influence of Mozart:

Quel bel hommage il lui rend [to Mozart], malgré lui, l'ingrat! Dans cet admirable morceau où sans réminiscence, sans imitation, sans y songer le moins du monde, mais par la seule vertu de son talent musical, il laisse tomber de sa plume des mélodies, des flots d'harmonie, des chants, des accens [sic], des accords tellement suaves, tellement profonds, tellement mélancoliques, tellement nobles, qu'on les croirait retrouvés dans le portefeuille de celui qui a tracé le rôle de *donna Anna*.³⁰

He praises the coordination of text and music: 'La poésie donne la main à la musique, et l'une et l'autre s'enlacent et se confondent dans une suave et merveilleuse étreinte'.³¹ D'Ortigue recommends attentive listening to the music for its better

²⁹ Ibid., 71.

³⁰ Ibid., 71.

³¹ Ibid., 72.

understanding. He criticised though the unclear division between recitative and aria, and the sometimes too heavy accompaniment.³² An allusion to Gluck naturally follows; he finds that Berlioz amplified his master's style with the help of modern instruments that are the result of Beethoven's and Weber's influence. The example is Aeneas's air '*Non, je veux te revoir*'.³³ D'Ortigue should have understood that this absence of rigid separation between recitative and aria is indeed Gluckian. Otherwise his words show not only sympathy but understanding of Berlioz's language.

The Berlioz scene in modern research

Significant research started even before the centennial of Berlioz's death in 1969.³⁴ The greatest edifice of recent scholarship is the New Berlioz Edition,³⁵ enriched by the discovery of the *Messe Solennelle* in 1991,³⁶ closely followed by the complete edition of his letters, the *Corr spondance G n rale*,³⁷ and the forthcoming complete edition of his critical writings for the daily press. Modern criticism and analysis of Berlioz's style has been growing, but still lagging behind composers such as Verdi and Wagner. Patrick Smith, who writes favourably about Berlioz the librettist as well as the composer, nevertheless adds:

³² Ibid., 73.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ See Holoman, 'The Present State of Berlioz Research'. *Acta Musicologica* 47 (1975), 31-67.

³⁵ From here on I shall use the common abbreviation: NBE. Examples give page numbers/bars in a given volume or composition.

³⁶ NBE, vol. 23, 1994. See Hugh Macdonald, 'Berlioz's *Messe Solennelle*'. *19th-Century Music* 16 (1993), 267-285.

³⁷ Pierre Citron (ed.) (Paris, 1972-).

Berlioz was never the master of dramaturgy that Wagner was, but his strong musical sense of drama did much to offset whatever shortcomings he had in stagecraft, and often he supplied touches both appropriate and moving.³⁸

I shall examine this aspect, and will try to prove to the contrary; for example see the discussion of *Benvenuto Cellini* (chapter 7), where Berlioz superposed the church calendar upon dramatic events; and in *La Damnation de Faust* the love duet and Mephisto's simultaneous activity (chapter 8, Fig. 1). On Berlioz's musical characterization Smith argues:

If his characters have no great subtlety they have a nobility of stature and a personalization through melody and orchestration which are different in intent and result from Wagner's ... Whereas Wagner relied on short motives to limn characterization..., Berlioz used the longer, more Gluck-derived musical lines. Thus Marguerite's great aria, "*D'amour, l'ardente flamme*," becomes in its whole a personalization of her character, and the whole canvas of the flickering darts of orchestration paints both Mercutio (the Mab Scherzo) and Mephisto.³⁹

I shall provide evidence to show Margarita's musical character (chapter 8).

The scarce studies concerning whole works, or following a particular character, suggested the choice of the compositions for my analyses. However I shall refer to some commentators on operas and figures discussed in this study, namely *Benvenuto Cellini*, *La Damnation de Faust*, and *Les Troyens*, showing that their focus is mainly on the libretto, albeit not exclusively.

³⁸ Patrick Smith, *The Tenth Muse* (London, 1971), 307.

³⁹ Ibid.

Benvenuto Cellini

Berlioz's choice of subject for the opera *Benvenuto Cellini* is partly autobiographical, as Garry Schmidgall observes:

Autobiography was an important aspect of the ethos of Romantic egotism, and Berlioz, like so many Romantics, wore his heart if not on his sleeve at least very close to the surface of his art...*Cellini* can be seen as the last and most elaborate part of Berlioz's "autobiographical" trilogy' (along with the *Symphonie fantastique* and *Harold in Italy*).⁴⁰

On characterization in the source *Autobiography* Schmidgall comments:

The *Autobiography* was a perfect vehicle for what Berlioz knew he could portray best. Intense passion, animation, and unpredictability are the dominant qualities of Cellini's personality and his prose style... Cellini naturally dramatized the events of his life, and the composer also possessed a sophisticated dramatic sense... Cellini wrote with a virile colloquialism and a minimum of "artistic" overlay. The same qualities are the essence of Berlioz's credo as an artist...⁴¹

On musical characterization Schmidgall states:

Cellini readily admits that he was often passion's slave, and Berlioz is careful to make sure his own Cellini remains precisely that - even devoting Cellini's Act I Romance ('La gloire était ma seule idole') to an expression of the pull between duty and passion. ... The orchestral fire never dies out under the role of Cellini. Nothing better captures his catapulting Romantic individualism than the duet "Quand des sommets de la montagne" for Cellini and Teresa in Act II. Marked *allegro fuoco ma non troppo*, this restless, fervent duet truly takes flight. One is reminded of Hernani's horn summoning the mountain hawks,

⁴⁰ Garry Schmidgall, *Literature as Opera* (New York, 1977), 154.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 172.

with which Hugo shattered the repose of the neo-Classical old guard.⁴²

Schmidgall describes musical characterization in general lines, which for the purpose of his book on literature as opera is no more than expected. His comments nevertheless only invite deeper exploration into what and how music reflects and uncovers this intriguing character and his entourage. Are these qualities reflected in music? I shall refer to this question in chapter 7.

La Damnation de Faust

Interesting comments on Berlioz's *La Damnation de Faust* are found in Steven Huebner's book on Gounod's opera. He mentions two of Berlioz's dramatic works as 'close to autobiographical':

... the composer's identification with the emotional and spiritual state of Goethe's protagonist [results in the personification of] the artist in the *Symphonie fantastique*, Faust the philosopher, Berlioz the man - the strands are inseparable. To step beyond charted knowledge or artistic convention was to invite isolation and *ennui* born of struggle; in both works, an awakening of sensual instincts brings a ... new way to relate to the world surrounding. Only after a happy tryst with the beloved do the artist in the Symphony (*fantastique*) and Berlioz's Faust (following Goethe) achieve a sense of unity with Nature - and a momentary reprieve from suffering.The abrupt negation of Faust's great achievement of solidarity with Nature [as a result of Mephisto's intervention] is the high point of Berlioz's drama. All that follows - the ride to Hell, the Pandemonium, the Apotheosis of Margarita - is *dénouement*.⁴³

⁴² Ibid., 172-3.

⁴³ Steven Huebner, *The Operas of Charles Gounod* (Oxford, 1990), 103.

Touching upon music, Huebner mentions the musical potential of Goethe's *Faust*; by that he means that the text of the poem includes "songs":

The authors of an opera were naturally more attracted than a playwright to the episodes in Goethe that are designated as sung or, if not, were conventionally seen as musical, like Gretchen's soliloquy at the spinning wheel.⁴⁴

Indeed the first music Berlioz composed as a response to reading Goethe's *Faust* was in 1829, the *Huit scènes de Faust*, which include mostly those parts of the poem that are 'songs' as 'Chants de la Fête de Pâque', 'Chanson de Méphistophélès', 'Le Roi de Thulé'. Nevertheless, it seems to me that it is even more the Romantic spell of the poem that attracted Berlioz, than the sheer existence of 'songs'.

Katherine Reeve asserts Berlioz's alliance with the Romantic wave in that:

...Berlioz in the 1840s - and to the end of his life - remains faithful to more broadly grounded ideals of the 'complete' artwork, inclusively expressive in the spirit of Hugo's Preface to *Cromwell*. How those ideals apply to his *Faust*, and how music is capable of enacting them, may be further deduced by examining some of the musical conventions through which his 'Romantic hero' is constructed.⁴⁵

She then gives a detailed musical analysis of *Faust*'s musical presentation.

On *Faust*'s musical characterization, Rushton devoted a chapter in his book *The Musical Language of Berlioz*. He concludes:

The examination of tonalities and motives in relation to the unfolding of dramatic ideas does reveal, in *La Damnation* as in

⁴⁴ Ibid., 110.

⁴⁵ Katherine Reeve, 'The Damnation of Faust', in *Berlioz Studies*, Peter Bloom (ed.) (Cambridge, 1992), 180. On Hugo's views see chapter 1.

Les Troyens, a network of correspondences made audible by the composer to the experienced listener, to the enrichment of his understanding through the multiplicity of perspectives they provide.⁴⁶

Margarita, to whom Berlioz attached greater importance than Goethe did, has not yet attracted so much critical attention.

Les Troyens

Patrick Smith stresses Berlioz's

... verse and his imagination. The latter is only partially in evidence in the two opera librettos he wrote [*Béatrice et Bénédict* and *Les Troyens*; *La Damnation de Faust* not being a proper opera], because both of them attempt to conform to the conventional idea of what an opera is.⁴⁷

The question of conforming to conventional ideas was hardly Berlioz's concern, seen from his own statement protesting against the view that only now (1854), with his *L'Enfance du Christ*, did he develop a new style that conforms with the French taste. He did not conform, he just adapted the style to the subject matter.⁴⁸

Rushton's article on the overture of *Les Troyens* provides him with an occasion for a fully-fledged musical analysis of the opera and its endemic techniques.⁴⁹

Characterization though is not a major issue in the article.

⁴⁶ Rushton, *The Musical Language* (Cambridge, 1983), 256.

⁴⁷ Smith, *The Tenth Muse* (London, 1971), 306. See also David Cairns, 'Berlioz and Virgil' in *Hector Berlioz: Les Troyens*, Ian Kemp (ed.), (Cambridge, 1988), 76-88

⁴⁸ Berlioz, *Mémoires*, 'Post-scriptum' (Paris, 1991), 556.

⁴⁹ Rushton, 'The overture to *Les Troyens*'. *Music Analysis* 4 (1985), 119-144.

Paul Robinson's approach to Aeneas's musical and theatrical representation in *Les Troyens* is based on his hypothesis that Berlioz created, as did to his mind all nineteenth-century artists, under the spell of history.

[Berlioz's] creation is inconceivable outside the intellectual atmosphere that made the idea available to him... To ignore the opera's intellectual affinities is to fall victim to the most myopic form of the intentional fallacy. ... Arguably it is the most pervasive assumption of European intellectual life in the Nineteenth Century, finding expression in the philosophy, science, political theory, literature, art, and - as I hope to show - music of the age.⁵⁰

By applying what he calls the 'Hegelian legacy' of the individual's dependence on history, Robinson relates Aeneas's story to a deterministic approach, where Aeneas has no responsibility to his fate. The detour Aeneas is made to take from Troy to Rome through Carthage happens in order to become

... morally and psychologically enriched for having emerged from its Carthaginian antithesis. The geographical trajectory of the opera charts a historical course from discredited homeland, through exotic alienation, to the true homeland of the future.⁵¹

So far this much could be deduced from the libretto, if one agrees with the fatalistic attitude to history, following Hegel, which Robinson claims must have been Berlioz's pattern of thinking. But Robinson refers also to music's role. He points to instrumentation's role and *couleur locale* in the emphasis on ceremonial music, for the sake of glorification of historical moments. Brass instruments invoke grandeur, authority. This claim brings to one's mind the first section of *Roméo et Juliette*, and the

⁵⁰ Paul Robinson, 'Berlioz', *Opera and Ideas. From Mozart to Strauss* (Ithaca, 1985), 106.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 109.

Pope in *Benvenuto Cellini*; association of brass with authority seems established for Berlioz. Another point that Robinson raises is the contrast between public and private in scenes involving Aeneas. 'It merely intensifies our awareness of the drama's historic import'.⁵² But the matter can be seen from yet another point of view. If one takes off the word 'merely', one can consider the musical point of this distinction between public and private as means for characterization of Aeneas as a leader and a warrior, but also as a human being with emotions, haunted by conflicts of duty and affection (see chapter 9). The contrast between public and private was also noticed by Cone regarding the Requiem,⁵³ a point that weakens Robinson's claim for historical determinism and suggests an attitude for multi-faceted resources of the human being—in the *Requiem* it is Man before God, in *Les Troyens* it is the leader and the man.

An illuminating point for musical characterization from Robinson's teaching is his notion of 'historical bass'. He finds that

...the bass is released from its supporting role and trades on a life of its own. The result is to create an impression of forces at work—and on the move—beneath the explicit musical gestures of the characters. In *The Trojans* those forces, I believe, are the impersonal laws of history, which carry the characters toward a destiny that they don't fully understand ...(Berlioz) employs it only when he is treating characters or situations connected with Aeneas and his historical mission.⁵⁴

Robinson's idea that the notion of history drove Berlioz thus to treat Aeneas with an independent bass line is one possible application of music's contribution to

⁵² Ibid., 116.

⁵³ Edward T. Cone, 'Berlioz's Divine Comedy: The *Grande Messe des Morts*'. *19th-Century Music* 4 (1980), 3-16.

⁵⁴ Robinson, op. cit., 125-6.

characterization, and it merits further investigation (see chapter 9 below, Aeneas's and Panthus's shared bass motive).

Conclusions

Nineteenth-century criticism dealt with the changing styles; the conservative or the ill-disposed critics found any novelty an abomination. The most valuable critique for our cause is by d'Ortigue, who stated explicitly that the gap between Berlioz and his audience did not influence his compositional principles. Thus criticism did not stop him characterizing the controversial Cellini, just as likely misunderstanding of the concept of the *Légende dramatique* (*La Damnation de Faust*) did not deter him, and nor did the unpopular mythological subject of *Les Troyens*, despite its vast scope and unconventional structure.

Nevertheless, if the mainstream of criticism had reacted better to his art, maybe he would have revealed more of the kind and been even more daring. We know that criticism and the failure of *Benvenuto Cellini* changed his fate as an opera composer, which it was his deepest wish to become. On the other hand, his instrumental output, which was also pregnant with drama and novelty, was more successful, in spite of harsh criticism about noisy use of instruments, 'wrong' harmony, or an alleged lack of rhythmical sense.

For *Benvenuto Cellini* support from such figures as Liszt and Paganini must have been a source for encouragement to pursue his individual way, as was later the case with the Princess Sayn-Wittgenstein for *Les Troyens*. Gautier praised innovations as an artistic resource for Berlioz and Hugo.

Les Troyens was never performed in its original integral version in Berlioz's time, so we cannot learn so much from critiques of the period. However, its long orchestral stretches were praised, as Berlioz's reputation rested on his symphonic output. D'Ortigue's critique stresses the value of complementing text and music. The question: for whom is this music meant? was also raised by d'Ortigue; he recommended attentive knowledgeable listening.

Criticism in the twentieth century tries to understand music in different terms from the nineteenth-century critics. The concerns of today embrace music as a socio-historical phenomenon. Specialization deepens points of investigation while it narrows their scope.

To the best of my knowledge, so far no studies of characterization in the early opera *Benvenuto Cellini* have been undertaken. Garry Schmidgall developed a character sketch of Cellini from the literary point of view. Of course we should not look for answers in a study about 'opera as literature'.

Faust in *La Damnation* has received more attention, in two exemplary studies, by Rushton and Reeve. But there is more in this concert opera than Faust; and while Reeve also considers Mephisto in conceptual terms, Margarita gets scant attention. Reeve's concern is its interdisciplinary aspects. She deals with the problem of genre, Classicism against Romanticism, the relationship between the source (Goethe) and Berlioz's Faust—text and music. Reeve analyzes topics of relationships between Mephisto, Margarita and Faust, from a feminist perspective, involving different fields of the arts for her arguments, of course including music.

On *Les Troyens*, Rushton's article contributes to the use of symbols in cross-references.⁵⁵ Robinson's historical point is interesting and illuminating in its scholarly examination. His interpretation, though, seems to me to deviate from the main concern of Berlioz, with the human side of the characters rather than their mission.

Taking these scholars as guides is a challenge, the more so since they leave much space for further investigations into characterization, as well as other aspects of these great operas.

⁵⁵ Rushton, 'The Overture'. *Music Analysis* (1985).

CHAPTER V: Berlioz's Aesthetic

Introduction

Berlioz was a protagonist in the Romantic Movement and an eloquent and prolific writer.¹ His rich literary contribution is of great interest to this study since it reveals his aesthetic viewpoint on theoretical as well as practical matters.² I shall review those writings, pertinent to the issue of characterization, such as musical techniques that serve in expressing dramatic situations or character traits, the kind of voice suited to represent a certain character. These issues and others will be dealt with in operas of old masters as well as those of Berlioz's contemporaries. His reports concern many other aspects of the presentation, including acoustics and extended accounts of the libretto, which are less related to the present study.

What was it that Berlioz admired and learned from his preferred predecessors? Did Berlioz express his views on characterization explicitly? Could his ideas give us clues for understanding his own means for characterization? What did Berlioz learn from the composers he adored, and what were Berlioz's views on operatic conceptions? These were the issues that promoted my examination of Berlioz's writings.

¹ Not all of Berlioz's output reflects his sincere ideas on artistic matters; some positive reviews are motivated by other grounds, such as personal obligations of a different nature. We know about these from his correspondence, where he confesses his bias.

² For the scope of Berlioz's writing, see D. Kern Holoman, 'Catalogue of Prose Works: Books, Contributions to Reports, Feuilletons'. *Catalogue*, NBE (Kassel, 1987), vol. 25.

What did Berlioz learn from composers he admired

Gluck

Gluck's influence on Berlioz was life-long, from even before he first heard Gluck's music in 1822, until the creation of his grandest opera *Les Troyens*. He consulted Gluck's scores, first fragments in his father's library, and then at the Paris *Conservatoire*, where he read and reread them; later he saw and heard *Iphigénie en Tauride* when it was performed at the *Opéra*, as a result of which he gave up medical studies.³ Berlioz's comments on Gluck are documented in *Les Soirées de l'Orchestre*, *A Travers Chants*, and in his *Mémoires*.

Berlioz read what Gluck had written in his preface to *Alceste*, on how opera should reflect emotions, as well as on principles of dramatic expression. In his famous preface Gluck spoke of beautiful simplicity. He says:

I have avoided making a show of complexities at the expense of clarity; and I did not think it useful to invent novelties which were not genuinely required to express the situation and the emotions. There is no convention that I have not willingly renounced in favour of the total effect.⁴

One can understand the appeal that such a composer exerted for Berlioz. The following is especially 'Berliozian':

It is, therefore sometimes necessary to ignore the old rules, and to make new ones for oneself, in order to create grand effects. These old Greeks were men with one nose and a pair of

³ Hector Berlioz, *Mémoires* (1991), 59.

⁴ Gluck. In: Patricia Howard, *Gluck: An Eighteenth-Century Portrait in Letters and Documents* (Oxford, 1995), 85.

eyes, just like us. We do not have to submit to their rules like servile peasants. On the contrary, we must throw off their clothes, break free of the chains they would bind us with, and seek to become original.⁵

The admiration went exclusively to Gluck's French operas; he largely ignored his Italian output, as was the case with Spontini.

On Gluck's use of *couleur locale* in *Alceste*, Berlioz wrote that ancient Greece in all its majestic and beautiful simplicity is represented by the priestesses, with their white tunics, instrumentally invoked. Berlioz added that he believed that some religious ceremonies of antiquity were accompanied by gesticulations and symbolic dancing, and while there is no proof of this, Gluck used his intuition by inventing irregular melodic-rhythmic forms.⁶ Berlioz drove this further in the strange dance 'Les Devins font des évolutions cabalistiques et procèdent à la conjuration' in *L'Enfance du Christ*, and in the 5/8 section of the 'Combat de Ceste' in *Les Troyens*.

Another direct influence of Gluck comes to mind when listening and watching the Pantomime in *Les Troyens*. I refer to a passage from *A Travers Chants*, describing Orpheus at Euridice's grave:

La grande et belle mélodie, "Objet de mon amour", dite avec une largeur de style incomparable et une profonde douleur calme, a plusieurs fois été interrompue par les exclamations échappées aux auditeurs les plus impressionnables.⁷

⁵ Ibid, 153.

⁶ Ibid, 183.

⁷ Berlioz, *A Travers Chants*, 142.

In the Pantomime in *Les Troyens* the 'singing' part is confided to the clarinet, and the exclamations come from the violins,⁸ with intervening choral exclamations representing the crowd; otherwise the description of the Gluck scene matches Berlioz's own pantomime of *Andromache*.

Spontini

Berlioz placed Spontini second only to Gluck as a composer of operas. On *La Vestale* Berlioz wrote pertinently about the development of a character by means of an aria:

Le caractère de Licinius se développe mieux encore dans sa cavatine, dont on ne saurait assez admirer la beauté mélodique; il est tendre d'abord, il console, il adore, mais vers la fin, à ces mots: "Va, c'est aux dieux à nous porter envie", une sorte de fierté se décèle dans son accent, il contemple sa belle conquête, la joie de la possession devient plus grande que le bonheur même, et sa passion se colore d'orgueil....⁹

Although Berlioz did not specify the musical means employed, the sentiments remind one of Cellini's *Romance*, which expresses similar affections of happiness at his own conquest of love on the one hand, but also Aeneas's changing disposition within his recit (No. 7). The melodic beauty of the piece leads Berlioz to interpret the cavatina and grade it high in his esteem; nevertheless there must be more to it since he decodes in it tenderness, pity, adoration, but also pride and vanity. Berlioz mentions 'accents', meaning presumably declamation, intonation—a major preoccupation of his

⁸ See Miriam Lensky, 'The symbolic language of Berlioz' *The Berlioz Society Bulletin* 141 (Spring 1991), 4.

⁹ Berlioz, *Les Soirées de l'orchestre* (Paris, 196), 207.

in opera composition, as will be discussed in the case studies. His analysis shows psychological sensitivity to emotions that receive an external expression.

Berlioz praised the style and especially the innovations in *La Vestale*, declaring that Spontini took after Gluck in the realm of dramatic inspiration, and in what he called 'l'art de dessiner un caractère, de la fidélité et de la véhémence de l'expression...'.¹⁰ Berlioz fires his arrows against stagnation, against the dull and myopic public; the administration is represented here by the 'doctors' whose proficiency he did not appreciate, these professionals esteemed a musical procedure only when it was already overused and became vulgar; they cannot take innovations.¹¹

Weber

Der Freischütz by Weber (1786-1826) was an opera that marked an epoch. Berlioz was one of the more outspoken admirers of Weber's novelties.¹² It is the capacity to emit a perfect expression of sentiment that appealed to Berlioz. Regarding characterization he pointed for example to the characters that are clearly delineated through binary opposition. He added that once the audience understands the composer's intention they could further follow the developments (as in a literary form):

Tous à présent, amateurs et artistes, écoutent avec ravissement ce délicieux duo, où se dessinent dès l'abord les caractères contrastants des deux jeunes filles. Cette idée du maître une fois reconnue, on n'a plus de peine à en suivre jusqu'au bout le développement. Toujours Agathe est tendre et rêveuse; toujours

¹⁰ Ibid, 213-4.

¹¹ Ibid, 214.

¹² On Weber's debt to French opéra comique see Ludwig Finscher, 'Weber's *Freischütz*: Conceptions and Misconceptions'. *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association* 110 (1983-4), 79.

Annette, l'heureuse enfant qui n'a point aimé, se plaît en d'innocentes coquetteries... Rien n'échappe à l'auditeur de ces soupirs de l'orchestre pendant la prière de la jeune vierge attendant son fiancé....¹³

An observation that points more to the concept of attentive and intuitive listening that Berlioz strongly advocated, than to Weber's compositional procedure.

A direct influence of Weber can be detected in *La Damnation de Faust*; its subject is originally German, and indeed Berlioz fused the literary influence of Goethe with the musical one of Weber. For Mephisto the instrumental representation of brass and the harmonic colour of the tritone paint characteristics suitable for a demon (see Chapter 8), which owe a tribute to Weber.

Meyerbeer

Berlioz followed with interest Meyerbeer's Paris career (1831-1865), his reactions being often, but not always, enthusiastic.¹⁴ On *Robert le Diable* Berlioz wrote (1835) à propos the resurrection of the nuns; his review reveals how Berlioz conceived characterization of a dramatic situation, and what are the musical means, notably the use of the orchestra, to achieve it:

Tout est glacé, poudreux et lourd comme les marbres tumulaires qui s'ouvrent lentement. Les violons, altos, flûtes, hautbois et clarinettes se taisent. Les cors, les trompettes à piston, trombones, ophicléide, timbales et tamtam, gémissent seuls quelques accords sincoppés pianissimo, précédées sur le temps fort de deux coups pizzicato des violoncelles et contre-basses [...] c'est si pâle, si morne, si hébété, la main de la mort pèse encore si lourdement sur ces misérables créatures, qu'on croit entendre

¹³ *A Travers Chants*, 247.

¹⁴ Patrick Besnier, 'Berlioz et Meyerbeer'. *Revue de Musicologie* 63 (1977), 36-7.

le son mat, le craquement des articulations de cadavres galvanisés et voir les hideux mouvements qui s'y développent.¹⁵

Not only does he specify the instruments playing, but more interestingly those which are silent. He personifies the instruments, as groaning; rhythmic effects of syncopation get an exact explanation in this instance, and from here on he suggests a vivid spectacle of doomsday.

Berlioz again wrote about the role of the instrumental music within opera in his enlightening article concerning Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots*. He regrets the lack of an overture, which he admits was conventional to omit in *Grand opéra* of five acts. The reason for the omission would for him be the nature of the dramatic subject of the opera; it would require an extended passage of instrumental music in order to expose the subject adequately, and would impose too great an effort on the part of the audience; it would tire them. Meyerbeer instead wrote a simple Introduction, where the Protestant chorale changes its guise with each variation, dramatically emphasized through a long *crescendo*, and using instruments skillfully and imaginatively to transmit the right atmosphere.¹⁶ Berlioz, in a rare gesture, writes suggestively about personal characterization of Marcel, the old militant Huguenot:

... un côté du caractère de ce vieux serviteur est supérieurement dessiné, c'est celui du soldat puritain dont la joie est si sombre qu'à l'entendre on ne peut distinguer s'il rit ou s'il menace. ...harmonie terne, gothique et en même temps sévère, parfaitement analogue aux moeurs du pesonnage.¹⁷

¹⁵ Berlioz, 'De l'Instrumentation de *Robert le Diable*'. *Gazette Musicale de Paris* II (12-7-1835), 231-2.

¹⁶ Berlioz, 'Les Huguenots'. *Journal des Débats* (10-11-1836). Reprinted in Condé, 318.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 320.

An echo of this man of principle can be heard in Berlioz's *Roméo et Juliette*, in the last movement, Friar Lawrence's solemn Sermon. Berlioz finds it difficult to explain Raoul's entry in the fifth act, in the midst of the ball, where his melody is dotted with silences in the vocal line at the end of each phrase; this cuts the flow of emotions at its peak. Nevertheless Berlioz provided a possible reason for these breaks, in Raoul's excitement that caused him to choke. By that he explains that a procedure that sounds contradictory in one respect is still valid if it has a dramatic reason. We find such an expression also in Aeneas's agitated recitation of the Priest Laocoon's fate in *Les Troyens* (see chapter 9).

Berlioz on operatic conceptions

For Berlioz opera was a 'Gesamtkunstwerk' in a different way from Wagner's, but still there is some resemblance, beyond the obvious fact that Berlioz wrote his own later librettos. He held that the fusion between text, music and the visual representation is total, like a closely-knit fabric. Therefore the need for acoustically appropriate halls, where the audience can understand the text, be close enough to the musicians to hear musical subtleties better, and see the actors' expressions, stems from this comprehension of opera as a musical-dramatic entity.¹⁸

Still, Berlioz was content for opera to retain many of its traditional forms and procedures. He wrote about the advantage of conventions regarding the overture of *Les Huguenots* (see above); but in his *Les Troyens*, that has characteristics in common with Gluck (division into numbers, containing arias, recitatives, though not strictly

delineated), he indeed does not by the book respect conventions. For example, the lack of conventional overture, and the opera's design, which Rushton summarized thus:

[identifying fifty-two musical self-contained units] ... he thus rejects the tendency towards fluidity in earlier nineteenth-century opera, including Weber and his own *Benvenuto Cellini*.¹⁹

On Instrumental music and on counterpoint

Berlioz conferred meaning upon instrumental music in much of his oeuvre, including in purely orchestral works. His vocal works are dotted with instrumental music not accompanying voices. Although this is the case also in Gluck, Weber, and for Wagner's instrumental interludes, or in Alban Berg's *Wozzeck* (the last Postlude, that tells without words the extent of the calamity), Berlioz's original treatment of the orchestral role needs close analysis. In order to hear these sections of instrumental music within Berlioz's vocal works as part of the broader narrative flow, one has also to get acquainted with the ideas expressed in his writings.

It is partly the development in the nineteenth century of musical instruments that encouraged the trend towards more expressive and eloquent orchestral music, but also the approach of the generation that formed the bridge from the Classic to the Romantic style. Berlioz admired the capacity of 'modern' instrumental music to be expressive.²⁰

As early as 1830 he wrote:

¹⁸ *Journal des Débats*, 6.2.1853. À propos the performance of *Louisa Miller* by Verdi, reprinted in *A Travers Chants*, 115-120.

¹⁹ See Rushton, 'The Overture to *Les Troyens*'. *Music Analysis* 4(1985), 120; and regarding the Overture, Rushton argues that the opening scene, until Cassandra's entry functions as the overture. *Ibid.*, 131.

²⁰ On the role of instrumental music in Berlioz's operas, see chapter 2, and the Case studies.

Un genre particulier de musique entièrement inconnu des classiques, et que les compositions de Weber et de Beethoven ont fait connaître en France depuis quelques années, se rattache de plus près au romantisme. Nous l'appellerons genre *instrumental expressif*.²¹

Berlioz distinguished this expressive music from music of the past that had merely been capable of pleasing the ear or the mind; to him Mozart and Haydn wrote instrumental music for entertainment. He still wrote fourteen years later:

La note était pour eux le but et non pas le moyen. Le sentiment de l'expression sommeillait chez eux et ne paraissait vivre que lorsqu'ils écrivaient sur des paroles.²²

In contrast to the 'archaic' composers (Haydn and Mozart), in the compositions of the recent generation (Beethoven and Weber) one can find not decorative but poetic thought; hence, instrumental music subsists not to provide a story (which would act as imitation, see below), but abstract topics of poetic value, equivalent to those found in literary work.²³ Furthermore, for all Berlioz's affinity to vocal music, he often stressed the advantage of musical instruments over the human voice, which render in music

... les sensations étranges, les émotions inexprimables que produisent les symphonies, quatuors, ouvertures, sonates de Weber et Beethoven ... on sent se réaliser en soi la vie sublime rêvée par les poètes, et l'on s'écrie avec Thomas Moore: "Oh! divine musique! Le langage impuissant et faible se retire devant ta magie!"²⁴

²¹ *Le Correspondant*, 22.10.1830, reproduced in Condé, op. cit. (1981), 97.

²² *Journal des Débats*, 15.12.1844, in Condé, op. cit. 96.

²³ *Le Correspondant*, 22.10.1830. Reprinted in: Condé, op. cit. 98.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

It is a new concept that one can sense already in his first major instrumental composition, the *Symphonie fantastique* (1830), where he first used explanatory text (the program) to make clear his intentions.

The overtures are, by their nature, a place to look for meaning. 'An important function of an overture is to indicate the genre, which is often not apparent in an introductory scene'.²⁵ Berlioz describes the overture to Weber's *Der Freischütz* where he finds a plaintive melody :

jetée par la clarinette... comme une plainte lointaine dispersée par les vents dans les profondeurs des bois. Cela frappe droit au coeur ; et, pour moi du moins, ce chant virginal qui semble exhiler vers le ciel un timide reproche, pendant qu'une sombre harmonie frémit et menace au-dessous de lui, est une des oppositions les plus neuves, les plus poétiques et les plus belles qu'ait produites en musique l'art moderne.²⁶

Berlioz found in this overture indication of characterization of Agathe through modification of a melody, originally belonging to the aria of Max, 'sung' by the clarinet and adapted to Agatha's character:

Rien n'échappe à l'auditeur de ces soupirs de l'orchestre pendant la prière de la jeune vierge attendant son fiancé, de ces bruissements doucement étranges...²⁷

²⁵ Rushton, 'The Overture to *Les Troyens* (1985), 130.

²⁶ Berlioz, *A Travers Chants*, 246. Berlioz mentioned the same passage in the overture to *Der Freischütz* in his *Grand Traité*: 'n'est-ce pas la vierge isolée, la blonde fiancée du chasseur, qui les yeux au ciel, mêle sa tendre plainte au bruit des bois profonds agités par l'orage?O Weber!!!!', 138.

²⁷ Berlioz, *A Travers Chants A Travers Chants*, 247.

On Wagner's Prelude to *Tristan and Isolde* Berlioz described it as having only one short theme, which is a chromatic groaning melody that undergoes transformations. In spite of his sincere effort to understand it, he could not find its sense:

J'ai lu et relu cette page étrange; je l'ai écoutée avec l'attention la plus profonde et un vif désir d'en découvrir le sens; eh bien, il faut l'avouer, je n'ai pas encore la moindre idée de ce que l'auteur a voulu faire.²⁸

He found many qualities of intensity, of sentiment, internal drive, strong will power, but all these qualities would be better pronounced if the composer is inventive, and less mystical.

Berlioz's review of the production of *Le Déserteur* by Pierre Alexandre Monsigny (1729-1817) at the *Opéra comique* on 12 November 1843 shows interesting points of his approach to musical-dramatic composition. The orchestra, rather than the singer, may be the carrier of melodic interest, in certain dramatic situations; by that the situation and the melodic interest are saved. The case in point is the reading aloud of a letter. He also praised Monsigny's treatment of counterpoint for dramatic means, where two contrasting characters first sing their own melodies which are later superimposed; this he praises as 'une des plus plaisantes inventions du contrepoint appliqué à l'effet dramatique'.²⁹ In the trio of the third act comes the turning point, where Alexis the soldier hides from his beloved Louise the verdict which condemns him to death. Louise nevertheless hears it and runs in. Immediately a barbarous-

²⁸ Ibid. 327-8.

²⁹ Berlioz, *Journal des Débats politiques et littéraires*, 12 November, 1843. Reprinted in Linda M. Stones, 'Musical Characterization in Eighteenth-Century *Opéra comique*'. PhD dissertation (Urbana-Champaign, 1985), 159-160.

sounding theme bursts in, which the voices sing successively in a fugato. The impression is one of fear; 'cela ravage l'âme et les sens', the female voice which dominates the two men's voices, hovers with frightening sounds, over dissonant harmonies; the audience is exposed to the most terrible illusions, which is what the personages really feel and their heart breaks exactly as the protagonists' heart.³⁰ This review provides an example of what it is to listen attentively and knowledgably. Reading the description one feels Berlioz heard *Le Déserteur* as a Romantic opera. Berlioz based his impressions on musical facts, but the interpretation is genuinely his own.

On Imitation

A different genre of articles appeared occasionally not as a critique of a performance of a composition, but as an exposition of Berlioz's ideas on musical matters. Such an article appeared in the *Revue et Gazette Musicale*, January 1 and 8, 1837, on musical imitation. By that he meant either the reproduction of noises, or musical painting of visual objects. Imitation of real sounds should never cast a shadow on the 'noblesse et ... puissance' of musical art. There must be a good reason for its presentation and some conditions to respect:

- 1) The imitation should never be an end but a means for a higher purpose.
- 2) The object of imitation must be artistically elevated.

³⁰ Ibid.

- 3) The imitation should neither be exact nor should it be too remote to be recognized, or as he expressed it:

La troisième serait que l'imitation, sans devenir une réalité par une exacte substitution de la nature à l'art, fût cependant assez fidèle pour que l'intention du compositeur ne pût être méconnue d'un auditoire attentif et exercé.

- 4) The realistic imitation should never replace the sentimental, expressive one, and should not exceed the descriptive aspect beyond its purpose 'quand le drame marche à grand pas et que la passion seule a la parole'.³¹ Berlioz found it ridiculous to use a real pistol to demonstrate a suicide in opera, but the use of real bells in *Les Huguenots* gives a special and terrible effect to a matching terrible dramatic situation.

Beethoven's 'Pastoral' symphony is for Berlioz an exception where the tempest in the fourth movement is the end, and the means serve this end. Berlioz adds that its effect stems from the contrast that the adjacent movements—before and after—provide, without which the effect would not be achieved.

On music's ability to express feelings

Berlioz distinguished between music's faculty to describe physical existence, such as a thick forest or a wandering moon, and what it implies to different characters. The lovers have other souvenirs of the dark forest than the hunter or the brigand. What music can successfully paint are the feelings these objects arouse in each of the people concerned. Music can express happy love, jealousy, active and carefree gaiety, chaste

agitation, menacing force, suffering and fright. But music can never tell the cause of these feelings.³² Contrary to the imitation of physical objects by musical means, there is a musical painting that is presented as an image, or a comparison of phenomena that invoke sensations of a nature that music possesses the means to represent. The model of the image must be readily recognized, that is, the listener must be previously notified of the composer's intention, and the comparison must be made clear. Berlioz's example is from Rossini's *Guillaume Tell*: the arrival of the boat's rowers is announced as a pre-requisite for the understanding of its signifier, namely the musical painting by a regular *rinforzando* in the orchestra. The other example of musical painting of an atmosphere, induced by the moon, is from Weber's *Der Freischütz*; Agatha's air is best represented in Berlioz's evocative language:

... la couleur voilée, calme et mélancolique de ses harmonies, les timbres clairs-obscurs de ses instruments sont l'image fidèle de ces pâles lueurs, et expriment d'ailleurs à l'aspect de l'astre nocturne dont Agathe implore l'assistance en ce moment.³³

Very rarely did Berlioz use the term 'characterization' in his reviews, but expressiveness and feeling always feature. One of these rare cases, that perhaps demonstrates his genuine praise of the opera, is his above-mentioned critique of *Le Déserteur*, where he declares that in no other musical composition destined for the

³¹ Reprinted in Condé, op. cit. 99-100.

³² Ibid, 106.

³³ Ibid, 107.

theatre (meaning opera) were the sentiments of dramatic nature, the expression of passion and those of character better accomplished.³⁴

So far I have presented Berlioz's views on abstract ideas. The following are some of his ideas on practical matters.

On the use of voice and on public taste

Berlioz's bitter feelings find an outlet in many of his reviews that raise the issue of public taste; they are also scattered among writings on other matters. For example, Berlioz's bitterness derived from the bad taste of the public, that could not accept Gluck's greatness, at least until October 1861, when *Alceste* was played in the *Opéra*; then the audience was struck by the majestic disposition of the composition as a whole, by the depth of the melodic expression, the warmth of the scenic movement and by a thousand beauties they have just discovered. Berlioz added that he believed that these days a considerable part of the audience is more capable of understanding such a score than before.³⁵ This is a significant remark, elucidating the importance Berlioz attached to intellectual capacity of the audience, which indirectly proves that he meant music to be understood as a communication, and not just enjoyed as entertainment, or as 'absolute music'.

A detailed article, appearing in *A Travers Chants*, is dedicated to the effect of the recent rise of the diapason on voices.³⁶ Its 'danger' preoccupied the administration that,

³⁴ *Journal des Débats Politiques et Littéraires*, 12 November, 1843. Reprinted in Linda M. Stones, op. cit., 159.

³⁵ Berlioz, *A Travers Chants* (Paris, 1971), 223.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 307-317.

as Berlioz sarcastically put it, tried to do something about it, since at this rate the diapason in the year 2458 will reach an octave higher. This issue provides Berlioz with an excuse to scan voice extremes in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and their effect. Berlioz stated that this rise of diapason, which is real but not necessary, is caused by instrument builders, and should be stopped now and be controlled. An important issue, resulting also from high pitch and tone quality, is the matching orchestral accompaniments to the vocal part. Some masters had the good sense not to use heavy orchestral chords when a singer reaches a note difficult to produce, and use a kind of a dialogue between the performing forces. But many composers allow the voice to be crushed (*écraser*) under the battery of brass and the percussion. Some of these composers even serve as models in the art of accompaniment.³⁷

A tenor role such as Cellini or Aeneas places heavy demands on the singer for lyrical, expressive singing, as well as dramatic declamations, and expanded diapason, fitting the multiple sides of the protagonists' character. Cellini's air 'Sur les monts les plus sauvages', where Berlioz reveals in a nutshell two sides of Cellini, at one time had a coda, in which he used the high c^2 for a climax reached progressively. Berlioz rejected this coda.³⁸ Joël-Marie Fauquet explains the dramatic reason for this scene thus: Cellini is day-dreaming, he feels detached but pulls himself together with renewed zeal, reaching gradually the high c^2 . However Fauquet does not suggest a reason for abandoning the coda. It may have been Berlioz's preference for the lyrical

³⁷ Ibid., 313

³⁸ Joël-Marie Fauquet, 'Les Voix de Persée'. *L'Avant-Scène Opéra* 142 (1991), 89-90.

tenor with the desired quality of tenderness, who would not have been able to reach this c^2 , other than in falsetto, or head-voice.

Conclusions

In the writings of Berlioz, we can deduce his aesthetic views and what he admired and learned in the work of his preferred predecessors and contemporaries.

On the Masters

- From Gluck he took his simplicity, naturalness, and truth of expression of genuine feelings, and his use of orchestral commentary to represent dramatic situations, as well as his broadness of melodies.
- Spontini was an example for daring and inventiveness. In his melodies he found a variety of expressions.
- Monsigny knew how to portray with sounds dramatic situations and states of mind, to imitate true feelings.
- Weber was for Berlioz a model for expression of true feelings, the use of orchestra for dramatic means, depicting mystery and the supernatural, expressing pain, sighs (see chapter 8, *La Damnation de Faust*).
- Meyerbeer was for him a master in depicting dramatic situations, by the right use of instruments, rhythmic effects, and effective use of pauses. Meyerbeer was a pointer and a model in the realm of personal characterization.

Berlioz's views on musical matters concerning characterization

- **Opera is an integrated work of art** where text, music and stage-action are closely interwoven. The coordination of the elements is as important as their specific tasks.
- **Characterization is a goal in dramatic music.** Music that aims at entertainment does not pertain to Berlioz's conception, neither is 'absolute music'. The means to achieve genuine feelings, which in turn serve characterization, are countless.
- **Instruments play an important role, even a quasi independent one.**
- **Music is capable of imitation of genuine sentiments and of dramatic situations that explicate feelings.** But imitation is a tool that should be judiciously employed.
- **Attentive listening is obligatory for communication of feelings.** An inattentive audience comes very low in Berlioz's esteem, and is not a target for his creative effort.

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PART TWO: CASE STUDIES,

**Characterization of Chosen Dramatic Persons and of Dramatic
Situations**

CHAPTER VI: Methodology of Case Studies

In Part One I discussed music's potential for bearing meaning and in particular characterization. It remains to bring theory to practice.

Phenomenological approach

Berlioz used imaginatively various musical elements for the purpose of characterization; therefore its deciphering is a delicate task. Although we never get a solid proof for our result, with responsible analysis we gain insight to the composer's intention. Consequently, following only one analytical method may result in a limited view. Even if one is a partisan of a particular school, one can test the advantage of the method but not the scope of a phenomenological issue. Therefore, rather than looking for a single analytical or theoretical method, or trying to prove one ideological approach, I chose to look for solutions for each case individually, according to the signs traced by the composer. The approach chosen by Paul Robinson in his study of Aeneas (see chapter 4), in which he emphasizes the role of history for the nineteenth-century artist's mind, despite achieving depth, leads him in my view to come to conclusions that ignore other aspects of the character.

Investigating characterization one has to take into consideration what particular patterns of thinking did the composer employ for each different opera. The pattern is likely to be different for the individual operas. One of the great achievements of a composer is the ability to adapt different sets of principles, according to the subject

matter, thus endowing the opera with the appropriate *tinta*. Discovering these is achieved by looking into the musical phenomena and evaluating them.

Choice of compositions and of characters

I chose dramatic works and characters with a view to represent a wide range of characters, featuring various techniques. The compositions I analyzed originate from different periods in Berlioz's life. Although we do not categorize Berlioz's oeuvre by periods, there is still a reason for the choice. *Benvenuto Cellini* is an opera that had it been successful, would have opened a career in the theatre of incalculated scope. For the importance of the issue, I added an appendix where I try to answer the question why did this opera fail.

La Damnation de Faust is a dramatic work that is not by definition an opera. This concept of an unstaged dramatic work inspired me to see what might be the substitution for acting and staging through music. The inspiration for Berlioz to compose the *Légende dramatique* came to him from north of the Alps. It was therefore interesting to check how this influenced compositional considerations.

Les Troyens is Berlioz's most recognized masterpiece. At this stage of his life Berlioz no longer expected any wide recognition; he was confident of his ability and the importance of his mission, and composed as he wished to do and as seemed right for his subject.

My choice of characters fell largely on characters who seemed complex, rounded in Forster's terms (see chapter 1). This is the case of Aeneas. In the second place the

choice fell on characters that may not be complex but their representation reflects their simplicity thoroughly. This is the case for Teresa and Margarita, and for Mephisto. Another consideration was the lack of adequate research in certain cases, while other characters have gotten prior attention.

Analytical approach

The ideal approach seems to me to survey a character throughout the opera, which means to check first the dramatic situation according to the libretto, evaluate its dramatic implications and then, through analysis, find how the composer enhanced the dramatic situation and revealed more of the character than words alone can do. With all its advantages no such research has been undertaken, to the best of my knowledge.

Therefore, for each character and dramatic situation I chose the aspect that contributes to characterization: rhythm, harmony, phrase structure, instrumentation, melodic line, vocal line, counterpoint, motivic recurrence. I looked for novelties as well as for traditional elements. The analyses are devised according to the musical-dramatical situation. For example, pitch-class and reduction are pertinent to Margarita's soliloquy; phrase-structure and meter for Aeneas; for Teresa a melodic line. The approach is phenomenological, following James Webster who advocates 'multivalent analysis'.¹

¹ James Webster, 'To Understand Verdi and Wagner we Must Understand Mozart'. *19th-Century Music* 11 (1987), 175-93.

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CHAPTER VII: Benvenuto Cellini

Characterization of Teresa and of Dramatic Situations

Introduction

The composition of *Benvenuto Cellini*, Berlioz's first opera to reach performance, lasted from May 1834 to September 1838.¹ It appears that the initiative for composing this opera was Berlioz's own, as a result of his reading the autobiography of the sixteenth-century sculptor and silversmith Benvenuto Cellini, in the translation by D.D. Frajasse (1833).² Berlioz did not yet write his own librettos. He named Léon de Wailly and Auguste Barbier as the librettists for this opera, and they were assisted by Alfred de Vigny. It seems that they were influenced by Berlioz's ideas, because Cellini voices Berlioz's opinions, and his deeds reflect his sublimated inclinations.

The libretto was first presented to the Opéra-comique authorities, but was refused. When the opera was finally accepted for the *Opéra* (1835), Berlioz had to make the appropriate adaptations, notably composing sung recitatives instead of spoken dialogue. This double origin explains why the genre of *Benvenuto Cellini* is a mixture of comic and serious opera. It received only four performances as a complete opera (10, 12 and

¹ The full historical facts about dates and the genesis of composition can be found in the NBE, vol. 1a, edited by Hugh Macdonald, 1994. Further information, by the same author, other authors and libretto are in *L'Avant-Scène Opéra* 142 (1991).

² The evidence for Berlioz's use of this translation is that he used two passages from it in the libretto, as explained in a note to "Première soirée. *Le premier opéra*". in: Berlioz, *Les Soirées de l'Orchestre* (Paris 1968), 479.

14 September, 1838 and 11 January, 1839), and a few partial performances during 1839.

There has never been a consensus about the reasons for the spectacular fall of the opera. This expression—‘La chute fut éclatante’—was pronounced in an article of 1858, printed for publication in *Dictionnaire universel des Contemporains* (publisher unknown).³ The article describes Berlioz’s life and artistic achievements, and was handed to Berlioz for revisions. Berlioz added his remarks in the margins (see Plate 1). Historians have variously attributed the failure to its musical complexity, its mixed genre, its subject matter, the ‘poor’ quality of the libretto, poor cooperation of the musicians and title role singer, or personal rivalry. It is impossible to deduce the reason for the failure from contemporary press,⁴ or other sources such as statistics of performances of operas in the Opéra at the same period.⁵ Rehearsals were exhausting, and many changes in music, text and staging were made to suit the performers. But these were the usual circumstances in the Opéra. Donizetti wrote at the same period:

At the Opéra things move slowly. Composers have to pay for the splendor of its production by suffering through a lengthy, often debilitating rehearsal period.⁶

³ The facsimile and discussion of it appears in: Frederic V. Grunfeld, “Berlioz, ‘Not Two Flutes, you Scoundrels!’”. *Horizon* 12 (1970), 106. The article was conceived for the *Dictionnaire universel des Contemporains* (publisher unknown).

⁴ As can be read in Peter Bloom (ed.), *Hector Berlioz. Benvenuto Cellini. Dossier de Presse Parisienne (1838)* (1995).

⁵ For a detailed account of contemporary performances of operas in the Opéra, which places *Benvenuto Cellini* in the right perspective, see Appendix.

⁶ Cited in Philip Gossett, ‘Introduction’. *Donizetti, Les Martyrs*. Philip Gossett (ed.) (New York, 1982).

Another witness to the wearing rehearsals is Meyerbeer, for whose opera *Robert-le-Diable* there is a record of many changes made during rehearsals, to please the management. Karin Pendle writes: 'In the interest of perfection none was too humble for Meyerbeer to consult: he even approached the 'chef de claue'.⁷

Furthermore, Berlioz himself did not vigorously defend the case for maintaining productions of his opera. In the above-mentioned *Dictionnaire*, the article says about *Benvenuto Cellini*:

It is an exaggeration of his manner: the administration was against him, the audience was warned, the fall was spectacular. But Mr. Berlioz could not accept the judgement and launched a lively polemic against his adversaries, he fell ill as a result.

Berlioz annotated in handwriting next to it:

I never exaggerated my manner, which is much simpler than that of Meyerbeer in *Les Huguenots*. I have never launched a polemic concerning *Cellini*. I have written nothing whatsoever concerning this opera, which I consider indeed one of my best compositions.⁸

⁷ Which means the person that is in charge of orchestrating the applause. Karin Pendle, *Eugène Scribe and French Opera* (Ann Arbor, 1979), 437.

⁸ 'Il avait encore exagéré sa manière (underlined by Berlioz): l'administration s'est mise contre lui, le public était prevenue, la chute fut éclatante. Mais M. Berlioz n'accepta pas le jugement général et soutint contre ses adversaires une vive polémique à la suite de laquelle il tomba malade...'. Berlioz's remark in the margins is: 'Je n'ai point exagéré ma manière et cette manière est beaucoup plus simple que ne l'est par exemple celle du Meyerbeer dans *Les Huguenots*. Je n'ai point soutenue la polémique de Cellini, jamais il ne m'est arrivé d'écrire sur cet ouvrage que je regarde du reste aujourd'hui comme l'un des meilleurs que j'ai produit'. Grunfeld, op. cit., (1970), 106. See Fig. 1.

Plate 1: Facsimile reproduction of the entry on Berlioz in: *Dictionnaire universel des Contemporains* (1838) with Berlioz's annotations.

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- † Je n'ai point eu de ^{la} manière et cette manière
 est beaucoup plus simple que ne l'est par exemple
 celle de Meyerbeer dans les Huguenots.
- † Je n'ai point soutenu d'opinion sur le sujet de
 Cellini, jamais il ne m'est arrivé d'écrire sur cet
 ouvrage, que je regarde du reste aujourd'hui comme
 l'un des meilleurs que j'ai produits. Au jour d'aujourd'hui
 à Weimar et beaucoup de Critique allemande tout de mon avis.

~~employé~~

autre
erreur. Cette
musique était au
contraire très
musical. mais
imitez plutôt
des musiques de
l'étranger et
à l'avenir, car
aucune préférence
réformatrice.
Je l'ai brulé.

C'est vrai,
et je la brûlerai
en sortant
du concert

BERLIOZ (Hector), compositeur français, membre de l'Institut, est né à la Côte-Saint-André (Isère), le 11 décembre 1803. Son père, médecin distingué, lui fit commencer des études de médecine qu'il vint continuer à Paris. Mais, poursuivi dès l'enfance par le démon de la composition musicale, il quitta l'École de médecine pour le Conservatoire. Au vain son père irrité lui supprima sa pension. Il se fit choriste au Conservatoire aux appointements de cinquante francs par mois. Sa nature ardente était surchauffée alors jusqu'au délire par un amour passionné. Il était aussi souffrant par une confiance excessive en lui-même qui lui fit bientôt déserter et quitter le Conservatoire. Il était convaincu qu'il était une ~~sorte de Mozart~~ à remplir. Cette croyance ne lui pas justifiée par ses débuts : sa première œuvre, une messe en musique, à quatre voix avec chœurs et orchestre, semble (à l'exception de tout sentiment musical, sa pensée se dégage plus clairement dans son Ouverture de Waverley, dans sa Symphonie fantastique, arrangée pour le piano par M. Liszt, dans la Trilogie de Shakespeare et les Scènes de Faust.

Le but de M. Berlioz était de donner à la musique toute la puissance expressive de la parole et de tout peindre par des effets. Il se préoccupait surtout de la mélodie. En 1828, il obtint à l'Institut le second prix de composition musicale, et, au moment de la révolution de 1830, sa cantate de Sardanapale lui valut le premier prix. Il fit exécuter aussi, en l'honneur des héros de Juillet, une Symphonie funèbre et triomphale qui fut très-admirée. Il partit alors pour l'Italie et écrivit à Rome le Retour à la vie, la Ballade du pêcheur, de Goethe; le Chœur des ombres, ~~etc.~~; une ouverture du Roi Lear et une ouverture de Rod-Roy, qui fut exécutée sans succès au Conservatoire. Il revint en 1832 à Paris, estimant peu la musique italienne et dédaignant d'user de ses prérogatives de lauréat pour visiter l'Allemagne.

Dès cette époque, il entra comme critique à la Gazette musicale, puis au Journal des Débats, et put défendre, dans la presse, ses innovations musicales. Sa Symphonie d'Hamlet, composée principalement pour alto à la prière de Paganini, fut exécutée par Urban avec un succès qui encouragea les hardieses de l'auteur. Il écrivit un opéra, Demosène Cellini, dont MM. de Vigny, A. Barbier et Léon de Wailly firent le libretto. Il avait encore essayé de ~~l'opéra~~; l'admiration se manifesta lui, le public était prévenu, la chute fut étonnante. Mais M. Berlioz n'accepta pas le jugement général et voulut contre ses adversaires une vive polémique à la suite de laquelle il tomba malade. L'opéra, qui était un de ses admirateurs, lui envoya 20 000 francs et le déclara l'égal de Beethoven.

Théâtre de l'Opéra
aujourd'hui la vendrille
+ Cette opinion est fautive
aut que malveillante; non
seulement je ne quitte pas
le Conservatoire mais j'y
suis à la fois, les idées
de Reicha et de Schumann
jusqu'à mon départ pour
l'Italie
+ Il serait très long de
démontrer l'absurdité de
cette opinion que l'on
m'a longtemps prêtée;
seulement je me formaliserais
peu, jamais étendu à la
musique avec puissance
expensive massive et diffuse.
De celle que lui ont succédé
les grands maîtres de l'école
des écoles

Encore une station fautive et malveillante. Si j'étais en
contraire un grand être de l'Allemagne, si je ne fus point à
voyager, ce fut parce que M. Berlioz, qui était opposé à la
musique de la Suisse des sonnettes de l'Opéra de Paris et de
cette la junte, et plutôt que de la quitter j'aurais perdu ma vie et
tout en m'occupant d'autre chose, car c'est loin de l'Opéra
un motif.

The Libretto

The Florentine sculptor Benvenuto Cellini immortalized his reputation more through his autobiography than through his art. The autobiography was known to Berlioz from 1834, and its influence resulted not only in the conception of the opera, but also marked many of his writings. For example, the casting of the statue, while sacrificing his remaining artifacts, which is the culmination of the opera, comes directly from the autobiography, and emerges in Berlioz's journalistic and other writings of that period: 'Je ne puis pas encore travailler à la musique, le métal me manque comme à mon héros'.⁹ In addition Berlioz wrote a story 'Le premier opéra: nouvelle du passé' which deals with Benvenuto Cellini's adventures and artistic independence, published in the *Gazette Musicale* in 1837.¹⁰ Berlioz found in Cellini a model that he could engage metaphorically to present, in partial disguise, ideals with he strongly identified. Even more, the protagonist's fate was for Berlioz like a prophecy that comes true. Like Cellini, Berlioz himself would encounter vicious critical response for this first opera of his, from people placed high in the administrative hierarchy, as well as from some fellow critics whose knowledge and appreciation of the art as Berlioz understood it was mediocre, and whose function it was to judge his art and by that dictate his fate. Some of those people such as the *Opéra's* administration, judges, and audiences are reflected in the theatrical farce played out during the Carnival scene.

⁹ CG II 453, 16 December, 1835, again in CG II 485, 22 December, 1836, and again in CG II 626, on January 1839, to Ernest Legouvé.

¹⁰ Berlioz, *Les Grotesques de la Musique*, 1 and 8 October, 1837, later included in *Les Soirées de l'Orchestre*, (Paris, 1968), 27. See also James Haar, "Berlioz and the 'First Opera'". *19th-Century Music*, 3 (1979), 32-41.

When Berlioz started working on *Benvenuto Cellini* he reviewed the comic opera *Le Revenant* by Gomis (January 1834), that struck in him a sympathetic chord. He wrote favourably about this little-known composer, Gomis, with whose values Berlioz could identify, e.g. his fighting spirit, courage and negative response from the public and authorities. Kerry Murphy writes: 'Berlioz depicts Gomis as a brave fighter for higher values trying valiantly to lead the tastes of the opéra-comique public on the worthier paths'.¹¹ It is interesting to note that Berlioz started composition of his own opera *Benvenuto Cellini* in the same year, of which the title role has just the same qualities with which Berlioz so strongly identified. Berlioz mentioned in his critique Gomis's daring rhythmic procedures, rejection of squareness of phrase structure— procedures that were always valuable in his eyes and which he himself used for his hero Cellini.

The inclusion of the love story not found in the *Autobiography* has, with all its passion, a secondary place in the opera. Patrick J. Smith discusses the place of a love story in the later work *Les Troyens*, which, despite the great difference between these operas, is true for that early work as well: '[Berlioz] kept the heroic element always in the forefront while working in the love story'.¹² Why did he include the love story in this opera? The answer is probably to please his audience, which expected love interest; but for Berlioz himself a yearning love story was a sentiment of great value, and it was therefore natural for him to include Teresa and what she meant for Cellini. There are more instances in the opera that one suspects were introduced with public taste in view, such as the drinking song that was a common feature of many operas; or the last

¹¹ Kerry Murphy. *Hector Berlioz and the Development of French Music Criticism* (Ann Arbor, 1988), 99.

¹² Patrick J. Smith, *The Tenth Muse* (London: 1971), 305.

moment inclusion of a simple strophic Romance for Cellini, which conforms with French taste, as Hugh Macdonald claims.¹³

An enlightening document by Franz Liszt, published in *La Revue et Gazette musicale*,¹⁴ elucidates Liszt's comprehension of Berlioz's motives, and at the same time it reveals the aesthetics of the young Romantics. Liszt expressed in masterly fashion the ideas behind the opera and the correspondence between Berlioz and his source of inspiration, in one of his 'Lettres d'un bachelier ès-musique'. The cherished ideals are that persistence wins through, and that beauty, courage and wisdom are to be glorified. Since Liszt had an intuitive sympathy with Berlioz's motivation and cast of mind, and since his writing style is as pungent as Berlioz's, his comments have the value of a primary source.

Liszt first points to the symbolism of the figure of Perseus. His main point in this paragraph is to praise the demigod, the glorious champion who represents victory of good against evil, who is also a metaphor of genius. Victory unites him with beauty, which is the poet's eternal love.¹⁵

Liszt then traces the idea's way from symbol to realization in sculpture and music, through poetry. First the Greeks expressed the idea in their writings, then in modern times Cellini realized it in the visual art. In our own time comes another Cellini, who

¹³ Hugh Macdonald, 'Commentaire littéraire et musical'. *L'Avant-Scène Opéra* 142 (1991), 42.

¹⁴ 13.1.1839, cited in: François Piatier, *Benvenuto Cellini de Berlioz ou le Mythe de L'Artiste*. (Paris, 1979), 5-11.

¹⁵ 'L'histoire de Persée est un des beaux mythes de la poésie grecque. Persée est un de ces glorieux champions restés vainqueurs dans la lutte du bien et du mal. Persée c'est l'homme de génie ... Ses premiers pas dans la vie sont des combats. Il tue la Gorgone; il tranche la tête de Méduse, la force inerte, l'obstacle brutal que s'élève toujours entre l'homme puissant et l'accomplissement de son destin. Il s'élance sur le cheval ailé; il possède son génie; il délivre Andromède; il va s'unir à la beauté, éternelle amante du poète: mais ce ne sera pas sans de nouveaux

realizes these ideals through music. Berlioz also fought to achieve this goal, which is not yet attained, since obstacles survive in the form of uncomprehending mediocrity.

But with God's help, the chain of victories will continue.¹⁶

Liszt goes on to distinguish between Berlioz's and Cellini's fate: Berlioz's adversaries reside low in the ranks of society, whereas Cellini's included the Pope himself.¹⁷

Indeed Berlioz had reason to suspect that some of his colleague-reviewers, some important administrators of the relevant institutions and some musicians could not cope with his demanding technique and sophisticated language. The orchestra's players

combats. La lutte recommence, et comme Persée est fils de la femme, qu'il est homme autant que Dieu il est sujet à la faute. La fatalité reprend ses droits. ... Idée primordiale! vérité éternellement vraie!'

¹⁶ 'Revêtant d'abord la forme la plus abstraite de l'art, elle (l'idée) se révèle dans la parole. La poésie lui prête son langage; elle la symbolise. L'antiquité nous donne, dans Persée, l'allégorie profonde, complète. C'est le premier degré, le premier pas du développement de l'idée; continuons: Dans les temps modernes et sous la main d'un grand artiste, elle prend une forme sensible, elle devient plastique; la fournaise s'allume, le métal se liquéfie, il coule dans le moule, le Persée en sort tout armé, tenant en main la tête de Méduse, gage de la victoire. Gloire à toi, Cellini, car tu as accompli une oeuvre difficile. Toi aussi, homme de lutte et de combat, tu as terrassé la Gorgone. Toi aussi, homme d'inspiration, tu as triomphé du monstre, tu as obtenu Andromède, tu as conquis le beau: ton nom ne périra plus. C'est le second degré.

Puis de nos jours vient un autre Cellini; un grand artiste, lui aussi, qui prend l'idée à la seconde phase et la transforme de nouveau. S'adressant au sens de l'ouï comme Cellini s'est adressé au sens de la vue, il revêt l'idée d'une nouvelle splendeur, et fait du Persée une création aussi grande, aussi complète, aussi achevée que les deux premières.

Honneur à toi, Berlioz, car toi aussi tu luttas avec un invincible courage, et si tu n'as pas encore dompté la Gorgone, si les serpents sifflent encore à tes pieds en te menaçant de leurs dards hideux; si l'envie, la sottise, la malignité, la perfidie semblent se multiplier autour de toi, ne crains rien, les Dieux te sont en aide; ils t'ont donné comme à Persée... l'énergie, la promptitude; la sagesse et la force. Combat, douleur et gloire: destin du génie. Ce fut le tien, Cellini; c'est aussi le tien, Berlioz. Mystérieuse conception! enfantement du génie par le génie! chaîne divine qui unit les hommes d'idées à travers les âges!...'

¹⁷ 'Aujourd'hui les papes et les favorites laissent en paix les artistes, mais la persécution est toujours là, plus latente, moins avouée. Au lieu de partir haut, elle vient de bas. C'est de la part de ses égaux et de ses inférieurs dans la hiérarchie sociale que l'artiste se voit le plus souvent arrêté, entravé; ce sont eux qui lui refusent d'abord, qui lui disputent ensuite pas à pas sa place au soleil, sa part de lumière'.

could not follow his rhythms, and the singer Gilbert Duprez abandoned the title role, as we gather from Berlioz's letters, after the few performances.¹⁸

The frame for the opera

Berlioz's sense of dramaturgy is already apparent in this early opera. The story of the supremacy of genius over mediocrity and the conquest of love unfolds within three days, which symbolically fall on the transition from the Carnival to Lent; Berlioz superimposed the story onto this religious calendar sequence. In this short time period, from Monday to Wednesday, and parallel to the liturgical calendar, there is an extraordinary transformation of mood.

The first day (first act, first tableau) is a Carnival day, in which comic situations are exposed and to an extent developed. The second day (first act, second tableau) is Shrove Tuesday, the climax of the Carnival season which is a festival where social classes mix. It ends with a duel, which was anticipated by Cellini and his friends in their street harlequinade. In the duel, Cellini kills Pompeo. This is the central climax of the opera; both assassin and victim are disguised as monks, which augments the scandal. The third day (second act, third and fourth tableaux; in the Weimar version Act III) is Ash Wednesday; it represents the aftermath of the climax and depicts the hazardous situation in which Cellini and his allies find themselves. The mood thus changes considerably (although there is some comic relief, played out by Ascanio, and in the abject posturing of Balducci and Fieramosca before the Pope). Cellini comes out of a chain of troubles and even gets a chance to be the winner in both love and art. The

¹⁸ E.g. CG II, 456. See also Appendix on the box office failure of the opera.

audience is left in suspense when he almost misses his chance, but gathering all his mental forces he brings about his own rescue and victory, by casting Perseus.

The linkage of the religious calendar with the human intrigue is a coup that reveals Berlioz's (or, less plausibly his librettists') extraordinary sense of dramaturgy, and renders the opera compact and coherent. Berlioz used this dramatic effect and amplified it through music. For example, the *Gras* elements are the serenading under Teresa's window, the carnival music with pantomime. The meager day, Ash Wednesday, displays greater predominance of the minor mode; the song of the metal workers comes in the minor; the duo for Teresa and Cellini in minor; the imitation religious music of the prayer and the austere grandeur of the pope.

The Carnival as a metaphor

The Carnival traditionally provided an outlet for feelings and behaviour not permitted expression at other periods of the Church year. The permissive atmosphere, and the dramatic situation, where the hero first uses the Carnival to ridicule his rivals, and then, as a result of the turmoil, to escape after committing a crime, exists in the libretto. In *Benvenuto Cellini*, the Carnival, while presenting dances that could have been substituted for the traditional ballet,¹⁹ had another and more radical function in the opera: it conveyed the core of the drama, featuring the plot of abduction, a murder, while at the same time it embodies satire. Berlioz brings into the farce the ignorance and bad taste of the management, embodied by the papal treasurer Balducci. The latter is pilloried in the Carnival role of the artistic judge Midas. In comedy authority is

¹⁹ Hugh Macdonald, "Argument", in: *L'Avant-Scène Opéra*, 142 (1991), 53.

undermined, and has been so traditionally in Italy in the unwritten improvised *Comedia dell'Arte*, with its stock characters that could easily be adopted for the purpose of satire.

Depiction of characters in the libretto and exposition of ideas

Around the main figure Berlioz built a love story that has nothing to do with the memoirs of Cellini. The libretto presents Teresa as a respectful daughter (when her father is around). She has no strong personality that is manifested in action, but she overcomes her fears and takes the risk of elopement with her lover, breaking conventional restrictions, which causes her great pain.

Cellini demonstrates a wide range of attitudes: love, adventure, leadership, fierce rivalry, resolution to achieve his goals, cunning in evading danger, and, above all, liberty of thought (and of deeds) and of artistic creation. In *Benvenuto Cellini* the main topic is freedom of artistic expression: nevertheless, when sentiments of love overflow he would reject even his aspiration for fame through art. Cellini is planted in many different dramatic situations, confronted with conflicts of various natures, and set among a gallery of characters. *Bon vivant* as he is, he also has a clear idea of Art's value, preferring his Art to frivolous drinking. In Burckhardt's words:

He is a man who can do all and dares do all, and who carries his measure in himself. Whether we like him or not, he lives, such as he was, as a significant type of the modern spirit.²⁰

Contrary to the free spirit of Cellini stands the 'flat' character of Balducci, whose characterization in the libretto seems to be single sided, caricature-like. The second rate

²⁰ Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance* (Oxford, 1945), 203.

artist Fieramosca is also a cardboard type. Ascanio and the Pope are only part of the mechanism of the plot, and are not fully characterized by libretto or music.

Musical Characterization

Genre: the character of the whole opera

Benvenuto Cellini is an opera semi-seria. In its passage to the Opéra, inherent features from the Opéra comique remained, such as social criticism, side by side with high values of Love, Art, Liberty. Was the coexistence of characteristics indeed eccentric and therefore a possible reason for the opera's failure? In fact it seems that the opera's failure was in spite of its being in line with the requirements of the Opéra and consistent with public's expectations (see Appendix).

Characterization of Renaissance life

Several questions arise when trying to identify in this opera a sense of the Renaissance atmosphere, for example:

1. How much was Berlioz aware of 'authentic' Renaissance music and culture?
2. Was he interested in conveying authenticity?
3. What kind of atmosphere and feelings did Berlioz convey?

Answers to the first two questions can only be estimated, and it is the third which is most relevant to this discussion.

That Berlioz's epoch was historically orientated can be seen from the works of A. W. Ambrose, *Geschichte der Musik*, which appeared in 1862, shortly after Jacob

Burckhardt's *Die Kultur der Renaissance in Italien*, published in 1860. Ambrose's work demonstrated the considerable progress made in the eighty or so years separating it from Dr. Charles Burney's historical account of European music.²¹ But to what extent Berlioz was concerned with the new trend of historical interest is not clear; he does not neatly fit into a particular school. Furthermore, the allusions of the characters and the plot to some people in Berlioz's entourage show that rather than being concerned with historical truth, he used historical information for satirical purposes.

The views of musicians contemporary with Berlioz show that while the historian Burckhardt maintained that the Renaissance divided off from the preceding Middle Ages in philosophy and behaviour, music historians of the nineteenth century viewed the two periods as continuous.²² The binding link, as the Romantic musicians saw it, was the expression of Christian piety in music in both periods.²³ In a review of Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots*, published in *La Gazette musicale*, Berlioz wrote:

The ballad of Marguerite de Valois ... was published in 1540; the melody to which she sang it has not, so far as I know, come down to us. But M. Meyerbeer has so beautifully grasped the colour of medieval melodies, there is in his music such a flavour of old tales, that one would think himself hearing one of those epics that Blondel sang at the court of Richard Coeur-de-Lion.... The beginning, "Pour être un digne bon chrétien," is especially remarkable for its gothic naivety, further emphasized by the style

²¹ James Haar, 'The Renaissance as Viewed by the Romantics'. In: *Music and Context* (Cambridge, Mass., 1985), 126-144. See also below, Paul Robinson on *Les Troyens*, and chapter 4.

²² While this may be true for music historians, in other fields such as architecture the distinction between the periods was clear, as can be seen in Viollet-Le-Duc, 'Du Style Gothique au XIX^e Siècle', *Annales archéologiques*, vol. 4, 1846, cited in *L'Esthétique romantique. Une Anthologie*, Claude Millet (ed.) (1994), 294.

²³ Haar, op. cit. (1985), 128.

of the accompaniment and by the mixing of major and minor modes.²⁴

Berlioz also practiced this pseudo-historical idiom in his *Symphonie fantastique*, *La Damnation de Faust*, where the chanting of a religious hymn was a source of Faust's yearning for redemption, and *L'Enfance du Christ*, an oratorio in an archaic religious mode. The instance in *Benvenuto Cellini* where one can find a parallel reference to an antique style is the priests' procession at the dawn of Ash Wednesday, sung on a reciting tone, accompanied by a beautiful prayer for Teresa and Ascanio, in an antique style of 'naïveté gothique'. The parallel sixths and thirds with passing harsh dissonances sound quasi-historic. But the plot sets the situation in such a manner that Cellini used the procession to hide among the monks and escape his pursuers; thus it is an ironical use of religious piety.

In general, Berlioz has not evoked the Renaissance musical style: there is no antique style except for the above-mentioned procession, which makes only a contextual point of localized significance. Even instances of what could have been *couleur locale*, such as the *saltarello*, have no historical ground in the music of earlier periods; they rather result from Berlioz's own recent experience in Italy, where he enjoyed traditions and music of the country people more than the music of church and theatre. The 'Chant des ciseleurs' owes its spirit to Renaissance ideals and serve well Berlioz's own conviction about the place of Art in private and public life.

²⁴ Berlioz, *La Gazette Musicale*, 2 (1835) 351, cited in: Haar, op. cit. (1985), 137-8.

The Overture

The overture is a masterpiece of symphonic order, following a mixture of procedures.²⁵ It provokes in the listener a large range of emotions, from disruption - due to metric irregularity - to the tenderest feelings, mediated by the voice of authority. As Rushton rightly maintains:

[the overture] is not programmatic [in a sense of revealing the story] but it evidently foreshadows not only themes from the opera but the personality of its hero.²⁶

Berlioz never tried to be narrative in purely instrumental music, without the help of text or descriptive titles, but he did express his view about the musical-dramatic role of operatic overtures. We learn much about Berlioz's aesthetic point of view concerning this issue from his comments on the four overtures to Beethoven's opera *Fidelio*. Berlioz found the last one, the *Fidelio* overture, the least connected to the opera, and therefore the least suitable as an overture:

... Les autres ouvertures, au contraire, sont en quelque sorte l'opéra de *Fidelio* en raccourci. On y trouve, avec les accents tendres d'Éléonore, les lamentables plaintes du prisonnier mourant de faim...; tout y est palpitant d'intérêt dramatique, et ce sont bien des ouvertures de *Fidelio*.²⁷

This interpretation could not persist would it not have been for the knowledge of the opera's libretto.

²⁵ A detailed analysis is found in Rushton, *The Musical Language of Berlioz* (1983), 202-27.

²⁶ Rushton, op. cit., 202.

²⁷ *Le Renouveleur*, 30.3.1834, *Journal des Débats*, 30.4.1842, *A Travers Chants* (Paris, 1971), 89-90. See also Berlioz's view on Meyerbeer's lack of overture in *Les Huguenots*, in chapter 5.

The overture to *Benvenuto Cellini*, like the overture to *Fidelio*, does not literally expose a summary of the play; both characterize moods, types of characters, and dramatic situations. In a first listening, the attentive listener could already interpret Berlioz's dramatic intentions in the overture, but not decode them. Only after getting acquainted with the opera could one almost read into it a summary of the opera.²⁸

Thematic material and its transformations

Cellini's Theme

The agitated theme that opens the overture introduces at once the 'idea' of the opera. Liszt's expression: 'L'énergie, la promptitude, la sagesse et la force' describes such a passage candidly. The shifting metre and the triplet neighbour note give him the impetus and is just one of Cellini's spectacular sides that we shall meet in the opera; this one Berlioz chose to expose in the overture and in the opera as a symbol for Cellini's presence or to allude to his spirit.²⁹

Teresa's theme

A descending half-chromatic line (see Ex. 1), contrasting in character and contour to the unrestrained triplets of Cellini, and indeed to other melodic contours, stands out throughout. Apart from its directness, the line often acquires special instrumentation. This line accompanies Teresa and reveals her pensive mood (see below, characterization of Teresa). The descending half-chromatic line enters in the *Larghetto*

²⁸ See Edward T. Cone, 'Three Ways of Reading a Detective Story' (1977) in *Music, A View from Delft* (1989), 86.

²⁹ In fact, Berlioz originally used this idea more often than in the final version of the opera. See for example the rejected air for Balducci 'Ne regardez pas la lune', which is accompanied by violin triplets, or, Fieramosca's song in praise of his courage, which is also accompanied by triplets in the rejected version (NBE 1b, 485-507). Teresa's

(bs. 28-31), into the pizzicato theme in the celli, unexpectedly, in the flutes and clarinet, in long notes getting shorter as they descend. Its first appearance in the opera is in an important point of the overture. Then, in the Allegro, bar 159 we hear again the winds with a variant of the descending half-chromatic line, which is taken from Teresa's part in the Trio of act I, when she sings: 'O Cellini, ce peut-il faire?'. In bar 175 tremolos are added to the line, raising the tension created by the descending half-chromatic line.

The Pope's Theme

The theme that opens the Larghetto section of the Overture (68/23) is the one which we will later recognize as the 'Pope's theme'. The 'Pope's theme' undergoes transformations, and encompasses different moods in the Overture. In other words, it is not the theme by itself, but the handling of it that changes character. In the very first appearance of the theme (68/23-36), the character of the Pope and what he represents is concealed; in fact it is the farthest remove from what he represents. The melody with its low bass pizzicato, its limping quality due to the rests, and its initial squareness that changes groupings as follows: 4 + 4 bars, then 3 times 2 bars units, seem to characterize an unstable person rather than the Pope. The cadence on V/G at the end of this first appearance elides with the noble theme that we shall later identify as the Harlequin's song in the Carnival scene. Contrast amplifies the difference in character between adjacent themes, and promises dramatic interest in the opera.

Solo trombones (72/64-67) play the 'Pope's theme' in its second appearance. The sound of trombones symbolizes authority (a sound topic which recurs for the Prince in

reflective Romance in the first act (in the first Paris version) has also triplets (173/61), as well as before and after "Ah, ce n'est qu'un moment" in the rejected air.

Roméo et Juliette). But a dramatic turn stops this declaration after three bars and the harmony shifts surprisingly to flat VI (73/66-78), in which key - E flat major - we hear the theme in its full length. The theme comes yet again in different rhythmic groupings: 3+3; 2+2+2, and sounds somber in the low register of the celli, bass clarinet and bassoons. The truncation and change of direction may hint at a Pope who does not strictly adhere to ecclesiastical principles.

The 'Pope's theme' is absent from the main body of the Overture. At its third appearance in the Coda (110/355), it is all embracing: each beat becomes a bar, played by all winds and it is superimposed upon other themes; with the counter melodies it adopts the Cantus firmus technique, associated with church music. This augmented version reappears in the third tableau in the Sextet, where Cellini, after been given a chance to live, to finish the statue and to gain Teresa, sings it in the augmented version, but as indicated in the instructions for the singer: '*demi voix, ironiquement*'. Cellini exercises mockery of authority even when he is in peril. It will indeed be his triumph, or fall. The 'Pope's theme' represents a strange and human pope, not consistent in his judgement. At the climax of the Allegro (104/318-354) the two thematic characters compete, but the representation of 'authority' is overwhelming (110/355-389). The fourth appearance of the theme is at the close of the overture. It exposes only its cadential end, and cadences for the first time in G major, the character is neither triumphant nor defiant. These are some of the principal points of the opera, foreshadowed in the overture. It is left to the unfolding of the opera to explain and fully present those points.

The Harlequin Theme

The 'Harlequin theme' has a gentle character. Italian in origin, Arlecchino was first a vulgar and cynical character, but assumed in France with Marivaux's *Arlequin poli par l'amour* (1720) a role of a sensitive and naïve person, associated with love.³⁰ In the carnival's *Pantomime* scene, indeed Harlequin represents the less popular but greater artist, who loses the competition to the vulgar Pasquarello. His importance in the opera rests on what he represents: artful beauty, too good to be understood by the majority of his audience and by the administration. He represents love that became under Berlioz's handling a major point in the opera, to be contrasted by art. In the overture the theme contrasts other themes and stands out in its suaveness.

The theme's first appearance (68/35) in the flutes and oboes overlaps the half-cadence of the 'Pope's theme'. In bar 42 the strings answer the theme in the tonic, accompanied by woodwinds in a 'galant' style, becoming even nobler in the cadence (72/63-64); it reminds one of the cadence of Cellini's seemingly simple strophic Romance, that has a noble cadence at the end of each strophe. The 'Harlequin theme' is preceded by an extended upbeat, played by flutes and clarinets (entering in the middle of bar 28), with a descending semi-chromatic line (Teresa's typical motive, see below). The bass and treble lines complement each other harmonically at this point: they exchange voices - the upper g^2 of the flute (b. 28) leads to the cello's g three bars later. The lines merge for the cadence in V/G (bs. 35-6) and the advent of the 'Harlequin theme' (incidentally in the actual key D major of the Harlequin in the Pantomime). Later these two themes correspond again (E^b , 75/77-8), but this time they are not

superimposed: the end of the 'Pope's theme' elides with the transformation of the 'Harlequin theme' (omitting the chromatic upbeat). The 'Harlequin theme' helps bring the tonality back to G major via G minor (78-84), accompanied by tremolo of the lower strings, and with syncopated horns (80). The last unit extends the upwards motion of the dotted rhythm (87), but is abruptly truncated by the whole orchestra when the *ff* tonic chord starts the main body of the Overture, *Allegro deciso con impeto*, a symbolic gesture for the Harlequin's state.

Characterization of Cellini

Cellini's versatile character manifests itself in his various appearances from the beginning of the opera, where his voice is heard from off stage; he is subsequently on stage for most of the opera. His principal motivic image appears in the overture in the form of the 'conspicuous triplet which recurs in the opera almost like a *Leitmotiv*'.³¹ The most characteristic feature of this triplet motive is its shifting position regarding the downbeat: in cut-time the triplet appears first on a weak beat then on a strong beat. Cellini appears in many more different guises, i.e. serenading off stage with his companions in a folk style, with popular percussion instruments (Choeur de masques, 136/10-91); when he confronts his adversaries, he shows them his firmness of mind (840/54-62, Paris 1,2; Quintet, No. 20); when overpowering troubles disturb him he sounds desperate or nostalgic (Act II, fourth tableau 'Seul pour lutter', pp. 995-1008); when he decides to elope with Teresa he sounds full of spirit and hope (777/160-69). In front of the Pope he does not yield (867/90-94). In short, the musical image of Cellini

³⁰ *Le Petit Robert 2* (Paris, 1981).

fits perfectly the libretto's dramatic situations. The multiplicity of guises, however, does not musically contribute to a deeper comprehension of the character of Cellini, beyond what the libretto offers. It does illustrate vividly the different situations. Generally speaking, the music does 'translate and amplify', in the sense used by Carolyn Abbate, or in Kivy's term 'characterize' (see Chapter 1). On that level it is eloquent and sensitive.

Edward T. Cone explains the different modes of singing available to the 'inhabitants of the world of opera': 'realistic' and 'operatic' singing. Operatic singing is the normal way in which characters converse in opera; realistic singing occurs when they are singing a 'song' within the opera, which would also appear as a song in a play, a novel, or real life.³² Parallel to the vocal parts we may distinguish in the operatic orchestra different 'voices' in different situations. What occurs in the first scene is a mixed mode: 'realistic dialoguing'. When we first hear Cellini's voice from the street, on Shrove Monday, he sings with his friends the Serenade adapted from the 'Chansonette de M. de Wailly': 'La la la...De profundis' (137/22 ff). The incipit of the Serenade becomes Cellini's personal motive as long as the situation in which it is sung lasts. When Cellini approaches Teresa's house, the motive is heard in the orchestra in E major, then Cellini is heard humming it from off-stage. Berlioz also uses harmony for the effect of 'remoteness': the guitar plays a C major chord, but starting on the third of the scale and ending on the 7th, B, so that it links back to E major (as its dominant); a flat sixth echoes the C major version (152/165-168). When Teresa hears it, she reacts with

³¹ Rushton, op. cit. (1983), 202.

³² Cone, 'The World of Opera and its Inhabitants'. In: *Music, a View from Delft* (Chicago, 1989), 126.

mingled concern and anticipation, her typical descending line is heard (see below on characterization of Teresa) as flowers are thrown in through the window, and Balducci confirms in E major: that's him. The local Cellini motive is heard in the clarinets and horns, in the mixed major-minor modes (214-5/11-12, 14-15). Cellini enters the house, Teresa shows signs of alarm, to the sound of the motive. Cellini, who does not sing it now, explains the orchestral motive as noise from the carnival, demonstrating that his motive and the carnival noise fuse. Teresa's reaction to the orchestral motive renders it a 'realistic song', even though it is heard from the full orchestra, which is normally part of the 'operatic' discourse and not realistic. Berlioz will use a similar technique, whereby someone on stage reacts to an orchestral sign, for Mephisto when he hears Margarita's motive (see chapter 8). From this it appears that music from the pit can be directed to characters on stage, if the situation requires it, and that they are not always deaf to the orchestra.³³ Instrumental music can be engaged in a realistic dialogue with the characters on stage.

This scene also represents a surprising dramaturgical approach: although Cellini is off-stage for the Serenade, the effect is like that of a split stage, simultaneously showing the inside and the outside.

After this scene there is nothing left of the motive, no reminiscence, and no residual association for it. If it is characterization of Cellini at all, it applies only to the given situation and not to his character more generally, as it comes merely as a marker.

³³ Edward T. Cone, *The Composer's Voice* (Berkeley, 1982), 35-7.

One might expect Cellini to reveal his emotional side in his two arias. Indeed, both are restricted to his lyrical emotional side. The Romance in the second tableau is a confession of love that is greater than his love for his art, which had been his only aspiration before he fell in love with Teresa. The instrumental commentary is however eloquent in the recitative that precedes his Romance and not in the aria, with its simple accompaniment. The Weimar version (339/2) opens with a gloomy, chromatic passage for strings in the lower part of their ranges, answered by a pastoral phrase in the woodwinds. The Romance that follows is touching and simple, strophic in form, though it embodies a fair amount of harmonic tension, as Rushton demonstrated.³⁴ It was a last-moment addition to the original performance, not printed in the libretto of 1838.

The second aria is in the fourth and last Tableau, when Cellini's projects are on the brink of collapse. In this recitative and air Cellini sounds almost Faustian in spirit, in text and music. In the recitative, the unison string lines that interweave into his melancholy text sound hollow. His invocation of nature reminds one of Faust's after he has broken his ties with humanity (*La Damnation*, Part IV); in both pieces the atmosphere is enhanced by tremolos. But Cellini's spiritual mood is momentary, as he often switches moods. The aria that follows, a Pastorale in 6/8 and F major, expresses Cellini's yearning for peace, liberty and simplicity. His ardent wish can be concluded from the presence of the high pitch of c^2 , the very Ut de poitrine that Berlioz mocked, when used for the sake of exposing the singer's effort (see chapter 3) as a sign for emotive passion.

³⁴ Rushton, *op. cit.* (1983), 177.

Cellini's kaleidoscopic disposition gives a mosaic-like picture, where clear lines delineate the different sides of his character. In the arias we get a glimpse of a more emotional and integrated personality, as he brings together his conflicting sentiments: his two loves—for art and for Teresa—and the contempt he feels for the life he has been experiencing, his longing for another kind. Nevertheless, the music is more explicit in the recitatives that precede the Romance and Air than in the arias themselves, a procedure we shall find in later works as well. We are finally left with a brilliant, but rather two-dimensional portrait of the Renaissance goldsmith.

Teresa's apprehensive disposition

Teresa is a young (seventeen-year-old) pretty girl who was courted by Cellini and responded with great love. In the libretto she is depicted as an anxious, worry-laden maiden, who, up to her *coup de foudre* with Cellini, was obedient to her good breeding. I shall demonstrate how the conflict caused by her new engagement is expressed by a conjunct, semi-chromatic descending line (from now on I shall name this line SCDL), and characterizes her state of mind. Traditionally a conjunct descending line is a sign of discomfort; thus it is easily recognized as a symbol. Such a line may be either diatonic or chromatic. Often one passing chromatic note is responsible for the special flavour of the SCDL. When not all the steps are chromatic, or diatonic, the motive is semi-chromatic, and this type is the one mostly associated with Teresa. But not exclusively with her; see for example Cellini's recitation about his escapade in the second act, which is dotted with descending lines that are immediately balanced by ascending ones; the sense of resolution is stronger here than the anguish (p. 765). Furthermore, his are

mostly full chromatic scales, so they are less associated with Teresa. Another example is the pope's threat, in a chromatically descending line (908/336 ff.). Descending lines had already appeared in the overture in connection with other recognizable themes (see above), for instance the Harlequin's melody, who personifies by the lyricism of his melody Cellini's sensitivity to his art and to love.

The following is a demonstration of the appearances of the semi-chromatic descending line in the role of Teresa. Her motive appears sometimes with Cellini's role; in these cases I make reference without showing the musical example. In Act I, the first tableau presents Teresa's conflict. Her father Balducci wants to marry her to Fieramosca, who is a mediocre sculptor in the service of the Pope. Cellini, the young talented artist—but not belonging to the right social class—is determined to marry Teresa, who wishes nothing more. At the same time she is reluctant to disobey her father.

Cellini and his friends are heard singing happy Carnival songs in the street. Teresa approaches the window (Paris 1,2, versions), knowing that her father is watching. Woodwinds play the SCDL line, B major with a flattened 7th note (153/175-8, Ex. 1.1), in a rhythmic pattern of acceleration: woodwinds play minims and crochets changing to quavers. The SCDL comes from the orchestra, as an emblem designating conflict, and the rhythmic accentuation reflects her growing fear. Teresa's air which follows is preceded by the same pattern (including the acceleration) in the woodwinds, in a higher register, introducing more chromaticism; e. g. in E major, the second time the 7th note appears it is flattened again, leading to A minor (165/2-5, Ex. 1.2). We sense her rising

anxiety not only by her vocal role but mainly by the orchestral commentary, including the diminution and chromaticism in the strings (165-6/5-12), that interpolate hastily between her words, when she observes Cellini and is afraid of the consequences of their forbidden meeting. She exclaims: 'Un billet... Cellini... quelle imprudence...', and the strings express Teresa's mingled excitement and anxiety. Her vocal rising exclamations grow gradually wider: the initial one is a fourth (b. 5), followed by growing intervals: a diminished 5th (b. 7), perfect 5th (b. 9), minor 6th (b. 10), major 6th (b. 11), minor 7th (b. 12); a pattern of acceleration emerges here as well.

In the Paris 1 version of September 1838 (which was never performed), the opening of Teresa's Romance had an introduction where the violins play a diatonic version of the descending line, imitated by flutes and oboes (No. 3a, 168/24-26). In the alternative versions (Paris 2 and Weimar), her Cavatina (3b) is about young love as opposed to parental obedience. It opens with the oboe in a melody outlined by an ascending broken chord and then descending in a chromatic line; Teresa takes up the melody (188/10-13, Ex. 1.3). This juxtaposition of broken chord and chromatically descending line is significant, as it portrays the musical distinction between Teresa and Cellini: Teresa's conjunct descending line and Cellini's ascending broken chord. When Teresa sings about her conflict, she uses both types of lines, highlighting the contrast between 'l'amour' (ascending arpeggio) and 'le devoir' (SCDL). Furthermore, in the second phrase, the orchestra establishes a version of the triplets' motive of the overture (189/26-34), and her vocal line has skips of fourths and thirds interwoven into her descending line. Music presents in a vivid manner the conflicting elements affecting Teresa. In the frivolous Cabaletta that follows, Teresa sings a diatonically descending

line (197/100-102), very much in the style of the discarded Romance (No. 3a, Paris 1 version), mentioned above, both incidentally in V/D.

The Trio, No. 4, is really a duo with intervention calls of the concealed Fieramosca, who eavesdrops on the lovers' plan to elope. The opening has the conventional structure of a duet where Cellini sings a phrase imitated by Teresa. Since it is shared by both, the phrase has both the triadic element and the conjunct descending one (224-5/70-74). At the peak of their duet, they sing the SCDL in parallel thirds, with sustained notes, unaccompanied; her text expresses resolution not to see Cellini any more, Cellini joins her in despair (238/125-6, Ex. 1.4). Teresa expresses her dilemma of pursuing her love and thus sinning, with the descending SCDL (257-8/229-33, Ex. 1.5). This melody is used in the overture (87/159-162); it recurs in a more recognizably vocal form (without the filling out of the octave leap) later in the trio (273/357), sung by Cellini. Bassoons double Cellini's attempt at convincing Teresa to follow him, echoing her motive, after which Cellini's triplets in the clarinet take over the accompaniment (259/247-53).

Example 1: Teresa's semi-chromatic descending line

Ex. 1.1: Act I, First Tableau, No. 2, 153/175-8

Largo

Ex. 1.2: Act I, First Tableau, No 3, 165/2-5

Flûtes I, II

Hautbois I, II

TERESA

(Elle ramasse un bouquet.)

Les belles fleurs!... un billet!..

Ex. 1.3: Act I, First Tableau, No 3b, 188/10-13

TERESA

En-tre l'a-mour et le de-voir

Ex. 1.4: Act I, First Tableau, No 4, 238/125-26

TERESA

Ah! je ne dois plus,

CELLINI

per - dre l'es-poir, Si mon â - - me

Ex. 1.5: Act I, First Tableau, No 4, 257-8/229-233

TERESA

O Ccl - li - - ni, se peut - il fai

Ex. 1.6: Act I, Second Tableau, No 12, 550-1/53-4

TERESA

fai - - - re?

Ex. 1.7: Act I, Second Tableau, No 12, 558/90-91

TERESA

je fai - - - re?

Ex. 1.8: Act II, Third Tableau, No 16, 731/17-20

Cl. (U)

Ex. 1.9: Act II, Third Tableau, No 16, 753/13-15

TERESA

Mais qui peut l'ar - rê - ter?

Ex. 1.10: Act II, Third Tableau, No. 16, 759/63-4

TERESA

Ra - mè - ne. je t'en pri - -


ASCANIO

Ra - mè - ne. je t'en pri - -

Ex. 1.11: Act II, Third Tableau, No. 18, 781/17-8

Cl. (La) 

Ex. 1.12: Act II, Third Tableau, No. 18, 797/143

TERESA 

Ex. 1.13: Act II, Third Tableau, No. 20, 839-40/51-3

TERESA 

Ex. 1.14: Act II, Fourth Tableau, No. 33, 1138/57-8

TERESA 

Ex. 1.15: Act II, Fourth Tableau, No. 33, 1139-40/63-5

TERESA 

In the second Tableau of Act I, Shrove Tuesday, Teresa is absent until the Finale that features the Carnival. When she comes in she drifts with the events. In the turmoil of the Carnival, in which Cellini and Ascanio are disguised as monks, Teresa desperately sings her SCDL: 'Ah, que vais-je faire?'; tormented by the conflict between loyalty to her father and the plot to elope, the SCDL is evident (550/53; Ex. 1.6). The passion increases when her father boasts how good he is to her (558/90-91 and ff, Ex. 1.7). In the Weimar version Teresa feels some hope of consoling her father, and she reverses the direction of the chromatic line (568/125-128).

The festivities of the Carnival include a singing competition; the cor anglais plays the SCDL first heard in the overture. It is the artful melody, figuring Harlequin (636-637/605-6), as opposed to the ophicleide's vulgar melody figuring Pierrot (or Pasquarello in Weimar), who, thanks to a mock-Balducci as Midas the long-eared judge, was the laureate of the competition (640/626 ff). We associate Harlequin with Cellini the artist and his love for Teresa; the ophicleide is associated with Balducci and his ignorance in artistic matters (on the Harlequin theme, see above). From here on Teresa plays only an ensemble role.

In Act II, the third Tableau opens on Ash Wednesday, with extended descending full-chromatic lines in the strings (pp. 729-30). It is the aftermath of the stabbing of Pompeo. Wind instruments, mainly brass with clarinet in C and bassoon—the dark section of the woodwinds—play the hymn of the metal workers in E minor, itself containing the half chromatic descending line (731/17-20, Example 1.8). We explicate the association of the gloomy atmosphere with Teresa's motive by her anxiety due to

the dramatic events and her concern for Cellini's fate. Ascanio's defence of his Master's uncompromising disposition comes as a contrast to Teresa's anxiety. Its musical representation is the interpolated orchestral ascending fanfares, hinting at Cellini's escape or at Ascanio's prediction of it. Teresa however is not convinced of Cellini's security; she sings her SCDL: 'Mais qui peut l'arrêter?' (753/13-15, Ex. 1.9). A monks' procession passes by while Teresa and Ascanio are impatiently waiting for Cellini. The ritualistic chanting of the monks alternates with their singing in a quasi gothic style, that features beautiful contrapuntal texture (pp. 756-762), parallel thirds and sixths, poignant passing dissonances, and contrary motion (see above, Characterization of Renaissance life). They sing '*ramène, je t'en prie*' where Teresa's line descends and Ascanio's rises (759/63-4, in Paris 1 and Weimar versions, Example 1.10). This gloomy atmosphere changes at once with Cellini's unexpected return; all musical elements change abruptly to Allegro vivace, full orchestra with brass and woodwind instruments, *fortissimo*, chordal texture and pauses, a purposeful contrast (see Table 1).

Table 1: Act II, third tableau: the change in musical elements upon Cellini's appearance

Timing	Metre	Tempo	Instruments	Dynamics
Waiting for Cellini	3/4	Andante con Moto Quasi Allegretto	Woodwinds	pp
Cellini's arrival	3/8	Allegro vivace	Woodwinds, Brass, strings	ff

The Duet No. 18 in F[#] minor in 3/8 time was excluded from the Weimar version. It is hard to find any explanation for the exclusion other than its length, since its beauty is striking. In addition it has a dramatic point: Teresa is taking a decisive step, namely to run away with Cellini. The structure (as in the Trio) is traditional in that it represents a parallel opening phrase consecutively sung by each of the partners. Teresa opens the duet; two clarinets in thirds, descending in the SCDL pattern (781/17-18, Example 1.11), introduce her vocal line. Teresa varies the descent, thus achieving richness of expression: first a chromatic version (781/20-22), then a diatonic one (781/22-23); she then uses a descent in the harmonic minor (782/25-6), followed by a descent to the tonic via flat II (783/37-9), and the minor diatonic 5-1 scale degrees; indeed using all modes of conjunct descents. Once convinced, she becomes active, giving advice such as: 'leave this blood-stained clothing', still with her SCDL (797/143, Example 1.12), disclosing her concern in spite of her seemingly courageous posture. As she gets confident we get more triadic motives, and leaps of fifths. A triadic rise in long notes is reserved for the text 'Que nos vœux sont bénis' (808/219-23). As in the Romance, Berlioz used both melodic patterns—the broken chord representing Cellini's attitude, and her SCDL—to dramatize her conflict.

In the Quintet No. 20 (Paris 1 and 2), the couple is surprised by Balducci. Teresa's sense of duty impels her to beg his pardon, with the descending lines first chromatic, then diatonic (837/28-33). Balducci's role imitates her with descending lines (pp. 838-839), and with supplications she extends her line, this time in her typical SCDL (839-40/51-53, Ex. 1.13). Cellini intervenes with his ascending triadic motive (840/54-55).

In the Finale, when things go wrong for Cellini and his statue, Teresa, Ascanio, the Pope and Balducci sing together the descending A minor scale to the text: 'how pale he is' (1137/52-54). In this Finale there is a concentration of descending lines, as a summary of emotions represented by these different versions of the line. First a rhythmic variation on a SCDL, on their text: 'how pale he is' (1138/57-58, Ex. 1.14); then a chromatic descent in augmentation, with a plea to God not to forsake him (1139-40/61-65, Ex. 1.15), ending diatonically, is embedded in diminished chords. It is now Cellini's turn to express his greatest despair in a SCDL when he is in danger of losing everything: his art, his love and his life (1148/98-100). In contrast, his resolution to win, at the expense of sacrificing all his other artifacts, is expressed in a diatonic descent (1164/186-8).

Conclusions

In *Benvenuto Cellini*, the most consistent musical means with which Berlioz marked a single person is by accompanying Teresa's special mood of apprehension with the SCDL. Teresa's role thus shows an evident musical profile. It is a kind of a compositional statement (from the authorial voice) which shapes her fragile figure. Despite, or because of its simplicity of means, it contributes to the portrayal of Teresa as a fragile girl in love, who is afraid to face uncommon situations. Therefore her overcoming of her fears, through the influence of Cellini, is even greater. She starts believing in their common future and is ready to take steps. The process of persuasion is better pronounced in music than text, through shared and mixed individual roles of each of the lovers. The motive is either instrumental, or vocal. The majority of the SCDL

appearances in her vocal part convey faithfully her supplications, apologies to her father, or deep concern for her lover and for their future. It supplies a link between different and sometimes contrasting dramatic situations such as farce of all kinds, amusement during the Carnival, suspense in the darkness of the Carnival, and thus contributes to the coherence of the opera as a whole. I have shown how Teresa's motive spills over and induces other people to be concerned with the events that cause her be fearful. To illustrate Cellini Berlioz used also different personal motives, namely the triplet, the arpeggio motif and the street serenading motive. At times, when Teresa gets decisive herself, she adopts one of his motives, or shares it confidently with him.

The descending line is not exclusive for Teresa; nevertheless Berlioz managed to use this familiar line markedly to characterize Teresa's fears and hesitations. A descending line will also characterize Faust in the later work, as Rushton has shown.³⁵ But in this opera and concerning the delicate personality of Teresa, the principal effect is its simplicity as indicated by the directness of the descent, and its semi-chromatic outline. This is different from Faust, who is a philosopher, and challenges the meaning of life; his line is a multiply varied descent, with occasional ascents, based on a descent from scale degree 5 to 3 or 2.

In this early opera, which may not be a fully mature work, the title role is faithfully depicted following the plot and the libretto. Cellini's roguish side, and at the same time his devotion to principles such as liberty of expression and of creation are evident from the libretto. Music exemplifies these with various musical means, but merely in Kivy's

³⁵ Ibid., 230-4.

sense of characterization. Characterization in theatre and therefore in opera (see chapter 3) is always within the context of dramatic situations, using stage stratagems of various kinds. A sense of drama is evident from the opera's plan, masterfully achieved with the matching of dramatic events to the religious calendar. Furthermore, Berlioz portrayed in vivid styles the dramatic situations which Cellini drags himself into, and also those where Cellini is not present. He used satire, allusions—religious and rural, *couleur locale*—pragmatically. It seems as though Berlioz was juggling between bluntly transmitting his bitter message, and being diplomatic so that he would not ruin his career; in the latter he was not entirely successful since he was thereafter excluded from the Opéra.

CHAPTER VIII: La Damnation de Faust

A Note on Mephistopheles; Characterization of Margarita

Introduction

Composed between November 1845 and October 1846, *La Damnation de Faust* is not an opera in the usual sense of the genre, since it was not conceived for the stage. Berlioz meant to call it *Opéra de concert*, but he finally provided the title *Légende dramatique*. How did Berlioz ‘stage’ this unstaged opera with musical means? I believe that Berlioz devised special musical procedures to substitute for the missing visual element.

The significance of the work derives from the value Berlioz attached to Goethe’s poem, the literary model. Berlioz’s setting of the work had a long history, from 1828, when he first read the poem,¹ through the composition of *Huit scènes de Faust* in 1828-29, to the completion of *La Damnation de Faust* in 1846, into which he incorporated the individual scenes from the earlier work. Berlioz felt free to use the play as a source for his own interpretation, which highlights some points while ignoring others. Sub-plots found no place in his scheme, while Margarita’s personality as Berlioz saw her, and her becoming the victim of Faust’s lust, not only pushed Berlioz as far as showing her reception into heaven, but also in damning Faust. Berlioz stated in the *Avant-propos* published with the first edition in 1854, that ‘Le titre seul de cet ouvrage

¹ David Cairns, *Berlioz* (London, 1989), 269.

indique qu'il n'est pas basé sur l'idée principale du Faust de Goethe, puisque, dans l'illustre poème, Faust est sauvé'.²

My interest in Margarita and Mephisto as character-studies rather than in Faust himself stems from the relation between them; in Berlioz's version Mephisto and Margarita are linked in such a way that Margarita is the tool in Mephisto's hands for the downfall of Faust. Although, as Katherine Reeve observes:

A structuralist view of the plot would see Mephisto as primary and Marguerite as a mere pawn in his pursuit of Faust's soul', she also adds 'she holds the key ... to the question of the hero and the heroic in the work'.³

From another point of view her being in the drama interests me and that is the sympathy Berlioz feels with her; Faust's character is intriguing as well, but it has been investigated by Julian Rushton, largely from a musical angle.⁴

The drama contains four parts:

1. Plains of Hungary, Scenes 1-3
2. North Germany, Scenes 4-8
3. In Margarita's room; the street outside, Scenes 9-14
4. Scenes 15-19, Epilogue

Despite the important role Margarita plays in the drama, she appears for the first time in part three, scene 10. Berlioz skipped over the street encounter of Faust and Margarita,

² 'Avant-propos' to *La Damnation de Faust*, published in 1854 with the first edition of the full score. NBE 8b, 2.

³ Katherine Reeve, 'The Damnation de Faust: the Perils of Heroism in Music'. In P. Bloom, ed. *Berlioz Studies* (Cambridge, 1992), 158-9.

⁴ Julian Rushton, *The Musical Language of Berlioz* (Cambridge, 1983), 228-56. See also Reeve, op. cit, 148-187.

which exists in Goethe's poem. In presenting Margarita in her private domain, with her troubled conscience, and ignoring the vulgar dialogue in the street, Berlioz draws her lines in the libretto as a chaste girl, which suits his concept of Margarita. Prior to her appearance we hear Mephisto implanting her image into Faust's dream (Part II, scene 7), and he falls in love with her. Margarita has also seen Faust in her dream and fallen under his spell; she can admit it only when she thinks that she is alone. Scene 10 serves actually as a prelude to scene 11, and it comes after Faust's air in F (scene 9), in which he thanks the Lord (not, curiously, the devil) for discovering love to him. Mephisto comes in abruptly, announcing Margarita's arrival. Faust expresses his excitement and hides; Mephisto leaves, planning the sarcastic Serenade to be sung in scene 12; this anticipates Faust's desertion of Margarita after their love affair, and puts much of the blame on Mephisto (indeed, Rushton suggested that Berlioz may have intended Faust's salvation).⁵ Margarita, thinking that she is alone, discloses her anxiety, which arises from her dream and the forbidden budding love; she then expresses the improbability of a real encounter with the dream-lover, and sings the ballad of fidelity, 'Le roi de Thulé'. In the *Huit scènes de Faust* of 1828-9 Berlioz added a note to the singer guiding her how to perform the ballad. He warns her not to look for expressive singing that will follow the sense of the text, but conversely, to sing it as uniformly as possible. It is evident that nothing in the world occupies Margarita's mind less than the miseries of the king of Thulé; this is an old tale that she had learned in her childhood and she murmurs it distractedly.⁶

⁵ Rushton, 'The Salvation of Faust'. I thank Professor Rushton for letting me read this unpublished typescript.

⁶ Berlioz's note appears in NBE vol. 5, 78.

What are the musical means with which Berlioz achieved characterization of Margarita and of Mephisto? In this discussion I shall demonstrate two methods that Berlioz used for that end: one is specific for this drama, thus constituting part of the *tinta* of the work,⁷ namely, anticipation of fragments of music that will get their significance later on. Unlike the conventional technique of reminiscence, favoured by nineteenth-century composers of dramatic music, who used it with exaggeration (see below), we find here the technique of anticipation, which appears to be a particular hallmark of *La Damnation*.⁸ By this term I mean that a motive is presented for the first time in the drama in its fragmentary form prior to its full appearance; thus it is apparently insignificant as yet to the audience.⁹ This means of characterization depends upon a major concern of this thesis, and is the second method I shall discuss later on, namely the engagement of the orchestra. Berlioz's use of the orchestra in imaginative new ways has been generally admitted. I shall draw attention to specific instances of the instrumental role that contribute to characterization.

Mephisto

Mephisto's entrance in Part III (scene 10, p. 258) is heralded by the sound of three brass chords: in F minor (bar 1), its dominant 7th, and a diminished 7th on F sharp. The latter is characterized by an abrasive tremolo that conceals the sense of meter; it is

⁷ See discussion of *tinta* in chapter 3.

⁸ It appears first in the anticipation of the 'Ronde de Paysans' and 'Marche hongroise' at the end of the first scene of Part I. In a fashion Mephisto's aria 'Voici des roses' is an anticipation of the Choeur de Sylphes (Part II, Scene 7).

⁹ Joël-Marie Fauquet mentions the use of anticipation in *Les Troyens*, pointing to the difference between this practice and the reminiscence (*rappel de thème*). His example is that of Anna mentioning the future love of Dido and Aeneas; the music is a fragment of the *marche troyenne*. 'Vienne une Cassandre, vienne une Didon...'

senza sordino (after the muted strings for Faust's entire aria), and causes a total and immediate change of the atmosphere. Another instance where Mephisto is thus heralded is in the tavern (p. 150), when, after listening for a while with Faust to the drunken participants, Mephisto steps forward to propose singing his own song: three short chords with the same instrumentation as at his very first entrance (p. 109). In Part III, therefore, we recognize these three chords, since they twice introduced Mephisto in Part II; they constitute a personal motive, although this is the last time it is used (despite his abrupt entrances later in Part III, and in Part IV).¹⁰ Dialoguing with Mephisto's sound (the tremolo that follows the brass chords) we hear an intimate melodic fragment, 'sung' by the clarinet. This fragment is heard for the first time, so we do not yet know its significance (or indeed whether it has any). Later it will become clear that the motive represents Margarita in so far as it is the opening of her ballad. The sound contrast between Mephisto's brass chords and Margarita's melodic fragments is striking, thanks to its brevity. The opposing elements are illustrated in Table 1.

L'Avant-Scène Opéra 128-9 (1990), 138-9. But of course we know the march already, so it is a musical reminiscence, even if at the given situation Anna prophesies.

¹⁰ In the opening of scene 14 the brass introduce Mephisto's entrance but without the active 'anapest' pattern. Berlioz may have softened the abruptness of the intrusion which in anyway appears blunt at this particular moment (see below). Dropping a motive may be typical of Berlioz; compare the handling of the 'Cellini' triplet motive. Note that the chords are not identical harmonically on each appearance, only rhythmically and in instrumentation, using trombones; the Part III appearance lacks the cymbal which ended the motive in Part II.

Table 1: The Contrast between Mephisto's and Margarita's music at the opening of scene X

Elements	Mephisto (bars 1-2)	Margarita (bars 3-13)
Tempo	<i>Moderato</i> crotchet=88	<i>Andante con moto</i> dotted crotchet=56
Meter	4/4, no sense of meter	6/8, clear sense of metre (bars 3-8)
Effects	strings <i>tremolo</i>	strings <i>pizz.</i>
Topic	dramatic	pastoral
Orchestration Dynamics	cornets, horns, trombones, f	clarinet in B-flat, pp (bars 3-8)

Anticipation technique

Before going into details, it will be helpful to discuss what is generally meant by reminiscence motive, thus alluding to the difference between these two modes. A theme can mark a situation, or a person, or a prototype; upon its recurrence the person or situation marked comes to mind. This is a simple technique that Kerman calls an 'identifying theme'. The more sophisticated technique that may hint or subtly remind the listener of a dramatic situation, a person in a conflict, is what he calls a 'recalling theme'.¹¹ The recurring themes are aimed naturally at the audience—people on stage may be deaf to them—and they may help identify the 'psychological essence' we are after. In French opera it was Meyerbeer who introduced the effect first in *Le Prophète*, in which he used 'musical repetitions of all kinds and descriptions'.¹² It was Abramo Basevi who 'considered that recurring themes in opera were first introduced and best used by Meyerbeer, run into the ground by Wagner, and not too well handled by

¹¹ Joseph Kerman. 'Verdi's Use of Recurring Themes', in: *Studies in Music History*, ed. Harold Powers (1968), 495.

¹² *Ibid*, 498. Basevi overlooked earlier uses of recurring themes possibly known to Berlioz (e.g. Méhul).

Verdi'.¹³ Katharine Ellis showed how Castil-Blaze had made use of the technique, modifying Mozart's *Don Giovanni* to the current taste of the Parisian audience who expected reminiscence as part of the mainstream tendency.¹⁴ Kerman speaks of fragmented motives that occur when the opera deals with persons with 'abnormal states of consciousness, when someone is mad, or dreaming or in prophetic fervor, he may be supposed to 'hear things'''.¹⁵ Nevertheless, even for these supernatural cases Kerman does not mention the anticipating motive. Indeed it is a unique device that Berlioz used sparingly in this opera.

The use of anticipating motives raises the question: who are the sounds of the orchestra intended for? The anticipating motive is less communicative than a motive that has been heard already in its complete form, and that was already implanted in the audience's consciousness. But while Berlioz used the device throughout *La Damnation*, as part of the *tinta* of the work, it has a definite purpose in characterization of Mephisto. The anticipated fragment prefigures Margarita before the audience is aware of her presence. It comes in the clarinet: a melody harmonized in G minor (Scene 10, bar 3) in 6/8 pastoral style, delicately punctuated by pizzicato.¹⁶ The foreshadowed tune, which the audience will later hear as Margarita's ballad, is also her personal, intimate song, emblem of her state of mind. One might wonder why Berlioz used an effect that seems lost for the audience. He caused Mephisto to react to the tune, by

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Katharine Ellis, 'Rewriting *Don Giovanni* or "The Thieving Magpies"', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 119 (1994), 232.

¹⁵ Kerman, op. cit., 496.

¹⁶ The melody in full is unequivocally in the major; the harmony here begins in the minor but at the close of the extract is G major.

saying: '*Je l'entends*', and so to warn Faust of Margarita's arrival. Did Faust hear the melodic fragment? If he did, he was unaware of its significance, since he needs Mephisto to draw his attention to the signified. The reason for Mephisto to hear and interpret it as Margarita's presence lies in Mephisto's supernatural capability which tells him that this tune is Margarita's sign: he does not need the signifier to identify the sign. Ready comprehensibility would require him first to present the signified attached to the signifier, after which the sign can stand by itself and the signifier be inferred. But a demon can understand the sign without attachment to the signifier.¹⁷ For reasons of dramatic verisimilitude, which he so much admired, for instance, in Gluck, Berlioz sacrificed ready comprehensibility for dramatic truth.

There is a second instance of anticipation in this short prelude (scene 10). We saw how Mephisto provoked Faust to hide behind the curtain of Margarita's room, so he can watch Margarita without her being aware of his presence. This brings the key of G flat Major (Allegro, bar 13), the flat II (Neapolitan) of the preceding F minor. Then, in the same key, Mephisto discloses his plan to perform a Serenade (bar 15). All he says is that he is going to sing a pretty wedding song, but his true intention is played out by the strings who play the tune *pizzicato* (Allegro, bar 17). This Serenade is part of Mephisto's plot to cause Faust to leave Margarita before the consummation of his desire, so as to renew its strength and develop the love affair; this is part of his larger

¹⁷ Frits Noske describes compositional procedures versus analytical procedures, stating that the latter must follow the opposite direction to the former: 'The "signifier", which by definition is material and perceptible, must be determined first and may then lead to the "signified", which is conceptual and intelligible'. *The Signifier and the Signified, Studies in the Operas of Mozart and Verdi*. (The Hague, 1977), 297.

strategy for preparing Faust's downfall. The use of the same key for both sides of Mephisto's maneuvering enhances the irony.

Thus in this short prelude in recitative (scene 10), Berlioz introduced in a nutshell important clues identifying the protagonists, using the device—that gives also a special tinta to the work, namely, of anticipation—selectively to characterize a supernatural being.

Scene 11 occurs in the bedroom and belongs to Margarita, as a soliloquy (Faust being concealed). This scene is interrupted by Mephisto's scene (No. 12) with the chorus of 'follets'; scene 13 is the duet for the lovers that culminates in mutual declaration of their love and might have gone further but for the intervention of the demon. The sequence in which the events appear presages a film technique and is illustrated in Fig. 1A and B. Berlioz arranged the scenes dramatically by interrupting the natural flow, and freezing time at a climactic point. The events follow thus: after Mephisto has concealed Faust in Margarita's room, Faust witnessed Margarita's intimate soliloquy, in which, after the arioso, she sings distractedly an ancient ballad. At her momentary 'profond soupir' the scene shifts as if with moving camera; a large parenthesis is interpolated (scene 12), focusing on Mephisto summoning his sprites for mischief. Another anticipation comes in the coda added as an afterthought to the Menuet: the Presto conclusion anticipates the melody of the Serenade (in a different metre), in which he will foresee Faust's fall. After the Menuet and Serenade interpolation we go back to Margarita's room and find her ready to resume her ballad; the opening Andantino and the full accompaniment and the melody in the oboe, here in

G major, hint at her intention. She perceives Faust (scene 13, bar 14), who now reveals himself. They express their amazement and love in the E major duet. At the climax of the duet they seem about to consummate their love, but they are brutally interrupted by Mephisto (on the love duet, see below). In fact Mephisto's joining the bedroom scene is predicted by his last words to his sprites: '*Silence! Allons voir roucouler nos tourtereaux,*' at the end of his scene (No. 12). He ends inconclusively on the dominant of B Major as a sign of the urge to flee.

Dramaturgical approach to the 'opera of the mind'

The above description depicts the musical flow, as presented in real time (see Figure 1A). But we are to understand what happens in reality as overlapping (see Figure 1B): Margarita's recitative concludes with the ballad uninterrupted, only for a slight break for a sigh, then her ballad resumed for a short moment before she discovers Faust; after they overcome their bewilderment they start the duet. Scene 12 was not an interruption in real time; it is only presented as such musically, in the middle of a continuous action in Margarita's room.¹⁸ Mephisto's last words mentioned above mark the point to which the simultaneity of these scenes lasts (see below). Berlioz chose to break the continuity of Margarita's and Faust's scene with Mephisto's scene, just before the encounter, for a dramatic reason, namely to suspend time. Rushton alluded to this dramatic arrangement as 'a simultaneity split into chronological succession, and permitted, like the instant scene-change it requires, in this ideal "theatre of the mind"'.¹⁹ Léon Kreutzer in his laudatory article suggested that the moment Margarita stops for the sigh she falls asleep

¹⁸ A possible precedent for this is Act II of *Don Giovanni*, the scenes surrounding the Sextet.

and Mephisto implants Faust into her mind in her dream.²⁰ This is clearly wrong; for the realization of this theory we should get from Berlioz at least a hint; for Faust's dream he makes it explicit. In fact, however, Margarita enters her room and starts to sing, after a recitative in which we already know that she is perturbed by the dream: 'C'est mon rêve d'hier qui m'a toute troublée...'. If it were not for the music, in theatre it could be presented with a split stage where in the upper level would be Faust first hiding then appearing, and Margarita, thinking she is alone and later discovering Faust. In the lower level would be Mephisto with his sprites. Therefore the 'theatre of the mind' is what we have to apply actively.

¹⁹ Rushton, *The Musical Language of Berlioz* (Cambridge, 1983), 259.

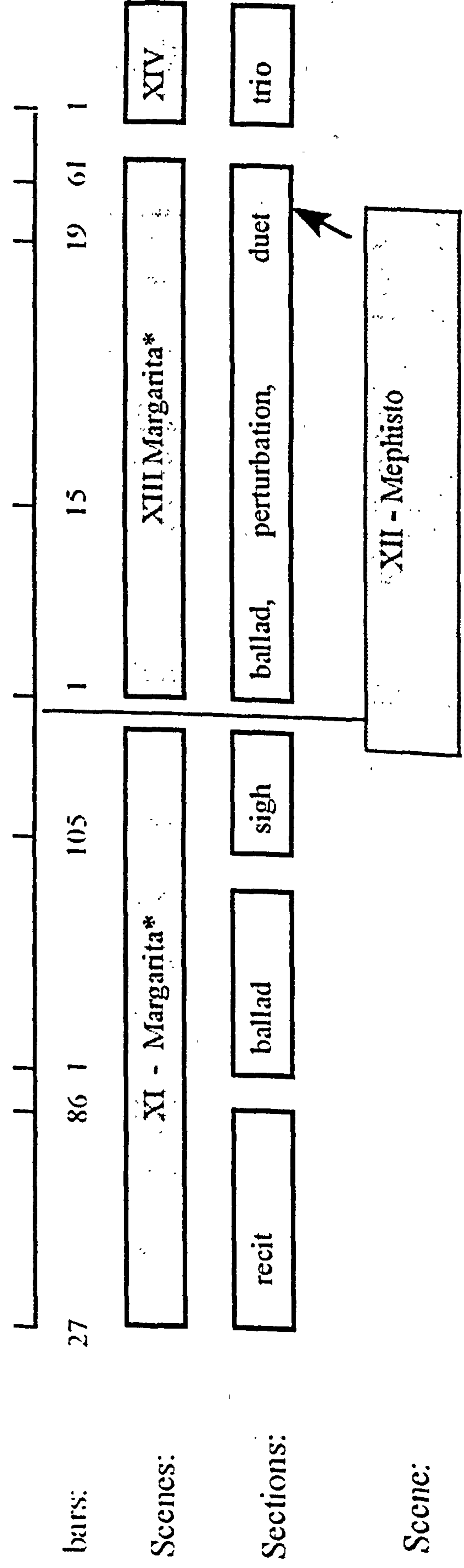
²⁰ Kreutzer, *La Gazette musicale* 6 (11 February, 1855), 43.

Figure 1: Part III, Scenes XI-XIV, actual and dramatic presentations

a) Actual musical presentation



b) Implied dramatic presentation



* Faust is hiding; he appears for the duet; Mephisto comes in where the arrow points

Characterization of Margarita

The role of the instruments

To substitute for the lack of staging Berlioz used **ambient** instrumental music. Berlioz's use of the instruments is imaginative, but in this specific case the instrumental role is multiple. A character on stage might use gesture to enhance a dramatic point, to the audience and/or the other characters. In opera, it was argued (see chapter 3) all visual elements have a restricted role. In a concert opera this is not possible and all must be audible. I agree therefore with Kivy's argument, as far as concert opera is concerned, that the orchestral commentary is there to enact the actor's gestures.¹

Margarita's soliloquy (scene 11) includes orchestral clues for interpreting her state of mind. Although instrumental music can bear meaning of a kind, it cannot bear specific meanings without the support of text. Berlioz achieves eloquence in untexted music through tight linkage with interpolated text. Margarita is alone on stage trying to come to terms with unfamiliar emotions. Instrumental music achieves the transmission of feelings; with the help of fractions of text it thus becomes demystified, and these are reused for further articulation of her state of mind. Because of the emotiveness of the pure instrumental stretches, the recitative used by the singer becomes more poignant than the words themselves. The unfolding of these emotions is explained below:

¹ Kivy 'Opera Talk', in *The Fine Art of Repetition* (1993), 156.

The flutes' opening theme (Scene 11, bs. 27-44) is a period of four phrases; it is followed by a passage where Margarita expresses her feelings verbally, alternating with versions of those instrumental phrases, thus forming a continuous musico-verbal monologue. The extension of the instrumental part gets an equal importance to the voice through development. It appears that the significance of the instrumental passage is that it expresses Margarita's inner voice. The four instrumental phrases are distinctly characterized, although they are continuously interconnected (see Table 2). Phrase a opens with a non-accented upper neighbour-note figure (see Ex. 1A). Phrase b is characterized by syncopated minims with the effect of displacement of the accent, starting with the upward octave leap and returning to the tonicized E^b. Phrase C is metrically regular and modulates back to V/C minor, thus functioning as a retransition to the opening phrase; this unit is not repeated later. Phrase a' (bs. 41-44) slows down the shortened opening motive in a reflective mood, but ends open ended, with II⁷ in C minor. This chord pushes onwards to a reharmonized, varied repetition of the whole period (bar 45), this time with interpolations of Margarita's recitative, which confers meaning on the initial instrumental period.

Example 1: Scene 11, bs. 27-44; instrumental introduction to Margarita's soliloquy

A: Phrase structure with reduction

D: Motives a and b superimposed; bs. 60-62

The image shows a musical score for two staves. The top staff is labeled "b. 60" and contains a melodic line with notes G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4. The bottom staff is labeled "clarinet:" and contains a melodic line with notes G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4. Both staves are in C minor and 4/4 time.

Table 2: The flute theme in C minor (bars 27-44)

Bars	Phrase	Chords
27-32\1	a	I
32\2-36\3	b	III
36\4-40	c	III-V
41-44	a'	I-II

From bar 44, which concludes the instrumental introduction and has the explanatory text: 'Que l'air est étouffant', until the explanatory phrase 'C'est mon rêve d'hier qui m'a toute troublée', the music gets more organized on certain levels: Phrase a is now harmonized with V-I (bars 45-46), but the upper line overlaps this passing cadence; continuity is superimposed over the articulation between the two periods. The chords of phrase b end with a dominant 7th in C (b. 53), to which Margarita responds: 'J'ai peur comme une enfant!', prolonging the 7th of the dominant without resolving it. Phrase c is omitted and the reprise of phrase a is now telescoped with two bars of phrase b (see Ex. 1 C). The irregular short viola tremolos now become a sustained *tremolo* dominant pedal in the cello, which prolongs the expectation for resolution. A brief resolution is suggested by Margarita's interpolated phrase in C Major: 'C'est mon rêve d'hier ...' (bs. 58-60). Next, the tonality is blurred through two consecutive diminished 7th chords of woodwind alone; the motivic material is now superimposed: the low register of the clarinet, which adds mystery, plays a variant of phrase a, while the flutes play a variant of phrase b (see Example 1D).

Margarita concludes this part of the scene with the words: 'En songe je l'ai vu...' and the orchestral commentary has an arpeggio in E^b Major (with an enharmonic pivot: Berlioz already writes d[#] for the voice, having in mind the relative ease of a major third over a diminished fourth, but also perhaps his next harmonic goal, which is B Major). This E^b follows the dominant of C minor which becomes inconclusive, and despite signs of growing organization, on the harmonic level it has become increasingly fragmented as motives from the instrumental introduction are eliminated

and never resolved. At the end of the second part of the recitative comes the likely answer to Margarita's question about whether she will ever meet her dream-lover; it is again offered by the orchestra. B minor slips up to a D[#] minor chord (bs. 77-8); Margarita confirms this conclusion by the hollow exclamation: 'Folie!', with an open fifth. D[#] turns enharmonically to become E^b major in the orchestra, a procedure which reverses the progression featured earlier in the scene (bs. 62-3) and mentioned above, to the text 'En songe je l'ai vu, lui mon futur amant'; the harmonic reversal is another symbol for the improbability of this love. These uses of E^b are linked by a registral recall of the opening of the scene, with the g² in the flute, which is part of the chord. The four closing bars before the end of the recitative modulate to F; they sound like a distilled version of the instrumental opening, passing through the principal melodic notes of the recitative (see the reduction in Example 1 B); words are now superfluous.²

Meanwhile, between these two exclamations ('En songe je l'ai vu' and 'Folie'), Margarita shares with us the image of her lover in its musical realization, as she has seen him in her dream. She anticipates the motivic repertory that we will hear later in her Romance (Part IV, scene 15) when she will speak of his absence and her longing for him. In the Romance the musical fragments will appear in their complete form. The anticipated fragments represent the actual sentiments aroused when Margarita saw Faust in her dream, so the Romance itself is a reminiscence. Contrary to Mephisto, she does not possess the ability to predict, and indeed she tells what she

² Berlioz recomposed this passage when it was decided to perform the ballad in F major rather than its original G major. G major was the key in the 1829 *Huit scènes de Faust*; originally the ballad, like its anticipation and

had experienced in her dream and dismisses it as folly. Table 3 summarizes the anticipated motives in the recitative against their reminiscences in the Romance. The anticipation technique, since it concerns Margarita's dream which she has received from Mephisto, is the work of the demon. The anticipated motives will not receive full realization until Part IV, in the episodes of the Romance. Thus again it is a dramatic consideration that caused Berlioz to reverse the normal order (whole then fragment), and it also conforms to the character of this work, contributing to its particular character, or *tinta*.

Table 3: Margarita's image of Faust in the recitative and in the Romance

Anticipated Motives in the rec. Scene xi	Parallel Passages in the Romance, Scene xv
bar 65-68: Qu'il était beau!	bar 52: Sa marche que j'admire
bar 70-74: Dieu! j'étais tant aimée! Et combien j'ai l'aimé!	bar 61: Dont il sait m'embrasser

In the second part of the scene Margarita's thoughts drift towards an ancient ballad about a king who remained loyal to his long deceased beloved: 'Le roi de Thulé'. The opening motive of this ballad was anticipated, as explained above, as Margarita's motive prior to its full presentation.³ To give it further a rustic effect, Berlioz added the instrumental echo, played by the flutes at the end of phrases, e.g. bars 41-2, 47-8, 51-2. The echo is occasionally interrupted, as though her performance of the song is

reminiscence, was to have been in G major also. See NBE 8b, 504.

³ David Cairns suggests that the ballad originated from the mountains of Berlioz's birthplace, being a typical melody with the 'augmented fourth, flattened sixth, shifting drone bass and gently rocking 6/8 metre'. *Berlioz* (London, 1989), 270; together with its 6/8 pastoral meter it represents a topic of rustic life. This (and not

about to be overcome by her reverie (as in bars 63-4). Once again the instrumental commentary reflects her inner thoughts.

Scene XIII: Duet

As explained above, the undulating viola motive and the oboe playing Margarita's theme restore at once the pensive mood in which we have left her at the end of scene 11. Although the two separated parts of the ballad are in different keys (the ballad in F, Scene 11, and its resumption in G, Scene 13), the change of key at this distance is not damaging to the conception; the music is identified by texture and melody rather than actual pitch. Mephisto ends his serenade in B major (with its diminished 7th chord) and she resumes the ballad in G, the flat VI relationship mediated by the diminished 7th: quite a dramatic gesture, fitted for the imminent revelation.

As long as Margarita believes that she is alone, her personal motive is heard. When Faust reveals himself, her bewilderment is expressed by woodwinds that 'shiver' with a diminished chord (bar 14), and the key drops a minor third to E major (the natural VI, but not the relative minor; it brightens the sound through the raised tonic G which becomes G#).

A short recitative for Margarita leads to the duet, in which Margarita first expresses astonishment. Faust, who had been preparing for this moment, is collected enough to launch the duet with a fully-formed refrain (A) during which he attains the high c^{#2}, that expresses his rapture at meeting her. From this point on the structure of the scene

anything medieval) is the significance of the heading 'Chanson gothique' (see discussion on Renaissance life, chapter 7).

suggests a Rondo (See table 4). When Margarita overcomes her first astonishment she sings in the relative minor (C[#] minor, bar 37). The flutes colour what her text expresses about his attractive voice, traits, language, a sensitive if traditional word-painting device. Music goes deeper into depicting their mutual attraction. At first their tonalities are quite personal, each maintaining the key: for him, E major and its dominant, B (bar 45); for her C[#] minor and its dominant, G[#] minor (bar 52). A stunning modulation prepares Faust's inquiry whether she had loved him in her dream: G[#] minor to G major; Berlioz favoured this move through a common mediant note of adjacent chords, resulting in a change from minor to major, (which Rushton called 'Pun', as here in bars 52-4).⁴ Margarita answers shyly: 'Je... t'attendais', but the dominant 7th in G Major that securely resolves at that moment (bar 57) with *sforzando* and *tremolo*, confirms, wordlessly, that it is love she feels, and suggests growing confidence. The next bar modulates through a diminished 7th chord back to B Major, ready to return to E; this is an echo of the transition from day dreaming to revelation at the outset of the scene, but this time the move takes place for the confession of love.

In section B Faust was accompanied by a syncopated rhythm, preserved for him throughout; but after Margarita reassures Faust of her love to him, her role receives Faust's rhythm (bar 58). The lovers' pictorial image of turtle-doves' patter, with flutes and clarinets in thirds, starts at that moment (bar 61) and maintains its flow through the shared refrain. This may be associated with Mephisto's remark: 'Allons voir roucouler nos tourtereaux!'. When the refrain comes back (A¹, bar 66) Margarita is wholly dependent upon Faust; he repeats his melody, but she is drawn into his music to sing

⁴ Rushton, *The Musical Language of Berlioz* (Cambridge, 1983), 32.

mostly in parallel sixths, accompanied by the turtle-dove's patter which cuts across the sections of the rondo. As can be seen from table 4, tonality also contributes to the flow between sections that are not strongly marked; rather they flow naturally one into each other. This indicates how the dramatic idea controls the course of the musical stream.

Section C embodies Faust's seduction and Margarita's final submission to love, dramatically illuminated by the chromatic descent from e^2 to $g^{\#1}$, which starts with the words 'quelle langueur' (b. 105) and ends with the final submission: 'Je meurs' (see Ex. 2). The lovers open this section, each in turn with identical musical phrases, declaring their affection in complementary texts. They join musically for the fourth phrase (b. 92), in contrary motion towards a tentative approach. They part again, this time in E major, and seem to stay apart a little longer, but they join and cross voices for the fifth phrase (b. 103). The duet disintegrates from bar 105, when Margarita sings of the strange yearning she experiences; this she expresses with a minim e^2 , accompanied by the orchestra *ppp* with an unrelated C major chord. Once she has reached this e^2 , they both start an interwoven chromatic descent to $g^{\#1}$ (marked * in Ex. 2). Margarita's last resignation is securely embedded in the home key E major (b. 118), where the chromatic descent becomes diatonic, passing through scale degrees $\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$.

Example 2: Margarita's submission to love, scene 11; bs. 86-118

F **AUST** **MARGARITA**

86 Je ne sais quelle ivresse

90

90 Marguerite o tendresse

92

93 dans ses bras, dans ses bras me conduit

qui vers toi qui vers toi m'a conduit

96

98 Je ne sais quelle ivresse

100

102

103

G: Cede a l'ardente ivresse

G: Brulante enchante resse

Example 2 (cont)

Marg.
Faust

104

Dans tes bras me conduit
Qui vers toi m'a conduit!

105 *

108 *

Quelle langueur s'empare de mon être
V/D C: *ppp*

109 *

111 *

Au vrai bonheur dans mes bras
tu vas maître viens!

112 *

114 *

116 *

^ 3 ^ 2 ^ 1

Ds mes yeux des pleurs Tout s'efface... je meurs... Tout s'efface Ah! je meurs!
Viens! Viens! Viens! Viens! Viens!

Tonally complete, the binary design might be expected to appear as a rondo by virtue of the return of the main theme. Instead a peripeteia brings Mephisto's intrusion. It is prepared in manifold ways: the very end of section C shifts away from E major to F minor (flat II) and the expected closing refrain is dramatically truncated by a menacing tremolo. Berlioz breaks off his potential rondo to underline the dramatic point of the curtailment of the love scene, and the frustration of love at the moment of its fulfillment.

Katherine Reeve provides a reading for the end of this love duet.

The "nocturnes amours" ... may be imagined to occur, with classical French restraint, between the acts, much as the consummation of Aeneas and Dido's love, in *Les Troyens*, occurs during an orchestral interlude. An even more graphic imagination might point out that we can more easily witness erotic climaxes in music than in spoken drama, and that Faust's long diminished-chord seduction has reached its E major resolution - on the words "je meurs"—just before Mephisto's interruption.¹

The latter interpretation, however, would spoil Mephisto's plot of making love more agonizing by frustration. The musical sensuality of this scene is indeed heartfelt; it reminds one of the *Scène d'amour* from *Roméo et Juliette*, and the love duet of *Les Troyens* Act IV. This music is pure characterization.

¹ Reeve, 'La Damnation de Faust'. *Berlioz Studies* (Cambridge, 1992), 161.

Table 4: Scene 13, structure, key plan and instrumental and rhythmic effects

Section	Bars	Person	Key	Effects
A	19-34	F	E	
B	35-36	F	E	Faust's rhythm
	37-41	M	c [#] -V/B	Singing violas
	41-45	F	B	Faust's rhythm
	46-52	M+F	c [#] - g [#]	Singing flutes
	53	M	G	Singing flutes
	54-55	F	G	Faust's rhythm+WW's
	56-57	M	G	Tremolo
	58-59	M		Faust's rhythm
	60	F	V/E	Fanfare
	61-65	F+M	E	Turtle-dove's patter - clarinet and flute in thirds
A ¹	66-81	F+M	E	Turtle-dove's patter - clarinet and flute in thirds
	82-85	F+M	E	Strings in rising scales
C	86-105	F+M	B-E	
	100-101		e-G	
	102-105		b-D	
	106		C	Long note in an otherwise short notes surrounding, ppp
	107-116	M+F		Chromatic harmony, roving basses
	117-118	M+F	E	
	119-122		E-f	Tremolo, crescendo molto

*M = Margarita, F = Faust, WWs = woodwinds

Scene XV: Romance

Margarita has become the victim of Faust's fulfilled lust. He abandoned her after a few happy encounters. Margarita expresses in her Romance her longing for Faust, and praises his virtues. Goethe's poem expresses all this by highly poetic means which caused Berlioz immense excitement and profound respect. The fact that he undertook composition of the *Huit scènes*, then of *La Damnation*, raises the question of how he could counterbalance this elevated poetry with music. How can music amplify, or even just express, what the poet has so masterfully put into words? There is indeed a risk that music has little to add to any great poem, even though in its form it is a lyric fitted for

music. I shall nevertheless try to show how Berlioz managed to create music that amplifies the impact of the poetic text.

The title 'Romance' alludes to a long tradition of strophic song. As Bruce Alan Brown mentions, in the context of Gluck: 'Naive, often slightly antique in expression, and strophic in form, the romance was allied more with song than with aria'.¹ Berlioz chose to deviate from this tradition and opted for an aria model which has something of a rondo design, but also falls into broader ternary (although not *da capo*) divisions, following the dramatic context rather than the structure of the poem.

The poem, set in nine stanzas, has a sequence of events where stanzas 1-3 speak of love, absence of the beloved one, and the consequent sufferings of Margarita. This sequence of ideas comes back in stanzas 6-8 although in different words. The two stanzas in between (4-5) speak of Faust's virtues; the last stanza (9), which extends the design, postponing the expected return of the main melody, expresses a wish for a reunion that almost attains the status of hope. Berlioz organized the music analogously, the large ternary design being better suited to his ends than a strophic song. The question of why he used the title Romance must have to do with contents rather than with form. However, for Berlioz, who used conventions to suit dramatic purposes, this question seems not so relevant. Table 5 shows how on a smaller level the division by stanzas suggests a rondo form (a)a b (a) c a¹ d a² (a); parentheses stand for instrumental phrase. Table 6 shows the poem's stanzas as set to musical large sections, as well as the rondo structure in a small scale. The ternary division is based on dramatic expression,

¹ Bruce Allan Brown, *Gluck and the French Theatre in Vienna* (Oxford, 1991), 365-6. See also Frits Noske, *The French Song from Berlioz to Duparc* (New York, 1988)

confirmed by ternary organization of keys and particularly of metre (see Table 5).

Tempi fluctuate on a smaller scale.

Table 5: The romance's subdivisions to rondo and ternary form

Bars	Stanza	Rondo	Ternary	Key	Metre	Tempo
1-9	inst.	(a)	A	F	3/4	I
10-21	1	A		F		I
22-32	2	B		modul.		II
33-40	3			A ^b -f		II
41-49	inst.	(a)		F		I
50-59	4	C	B	F-C	9/8	I
60-67	5			C-mod.		I
67-77	6	a ¹	A ¹	F	3/4	I
77-86	7	D		modul.		III
87-95	8			A ^b -F		II
96-108	9	a ²	coda	F		IV-I
108-121		(a)		F		I

Tempi: I Andante un poco lento III Piu animato ed
 II Un poco animato IV Lento agitato appassionato assai

Table 6: The poem's stanzas and large musical sections

	Stanza	Section	Key	Rondo sections
	Instrumental opening		F	(a)
1	<i>D'amour l'ardente flamme Consume mes beaux jours. Ah! la paix de mon âme A donc fui pour toujours!</i>	A	F	a
2	<i>Son départ, son absence Sont pour moi le cercueil Et, loin de sa présence, Tout me paraît en deuil.</i>		modulatory	b
3	<i>Alors ma pauvre tête Se dérange bientôt; Mon faible coeur s'arrête, Puis se glace aussitôt.</i>		A ^b -f	
	Instrumental interlude		f-F	
			F	(a)
4	<i>Sa marche que j'admire, Son port si gracieux, Sa bouche au doux sourire, Le charme de ses yeux,</i>	B	F	c
5	<i>Sa voix enchanteresse Dont il sait m'embraser, De sa main la caresse, Hélas! et son baiser,</i>		C	
			C	
6	<i>D'une amoureuse flamme Consument mes beaux jours! Ah! la paix de mon âme A donc fui pour toujours!</i>	A'	F	a ¹
7	<i>Je suis à ma fenêtre, Ou dehors, tout le jour: C'est pour le voir paraître Ou hâter son retour.</i>		modulatory	d
8	<i>Mon coeur bat et se presse Dès qu'il le sent venir. Au gré de ma tendresse Puis-je le retenir!</i>		A ^b -F	
9	<i>Ô caresses de flamme! Que je voudrais un jour Voir s'exhaler mon âme Dans ses baisers d'amour!</i>	Coda	V/F	a ²
	Instrumental closing		F	
			F(A)	(a)

The contrast between A and B is of poetic and musical content: A and B sections differ in meter, 3/4 in A and 9/8 in B. A and A¹ both have a stanza in A^b, where Margarita speaks about her suffering; the difference between them is that in the A section A^b modulates to its relative minor, while in A¹ A modulates to F major, a distant key, but also the tonic major of F minor, which may be heard as the budding hope. A itself is a closed form, rounded up with the instrumental reprise. The B section modulates as expected to the dominant. The two stanzas of B that praise Faust's virtues stand out in that they are connected (from bar 60) through *crescendo* to *forte* in the flutes and cor anglais, and by creeping harmony: B major, B minor, C major, with a continuous accompaniment. Thus they form a close-knit unit.

The instrumental role is eloquent throughout. Most significant is the choice of cor anglais for the opening (a) phrase. Berlioz wrote in his *Grand Traité d'Instrumentation et d'Orchestration* about the cor anglais:

C'est une voix mélancolique, rêveuse, assez noble, dont la sonorité a quelque chose d'efface, de lointaine, qui la rend supérieure à toute autre, quand il s'agit d'émouvoir en faisant renaître les images et les sentiments du passé, quand le compositeur veut faire vibrer la corde secrète des tendres souvenirs.²

Moreover, each stanza is characterized by a different accompaniment that puts Margarita's message into relief. The first stanza, speaking of love, marks each beat with *pizz.* in the bass; the second stanza, speaking of the absence of her lover, has a legato bass and syncopated arpeggios in the violins; the third stanza, expressing her suffering

² Berlioz *Grand Traité* (1854), 122.

caused by his absence, has crotchet pulsations of repeated notes in the upper strings, while the bass has *pizz.* octave leaps. Equally pictorial is the way the accompaniment ceases (b. 38) when Margarita sings of her heart freezing. It starts beating again with just one bar of the accompaniment of the first stanza in F minor, moving to F Major for the interlude (a), the *cor anglais* reprise. This one bar of accompaniment hints at a vocal reprise, which does not occur; the voice is silent.³ The accompaniment in *pizz.* undermines the lyrical quality of the metre by oddly stressing the weak beats. At the same time two other lines accompany Margarita: a string of displaced quavers in the second violins and violas, and a smooth undulating line in the first violins. This superimposition of rhythmic patterns may project different currents in her disturbed soul.

There is a bridge connecting B to A¹ that expresses the remembrance of the kiss. Bar 65 starts with a *cresc.* and ascending slide in the first violins preparing Margarita's 'Hélas!', which reaches the peak g² and descends to g¹ over alternating diminished 7th chords, on c[#] and g[#], and back to c[#]. This instability conceals the return back to the A¹ section by overlapping its beginning.

The sixth stanza is a reprise of the first one, but the effect of the kiss overflows to the reprise A', the accompaniment being legato (bs. 67-72); only after 'la paix' (significantly reharmonized) does her heart 'beat' again in the bass. Stanzas 7 and 8 still belong to the altered reprise of A, having the above mentioned differences of tonality and accompaniment.

³ Nevertheless the *cor anglais* is itself sufficiently eloquent to call to mind the text that was previously sung to this

In stanza 9, which is the extension of A¹ and functions as a coda, Margarita's vocal line and orchestral commentary become emotionally and musically climactic. The orchestra sustains the G minor (supertonic) harmony, tremolo. The notes d and g are marked by octave leaps respectively (bs. 97, 99-100). Unlike the other stanzas, parts of the text of stanza 9 are repeated: 'Voir s'exhaler mon âme Dans ses baisers d'amour, Voir s'exhaler mon âme Dans ses baisers, dans ses baisers d'amour!'. In the repetition of 'dans ses baisers d'amour' the register is low, the highest pitch a' is repeated and sinks to f¹ (tonic) at last (b. 108). The repetitions are characteristically reharmonized: g² is first harmonized as II (b. 100), f² becoming its 7th; b¹ natural (b. 102) supports V/V; the second time g² supports V₅⁶/VI, f² supports VI (bar 104), then IV (b. 105). The b¹ natural of bar 106 is reharmonized as the augmented 6th leading forcefully to the cadence. Such harmony suggests deep emotional commitment from this otherwise submissive girl.

The instrumental postlude that follows presents the melody with gaps, *fermate* in the introduction, filled in with drooping arpeggios in the violins, over vibrating cellos in tremolando, and sustained violas. One feels touched by the mood of resignation and acceptance, by means of quite straightforward signs: the arpeggios are curiously analogous to Purcell's choir of angels singing 'with drooping wings' mourning the dying Dido. Katherine Reeve has a different interpretation in which she focuses on the abuse of Margarita, rather than on her longing for what she loved and lost.⁴

melody. This point is essential to permit the rondo interpretation.

⁴ '... by the end of the Romance, Marguerite is not merely a forlorn, love-sick girl, but also a victim of violence. Her doom, foretold in the [soldiers'] choruses' model of seduction as siege, battle and victory, is enacted musically

The above-mentioned reharmonizations are not the only ones in the Romance. A series of reharmonizations of the note b^b with the word 'la paix' upon the six appearances of phrase A in the Romance symbolizes Margarita's hope and despair. Brian Primmer maintains that

...the concept of organic reharmonization is... variable: whilst its ability to symbolize the subtlest fluctuations of the human spirit makes it peculiarly attractive to Romantic sensibility.⁵

Strangely, however, when he goes on to exemplify his statement Primmer mentions four occurrences of the melodic pattern, two in the orchestra and two in the vocal line; but in fact it appears six times (see table 5), three in the orchestra and three in the voice. In addition, Primmer interprets b^b as a tonal centre, and the supertonic of F he interprets as actually being *in* G minor. If we rather examine the music in its harmonic context and not by local chord vocabulary we arrive at different conclusions. The note b^b appears first in bar 6 in the cor anglais where it is harmonized as IV; in bar 16, in the voice, to Margarita's text 'La paix', it is part of a diminished 7th chord on c^\sharp ; bar 45 is an exact repetition of bar 6 (as Primmer notes). In the sixth stanza, bar 72, again on 'la paix', b^b is part of a passing E^b Major chord, becoming retrospectively VI when related to the supertonic harmony. This is marked by a *sforzando*, colouring the word 'paix' with ironically bitterness. The above two reharmonizations of the b^b note on the word 'paix' temporarily punctuate the II, which falls on 'âme'. The importance of the supertonic manifests itself in the coda, stanza 9, which is a variation of A: the text

by the absorption of her vocal line into the rhythm of the soldiers' march, and by the stifling of the English horn as it attempts to restate the theme'. Reeve, *op. cit.*, 162.

⁵ Brian Primmer, *The Berlioz Style*. (London, 1973), 149.

rhymes with the original A (stanza 1), and the meaning matches as well, only here it presents the wish which appears almost to be hope, while the original stanza expressed despair. The orchestra's role is expressive: tremolos in the strings and sustained notes in the winds, with the dynamics changing in wave-like patterns. *Sforzando* comes twice with the word 's'exhaler' and with the note g^2 . The principal melodic notes are a gradual descent from g^2 to g^1 (the note b^b here is part of the supertonic harmony). The last instrumental refrain (ignored by Primmer), reminds one of the bitterness of the sixth stanza with the E^b again in the bass, as if to quench hope.

Margarita's Romance echoes Faust's air (Scene 9), with its inner conflict of hope and improbability of the realization of their love. Rushton provides an analysis of Faust's air, in which he shows how harmony indicates these 'uncertainties', and he compares 'Berlioz's agitation ...(to what) Gluck said of Orestes, so we can say of Faust: "Il ment"'.⁶

Conclusions

The constructive use of the anticipation technique is the unique practice Berlioz employed in spite of its apparent problem of communication. Berlioz reserved the device for Mephisto, as a supernatural creature. The supernatural phenomenon is a typically German feature. Berlioz knew and adored Weber's opera *Der Freischütz* with its mysterious supernatural atmosphere. Rather than imitating his technique, Berlioz thought up his own, resulting in a new species of supernatural transformation. Mark Everist distinguishes between the German and the French attitude to the supernatural,

⁶ Rushton (1983), 242.

stating that for the French the supernatural is ‘part of a deception [as in *La Dame Blanche*]... The German supernatural tended to depict genuine inhabitants of other worlds on stage’.⁷ Berlioz adopted the ‘German’ option.

The instrumental role, that embraces colour, harmony, melodic material, and rhythmic gestures, reveals more of Margarita’s feelings than do the words. Every note and musical gesture conveys her sensitivity since her first appearance. We know nothing of her upbringing, her background; everything narrative is omitted in favour of revealing inner feeling. Margarita and the music she sings and is surrounded with are one; she becomes part of the music and the music is part of her. Her monologue weaves vocal and instrumental music in a fabric that results in a portrayal that would take many more words than those included in the libretto to evoke.

⁷ “The Name of the Rose.” *Revue de Musicologie*, 80 (1994), 243.

CHAPTER IX: Musical Characterization of Aeneas

Introduction

Les Troyens is a unique genre of opera, as Rushton has put it:

Les Troyens has the outward semblance of Grand Opera... But in spirit and form it has only a loose connection with the commercial opera of the bourgeois monarchy and second Empire.¹

As is fitting for an epic, which expressed a life long passion for Virgil's *Aeneid*, it occupies vast dimensions in broad tableaux. Berlioz credited Shakespeare for his influence in the dramatic aspect: 'C'est beau parce que c'est Virgile; c'est saisissant parce que c'est Shakespeare'.² To this we may add a tribute to his idol Gluck, given in a letter to his sister Adèle: 'Il me semble que si Gluck revenait au monde, il dirait de moi en entendant cela: "Décidement, voilà mon fils."'.³

Berlioz started writing the libretto and composing the music in April 1856, and went on making corrections until January 1860.⁴ When composition was under way he wrote to the Princess Carolyne Sayn-Wittgenstein, who greatly encouraged him in realizing the opera, about his aspiration concerning his music's role and aim. The essence of his

¹ Julian Rushton, 'The Overture to *Les Troyens*'. *Music Analysis* 4 (1985), 119. On the genre and relationship of this opera to the tradition of Grand Opéra, see David Charlton, 'On the nature of "grand opéra"', in *Hector Berlioz, Les Troyens*, Ian Kemp (ed.) (Cambridge, 1988), 89-93.

² CG V, 2163, 12.8.1856

³ CG V, 2283. In the above mentioned letter to the Princesse Sayn-Wittgenstein he writes about music's role, where he blames Wagner for exaggerating Gluck's system in which music should merely serve the text with *expressive accents*, and adds that fortunately Gluck did not practice what he preached.

⁴ Macdonald, 'Composition', in *Les Troyens*, Ian Kemp (ed.) (1988), 52.

creed is a belief in music that is expressive with true feelings and so powerful that it can fight to win:

Je suis pour la musique appelée par vous-même libre. Oui, libre et fière et souveraine et conquérante, je veux qu'elle prenne tout, qu'elle s'assimile tout, qu'il n'y ait plus pour elle ni Alpes ni Pyrénées; mais pour ses conquêtes, il faut qu'elle combatte en personne ... qu'elle aille elle-même au feu Elle est si puissante qu'elle vaincrait seule ... Trouvez le moyen d'être expressif, vrai, sans cesser d'être musicien, et donner tout au contraire des moyens nouveaux d'action à la musique, voilà le problème.⁵

We find in his words the echo of a life long *credo* put into a warrior's image.⁶ What are the arms with which Berlioz's music 'fights', and to what extent is it indeed 'sovereign'? But before going into these crucial questions, the choice of character must be examined.

When looking for a title for the opera, among the options Berlioz contemplated were *Aeneas*, *Aeneid*, *Dido*, as well as *Troie et Carthage* and *Italie*,⁷ indicating the important role that the source played, the characters of Aeneas and Dido and the former's historic mission.⁸ Berlioz's early involvement with the fate of Dido is documented in his *Mémoires*.⁹ Cassandra is very much Berlioz's contribution to the epic, playing a small role in the *Aeneid*; she is always the prophetess, even in her love affair. She appears in the first two acts, at the end of which she commits suicide together with her fellow Trojan women. Dido is present in the last three acts; she appears as the noble queen,

⁵ CG V, 2163.

⁶ See Millet's remark on this romantic trend, cited in chapter 1.

⁷ CG V, 2150.

⁸ See chapter 4, and Paul Robinson, 'Berlioz', *Opera and Ideas, From Mozart to Strauss* (Ithaca, 1985), 106.

even when in her great sorrow she loses her distinction. The reason for selecting Aeneas as a model for characterization is the versatility of his personality, exposed over all five acts, through text and music.¹⁰ Berlioz exposed Aeneas's character from many sides—in the private domain as well as in leadership; consequently we see him torn between love and duty. Where Dido in a similar predicament risks choosing love, Aeneas chooses duty; but his heart, too, is broken. My main concern is to enlighten music's role in characterization of Aeneas, in revealing how Berlioz created a more rounded character than the libretto was able to offer. For this purpose I analyzed those scenes in which Aeneas has an individual role. For context each section is preceded by an outline of the dramatic situation.

Another striking effect of this opera which I hope to elucidate is the overall atmosphere that envelops it, that which we summon the *tinta* of the work, consisting of several distinct musical procedures, used consistently and specifically in an opus.¹¹

Act I, No. 7: récit; No. 9: récitatif et chœur;

Dramatic situation

Aeneas, the hero and title role of the source epic, first appears in the opera with the function of a messenger (No. 7). His abrupt intrusion into a solemn commemoration ceremony commemorating Hector (Pantomime, No. 6) makes his advent even more

⁹ Berlioz, *Mémoires* (Paris, 1991), 43-4.

¹⁰ It is also true that more attention has been paid to the leading female roles, for instance by Julian Rushton in Ian Kemp, op cit. (1988), and, indeed, in Berlioz's own comments on the opera.

¹¹ Jean-François Labie noticed it: 'L'opéra entier baigne dans une lumière dorée que Berlioz est allé chercher au fond de ses souvenirs littéraires'. 'Berlioz, homme de lettres'. *L'Avant-Scène Opera* 128-9 (1990), 136. Labie though does not explain the musical means with which Berlioz created this light.

remarkable. Aeneas relates with great excitement the horrible fate of the priest Laocoon. The effect on his audience is startling and this ironically makes them all too ready to bring the wooden horse into the city, to appease the gods. Only Cassandra, who prophesies calamity, dissents; but nobody listens to her.

Berlioz had originally intended to include a scene immediately after the pantomime, in which Sinon, the Greek spy (derived from Virgil), prepares the way for the horse to be taken into the city. Whatever might be the reason for Berlioz to dispense with this scene, for which he composed and orchestrated the music, the result is that Aeneas himself appears responsible for the fatal mistake.¹²

Musical characterization

No. 7, récit

Aeneas's first appearance is alarming, due to the contrast in sound with what has preceded it. Contrast for dramatization of turning points is one of the musical means with which Berlioz's music realizes the character of this epic drama.¹³ The scene however preserves some traits from the Pantomime, promoting continuity, and highlighting the imposed peripeteia, which sweeps aside the solemn ceremony. The location, the dramatis personae (except for Aeneas), and more surprisingly the tonality, are constant elements. Tempo, metre and sound elements change abruptly. The recitative starts in F# minor and ends in the relative major. A strong dramatic effect is

¹² The music appears in NBE 2c/875-886. The scene, orchestrated by Hugh Macdonald, has been restored in the performance of Opera North under the conductor David Lloyd-Jones, and in the recording conducted by Charles Dutoit (1993).

¹³ Rushton provides an example where 'The elements of contrast at Mercury's entrance affect every musical dimension', in 'The Overture to *Les Troyens*'. *Music Analysis* 4 (1985), 122.

caused by projecting on the one hand the continuity of tonality and place, including the same people—nobility and crowd—and the contrasting elements on the other hand (see Table 1).

Table 1: Sustained and contrasting elements in No. 6 and No. 7

Elements		No. 6, Pantomime	No. 7, Aeneas's Recit
Sustained	Location, time and persons	Trojan dignitaries in a memorial ceremony	The same
	Tonality	F# minor	F# minor
Contrasted	Tempo	Andante non troppo lento	Allegro
	Metre	C	3 / 4
	Persons		Aeneas's hasty appearance
	Instrumentation	Clarinet solo (representing Andromache), strings, chorus	Tutti (no brass for the previous 41 bars)
	Tessitura	Low register, con sordino	High register for the strings, senza sordino
	Dynamics	ppp	ff

The recitative's style is a syllabic arioso, which may be attributed to the echoes of French tradition.¹⁴ Although the text is organized in rhymed verses, the music flows rhetorically, independent of the rhyme structure. Table 2 summarizes the organization of text and music. There are fourteen text lines and sixteen musical phrases; musical phrases frequently cut across text lines, for the endings rarely coincide. The result is an excited, spontaneous recitation, in which the musical phrases match the direction of the narrative more than Berlioz's own versification. For example, the first text line makes

¹⁴ The musical recitative in French tradition of the eighteenth century has a free character, that depends on the dramatic situation and the literary model, as Charles Dill demonstrates in 'Eighteenth-Century Modes of French Recitative'. *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 120 (1995), 232-250.

less sense as a unit, but the musical phrase stops for a break in the right place: 'Du peuple et des soldats, O roi!', while the verse goes on to include: 'la foule'.

The narration is subdivided into three sections (see Table 2, p. 181):

I - Aeneas announces the panic caused by a terrible event

II - The subject of the event - the priest Laocoon and his suspicion; his apparent blasphemy in throwing a spear at the horse

III - Laocoon's fate, caused by the monstrous serpents coming from the sea to devour him.

Unusual harmonic turns, orchestral, rhythmic and melodic effects highlight the dramatic events (see Table 3, p. 182). The wind instruments create a sonic resemblance with the beginning of the opera, as Condé noticed.¹⁵ Condé did not mention however the preceding short but significant sound of strings, *ff senza sordino*, *decresc.* Its significance can be drawn from Berlioz's explanation in a letter to Liszt, where he says that the lack of an Overture to the opera offers the opportunity to keep the strings out of hearing until Cassandra's entry. When she is introduced by their sound, the effect provides the required contrast to the jubilant mob.¹⁶ I would therefore suggest that Berlioz used here the same strategy for Aeneas's entry; moreover, he uses the strings'

¹⁵ Gerard Condé, in *l'Avant-Scène Opéra, Les Troyens* 128-129 (1990), 64.

¹⁶ 'A celle-là (Les Troyens) il n'y a pas d'ouverture. La raison qui m'a empêché d'en écrire une est une raison d'instrumentateur: pendant toutes les scènes populacières du commencement la c anaille Troyenne est accompagnée seulement par les instruments à vent (bois); les archets restent inactifs et ne font leur entrée qu'au moment où Cassandre prend la parole. C'est un effet spécial, qui eût été détruit par l'ouverture; car je n'eusse pas pu m'y passer des instruments à cordes'. CG VI, 2632.

high register as a call for attention, while for Cassandra he used the more gloomy deep register.

The recitative progresses from confusion caused by Aeneas's genuine bewilderment to control over his feelings, in a manner that describes Aeneas's gradual recovery of leadership. Ian Kemp finds the confusion in the chorus but not in Aeneas's role,¹⁷ which diminishes the trajectory from the terrifying occasion, through the devastated Aeneas, to his becoming the generally accepted leader.

Spectacle is, to be sure, an integral part of opera, in such a manner that the audience can see his excited state and his rank, but it is music: orchestra and voices that profoundly express these sentiments and reactions in an eloquent way. Aeneas's hasty entrance is represented by the winds in a rising scale (from $c^{\#2}$ to $c^{\#3}$, bs. 2-5), in an irregular metric pattern (consisting of groups a and b, see Ex. 1a). Two pairs of joined bars, each containing three minims (a + b), form a hemiola; within this pattern a secondary pattern arises that embodies tension between a dactyl foot (long-short) at the beginning (bs. 2-3) and anapest (short-short-long, bs. 4-5). The first sketches of this music were in the unusual 5/4 time, but in a repeated regular pattern (see Ex. 1b).¹⁸ In this early version, a gradual rise uses a repetitive two-bar module.

¹⁷ Ian Kemp, 'Synopsis', in *Hector Berlioz. Les Troyens*, Ian Kemp (ed.) (Cambridge, 1988), 24.

¹⁸ NBE 2c/935.

Example 1: Aeneas's typical rhythmic irregularity

a. Rhythmic irregularity in Aeneas's first entry, No. 7, bs. 1-5

Musical notation for Example 1a, showing rhythmic irregularity in Aeneas's first entry. The notation is on a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It features a triplet of eighth notes followed by a series of eighth notes. Brackets labeled 'a' and 'b' group different rhythmic units. Labels 'dactyl' and 'anapest' are placed above the notes to identify the metrical feet. A measure number '8' is at the bottom right.

b. First sketches of No. 7, NBE, vol. 2c, p. 935

Musical notation for Example 1b, showing first sketches of No. 7. The notation is on a single staff with a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It features a series of eighth notes. A bracket labeled 'dactyl' is placed above the first three notes. A bracket labeled 'anapest' is placed above a group of three notes later in the sketch.

c. Aeneas's move to action in No. 13, bs. 5-8

Musical notation for Example 1c, showing Aeneas's move to action in No. 13. The notation is on a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats (Bb, Eb). It features a series of eighth notes. A measure number '5' is at the bottom left.

After the peak ($f^{\#1}$), a turning point comes, where we twice hear the anapest meter. Berlioz retained from this version only the anapest meter, but its use is significantly different in the last version because of the irregularity that illustrates better the excitement and confusion. The pizzicato punctuates the 3/4 meter against the duple grouping of the hemiola, adding to the sense of disorder.

Phrase structure gets more regular with the course of the events:

- Part I (bs. 1-24) consists of irregular musical phrases; only the fourth and last musical phrase of part I coincides with text line 4.
- In part II (bs. 25-46) the rests maintain regular short duration, as if Aeneas has recovered his breath, but the musical phrases are still irregular.
- Part III (bs. 47-end) embodies the peak of the story:

The serpents entangle the priest, inject their venom and bloody saliva, and then devour him. The tension increases, the register rises gradually, the movement is mainly chromatic. At the same time a regular phrase structure emerges (from bar 47-75), where we find the repeated pattern of four bars (preceded by an upbeat), ending with a pause. This regularity increases the impact of the terrifying story in a mysterious way, and reveals Aeneas's self control. Parallel to this regularity in the vocal line, the instrumental chromatic figuration, which evokes the serpents' image, cuts independently across text lines and musical phrases: the instrumental 'persona' reflecting Aeneas's alarmed state of mind is still under the serpents' spell, while Aeneas

has already recovered. Considering this psychologically, it is a stroke that reveals Berlioz's deep comprehension of his hero's changing states of mind.

A strong rhythmic effect is reserved for the climax. The greatest excitement, caused by the devouring of the priest, utilizes metrical superimposition. While Aeneas soars with his highest notes, sustained, to descend finally an octave, the strings have a duple meter pattern of repeated chords and rests (from bar 75), the trombones are heard off the beat in triple meter that the woodwind quavers maintain - the whole orchestra shakes like an earthquake.

Aeneas gains all our attention through an eloquent text, strongly supported by music that is far more than an accompaniment. The image of Aeneas is already sufficient to delineate a man of energy with potential leadership qualities, but at the same time with human weaknesses.

No. 9: Récitatif et chœur

Confusion reigned in the octet that followed Aeneas's horrible story. In No. 9 Aeneas is the first to recover and seek a way forward. Since he attributes the fate of Laocoon to the gods as a punishment for blasphemy, 'pious Aeneas' opens with a prayer-like phrase trying to turn aside the gods' rage. From this point on a descent by fifths starts, a traditional procedure not common in Berlioz, that he used as a sign for agreement between the eminent personages of his cast. The dominant 7th of D (bs. 3-4) moves directly to the dominant 7th of G, which duly resolves. The King takes the tonality down another fifth to C major (b. 7) showing full accordance with Aeneas, so that in commanding the Trojans to follow his orders Priam effectively hands over

leadership to Aeneas.¹⁹ Priam echoes Aeneas's three repeated semi-quaver upbeats and he too speaks of the gods' rage. Aeneas is certainly not following the King's footsteps: on the contrary, he assumes leadership. When Aeneas refers to the goddess Pallas and to the wooden horse as a sign from the gods—strings accompany him by a traditional texture of long sustained chords; a gesture that may reflect Berlioz's admiration for Gluck.²⁰ Before Aeneas's next solo, in which he confirms Priam's unheard order, the whole orchestra plays a *ff* rising dotted arpeggio in C major. C is restored as Aeneas ends his speech, then the descent by fifths reaches F major, at bar 14, after the change of tempo (b. 12). The text now calls the horse a sacred object. The last goal in the fifths descent, B flat (b. 21), has the same words, and this key is later associated with the triumphant entry of the horse during the Marche troyenne.²¹

Summary for Act I

Berlioz presents Aeneas starting to build up by steps his character as a man of action and a leader. He is stricken by the events like everybody else. His authority gains the public's respect because of past reputation, which Berlioz assumed the audience is familiar with, and because he is ready for action. But it is mainly music that has shaped him thus. The decisive characterization lies in the energy of the rhythms, and the strongly directed modulations from F# minor to A (No. 7) and from F# minor, again,

¹⁹ Priam's orders are never heard, but he gives clear orders in the discarded Sinon scene: 'Que sur de durs rouleaux disposés avec art le cheval soit placé ...' NBE 2C, 888.

²⁰ The symbol has been used by predecessors of the Baroque period, but these can hardly be attributed as a model for Berlioz.

²¹ This is another instance where G minor moves to B flat major as a symbol for fear leading to resolution, as Rushton demonstrated for scenes 13 and 39 'The overture to *Les Troyens* (1985), 124, and the fact that G minor was not stated here, but alluded to, cf bars 8-10, may also be significant.

mainly by falling fifths to B flat (No. 9), a sign of agreement between the King and Aeneas.²² His image of anti-hero that only gradually recollects his authority is musically depicted in his versed recitative.

Table 2: Phrase structure of No. 7: récit

SECTION	LINE	TEXT ²³	BAR COUNT
		Instrumental introduction	5
I bars 1-24 Announcement of the event	1	Du peuple et des soldats, Ô roi! / la foule	3
	2	S'enfuit et roule	4 + 2 rest
	3	Comme un torrent;/ on ne peut l'arrêter!/ (Instrumental intr.)	2 + 4 rest
	4	Un prodige inouï vient de l'épouvanter: /	4 + 2 rest
II bars 25-46 Laocoon's action	5	Laocoon, voyant quelque trame perfide	4 + 1 rest
	6	Dans l'ouvrage des Grecs,/ a d'un bras intrépide	2 + 1 rest
	7	Lance son javelot sur ce bois,/ Excitant	5 + 1 rest
	8	Le peuple indécis et flottant, /	6 + 1 rest
	9	A le brûler. /	3 + 1 rest 3 + 1 rest
III bars 47-end The serpents' reaction	10	Alors, gonflés de rage, / Deux serpents monstrueux, / s'avancent vers la plage, /	3 + 1 rest 3 + 1 rest
	11	S'élancent sur le prêtre, en leurs terribles noeuds	3 + 1 rest
	12	L'enlacent, / le brûlant de leur haleine ardente, /	3 + 1 rest
	13	Et le couvrant d'une bave sanglante, /	3 + 1 rest
	14	Le dévorent, à nos yeux	7

Key: - Bar count indicates whole bars and ignores upbeats - Slash (/) delineates musical phrases - Indented text lines belong to the previous line.

²² In the above mentioned Sinon Scene, between Nos 6 and 7, Priam does not listen to Cassandra's warnings and tells her to leave the fate of the people to him. NBE 2C/885.

²³ The source for the libretto's versification is *l'Avant-Scène Opéra. Les Troyens* 128-9 (1990).

Table 3: Harmonic organization and dramatic effects of No. 7

Section	Key / temporary tonal centre	Bars	Dramatic situation	Orchestral or other effects
I	f [#]	1-16	Introduction	Tutti
	A	16-20	Reharmonization of the introduction	Tutti
	V/f [#]	21-24		
II	D-e-D	25-33	Laocoon's suspicion	
	B ^b (bVI)	34-9	Strikes wooden horse	Horns(34-6)
	V/f-A ^b	40-46	Instigation - to set fire	Alternating D ^b -C
III	a _(bII) - e roving	47-62	Serpents advance, attack the priest	Bass alternating A-B ^b brass ff (bar 62)
	roving	63-67	Entangle him	Brass
	roving	67-76	Burn him	
	A:V-I	77-82	Swallow him	Polyrhythm

In this chain of actions Aeneas comes out as a mediator, horrified, but engaged in public affair. Priam, the king, initiates action, but ends following Aeneas's lead, in music and action alike, a strategy that strengthens Aeneas's personality.

Act II, No. 12: scène et récitatif; No. 13, récitatif et chœur

Dramatic situation

A pantomime opens the act. Aeneas lies half-armed and fast asleep. He wakes up to the sound of destruction, and remains stupefied finding Hector's ghost before him. Hector orders him to escape and find salvation for the nation by founding a new empire on the soil of Italy; in the event he will die a hero's death. This scene, full of mystery, changes into reality with the priest Panthus's entry, wounded (No. 13; in Virgil he died in battle), carrying the sacred images of Troy. He suggests a last stand to save Troy.

Aeneas is now confronted with a dilemma: to obey Hector's order or to lead his soldiers to fight. Aeneas opts for a military solution, making the same mistake as Cherebus—Cassandra's betrothed. We learn from Cassandra that he did, nevertheless, escape after the fall of the citadel, with his son Ascanius. They all call on the gods Mars and Erinyes to guide them.

Musical characterization

No. 12: scène et récitatif

This is a scene heavily loaded with symbolic images. What makes an instrumental motive significant is its recurrence in association with an event; its deciphering is helped by verbal remarks. Berlioz implanted in the score the explanatory text: 'noise of distant fighting' to the music in bar 2. On the one hand it is representational music for the noise of fighting; on the other hand it also is a reminiscence of the motive Berlioz used for Cassandra's imploring Cherebus to listen to her prophecy (No. 2, bs. 53-4),²⁴ which indeed comes true here. By this Berlioz invites the listener to participate in a musical experience that is meaningful through association with a past event and imitation of actual noise. The motive is now extended by up and down scales, and in this form I will name it the 'destruction motive'. This extended motive inhabits the scene's instrumental introduction, which is organized in two broad sequences, each containing three distinctive units:

²⁴ Rushton 'The Overture to *Les Troyens*' (1985), 128-9, and in the table, 144.

- The first unit of four bars in B^b minor—a key of disaster in the opera²⁵— moves to its relative major (D^b), and includes the ‘destruction motive’.
- The second unit (bs. 5-7) opens a major third lower, in A major, with a descending arpeggiated chord in dotted rhythm, tutti, ff; the trombones’ and horns’ timbre adds a devilish flavour to this moment.
- In the third unit (bs. 8-10) the trumpets and horns play behind the scene the dotted rhythm that had accompanied Aeneas’s resolution ‘A cet objet sacré’ (153/13) in dialogue with the rhythmic motive identified by Frits Noske as a ‘death topos’ in the lower strings.²⁶

A sequence of the three units a semitone higher (bs. 11-20) follows.

The instrumental introduction acquires its full significance retrospectively with the coming events: the curtain rises behind the sleeping Aeneas, to the full sound of the orchestra (b. 21), with a minor six-four chord on B^b, resolved to B major (C flat in the bass). Only at bar 90 does Aeneas wake up, when the same chord is heard again, even louder (as Berlioz indicates to the performers), followed by the ‘destruction motive’. His troubled sleep, mixed with external noise of the disaster, was musically represented, as explained above (bs. 1-90), using reminiscence motives,²⁷ imitation and other symbols. A mixture of two different kinds of musical signs serve to portray the subconscious mind of sleeping Aeneas: the representational device, which is imitative,

²⁵ Ibid, 124.

²⁶ Noske, *The Signifier and the Signified*. See also Rushton, op. cit. (1985), 125.

²⁷ For this term see discussion of *La Damnation de Faust*, chapter 8.

and the allusive, which triggers the imagination. Aeneas's son, Ascanius, enters with light steps (bs. 26-74), imitated by woodwinds, which is another realistic representation. Dream and reality change to ghostly world. Orchestration and tempo change for the appearance of Hector's ghost: horns and drums usher him with ghostly steps. The ghost's music remains harmonically unresolved, ending on V/C sharp minor.

No. 13: récitatif et chœur

The ghostly prophecy yields to cruel reality: there is a bridge of four bars of strings in tremolo, which follows the last chord that accompanied Hector's departure: the dominant of C sharp minor that does not materialize. Instead, the first bars of Allegro modulate to C minor. In this key the strings have an ascending line in an irregular rhythmic pattern that reminds one of Aeneas's hasty entry in No. 7 (see Ex. 1a and 1c). Here too we find the more active anapest rhythm. Indeed, Aeneas is once again reacting to a supernatural event, and again the woodwinds' repeated chords in quavers (b. 4) remind one of his first entry. Parallel to his first entry, Aeneas is expected to react; this time the belligerent step he should take was expressed. The line is direct between these events; made clear by musical means. A varied sequence based on the ascending and descending scale starts in bar 13 (see Table 4), but is interrupted by Aeneas, who discloses his conflict: to fight or to flee ('Où combattre? Où courir?': C in Table 4). The second part of the orchestral sequence overlaps Aeneas's last syllable (b. 21), and descends as before, only it lands in B^b major, to hand over the floor to Panthus. As often with Berlioz, a verbal comment explains a previous musical gesture, which he consequently uses as a sign (see for instance Margaita's recitative, before her ballad). In

the present case, while Aeneas sings, the orchestra merely decorates his exclamations (bs. 15-20); it resumes its own pattern when Aeneas is silent, as if listening to Aeneas and having a dialogue with him. Thus we hear a chain of musical narrative, partly vocal and partly orchestral, which forms an integrated discourse.

Table 4: Phrase structure of the opening of No. 13

PHRASE	O	a	b	a ¹	c (Aeneas)	b ¹
BARS	1-4	5-8	9-12	13-16	16-21	21-24

LEGEND:

O - orchestral opening material; a, b - orchestral sequence; c - Aeneas vocal part

Panthus starts his reciting of the events in B^b major (bar 24) in a march style, using repeated descents, which are part of the 'destruction motive'. Ascanius, on the contrary, sings on a monotone, even though he tells horrible news; his triplets contrast the dotted rhythm and therefore appear more docile, an analogue for his extreme youth and dependence. Aeneas steps in, interrupting Ascanius. Strings play a descending chromatic line of the 'destruction motive'. The 'destruction motive' also accompanies the rondo-march call to arms, led by Aeneas, who takes to action and to arms, disobeying Hector's order.

Summary for Act II

Aeneas looks once more like an ordinary man with added qualities that make him a leader, contrary to a stereotyped hero who knows with certainty what is good for his people and is resolute right from the beginning of a strenuous situation. He is torn by

conflict, taking the wrong decision. The 'historic' attitude, according to Robinson,²⁸ demands obstacles, thanks to which the hero comes out more purposeful. Notwithstanding, Berlioz portrayed Aeneas masterfully, as half mortal and half the goddess Venus's son, as much a human being as a mighty hero. Even though most of this exists in the text, music furnishes a vital dimension, which represents the state of Aeneas's mind, his conflicts and even his unconscious tendencies. We learn to know him better and to accept his heroic defiance of Hector's orders to flee. Most important, we learn to know his human weaknesses.

Act III, No. 28: final

Dramatic situation

The body of act 3 is dedicated to Dido's kingdom in Carthage. The Trojan refugees land on Carthage's shores after a storm that prevented them from moving forward to Italy; Ascanius asks asylum in the name of his father and offers royal presents. The Finale begins with a turning point: Narbal brings news of an invasion by large troops of the Numidians, Dido's enemies. Dido is alarmed. At this moment Aeneas reveals himself, and offers his support. Dido accepts his offer, and Aeneas asks Dido to take care of his son. Aeneas bids a touching farewell to Ascanius. The act ends with the ensemble of the united forces under Aeneas's leadership, moving to face Dido's enemy.

²⁸ Robinson, see footnote 8.

Musical characterization

The use of motives as personal signs is rare in Berlioz. Nevertheless in *Les Troyens* he marked Choroebus with an individual motive in act 1, and Cassandra is also marked in certain situations with a quasi-personal motive.²⁹ Berlioz used motives more often to characterize dramatic situations. This is the case with the 'destruction motive' of act 2, discussed above. Another and more complete theme concerns the Carthaginian situation in act 3. Like Choroebus's motive, it is used only in a single extended number.

The 'Invasion Theme'

The appalling news of invasion brought by Narbal is heralded by an orchestral motive, which will recur as long as the danger of invasion threatens (Ex. 2a).

Example 2: 'invasion theme', No. 28 finale

a. bs. 1-3



b. The curtailed theme, bs. 92- 96



²⁹ See Rushton 'The Overture' (1985), 126.

The orchestra provides context, associating the 'invasion theme' with Aeneas's *raison d'être*. The repeated notes that are part of the invasion theme, become prominent through the curtailing of the theme and, with brutal simplicity, concludes Aeneas's declaration of alliance (Ex. 2b). Dido accepts Aeneas's offer to fight alongside her warriors, accepting the new key of Aeneas's declaration, E major. At the climax of her speech, the orchestra plays the 'invasion theme' *ff*, a reminder for the reason for the new alliance (416/146-7).

Again, in a decisive point in the course of Aeneas's fate Aeneas is portrayed not just as a hero, but as a sensitive personality. The following passage is a case in point. Its formal organization is ABA¹. The two outer sections represent his military intention, the central B section portrays emotional intimacy.

A section (417/162-221): parallel to the situation in Act II (228/80), it is Aeneas who leads the chorus in the style of a march (in B major); everybody joins to thank Mars for guidance, and the chorus also credits Aeneas the demigod.

B section (bs. 222-289) subdivided:

a) Aeneas bids Panthus to call the Trojans to join him; this still has the dotted rhythm of the preceding section. An orchestral fanfare in C confirms a rapid move from B major (bs. 222-225)

b) Aeneas addresses Dido with the promise to liberate her country from the invaders.

The orchestral fanfare confirms now B^b, the Trojan key (226-29).

- c) Beginning in B^b major, Aeneas requests Dido to take good care of his son (230); it is the orchestra who reveals Aeneas's feelings: sustained strings respectfully accompany his plea, and woodwinds accompany Dido's answer. Harmony diverges with uncertainty through three diminished sevenths, overlapping their speeches, to emerge in C minor.
- d) Aeneas tenderly addresses his son. This is a sustained period in E flat; trombones lend solemnity to the modulation (235-6). To this new image of Aeneas Berlioz added, however, as a reminder of his mission, a motive from the march refrain (A section) in the violas (239-40; 251-2; cf 212-214, where the chorus sings: 'proclame au loin la honte et la mort d'Iarbas!'). In addition, a motive for the clarinet (bs. 241-4) sounds like a reminiscence of Andromache's mourning (No. 6), a subtle but meaningful association: Andromache's son was fatherless, the condition Aeneas fears for Ascanius. Andromache's fate will also come up in the relations between Aeneas and Dido; this might be an anticipation of the coming events. Smooth, stepwise ascending 6th chords, for the text 'Je ne t'apprendrai, moi..' (bs. 253-255) contrast the fifths ascent to B^b, usually associated with heroism (both key and fifth ascent). Next the progression moves sequentially in the bass, against chromaticism in the upper voices, halting on D minor (b. 260): at once does he move on and immediately stops again, this time in G minor. An uncomfortable sensation expresses distress through the succession of minor steps. A weird juxtaposition follows: G minor (b. 263) moves to its Neapolitan key A^b, then rises 'heroically' a fifth to E^b (b. 272) and with the mention of Aeneas and Hector another rise of a fifth to B^b. This last coincides with the highest note of the

passage (b^{b1} , 278). The ascent by fifths symbolizes hope for victory, the high pitch excitement (see chapter 3 on voice types). B^b resolves to E^b for a bridge that changes to E^b minor, and to another stunning modulation to B major, through enharmonic modulation, with a step down of a major third in the bass (bVI), leading to the reprise of the March (A^1). The fall of a major third is another parallel with Aeneas's first entry in this number (A^b-E , b. 84).

Aeneas's complex character is already apparent. A look at the appearances of three men in important turning points shows the preeminence of the portrayal of Aeneas, expressed in his music by the amount of detail. Panthus, a priest and leader of the Trojans, relates the horrors of war with a mission in mind; his music shows no signs of individuality. Narbal is Dido's councilor, who, like Panthus, mainly has the task of announcing difficulties and dangers (in Acts 3 and 4). Among these leaders only Aeneas is musically portrayed with compound means; these constitute of harmonic and rhythmic means in particular, as can be seen from Table 5. Aeneas's role uses striking harmonic inflections. Irregularity of his phrases shows his hesitation, his excitement; in short, the impression imparted is of a singular character as opposed to a stereotype.

Table 5: The characteristics of three men in power

	Panthus	Narbal	Aeneas
Act Number	II, 13 - rondo	III, Finale 28 - (beginning)	III - Finale (central-end) 28- rondo
Keys	B ^b -g - B ^b	E ^b -A ^b	E-B-C-B ^b (d-g) - A ^b -E ^b -e ^b -B
Rhythm	Regular groupings	Regular 4 bars units	Irregular groupings
The Message	Negative: destruction of Troy	Negative: Numidian invasion	Positive: alliance with Carthaginians, taking a risk of leaving his son an orphan.

Summary for act III

Aeneas appears in this act more resolute than in our previous encounter with him in a war-time situation, even though this time it is not his own country and people he is going to defend. He volunteers instantly to fight for his hosts albeit he is not yet committed to love. His ascent to leadership is sweeping and makes a strong and confident impression on his bewildered hosts. At the same time the tender side of his character is revealed in the heart-breaking farewell he gives to his son. Music with bold traits portrays the various sides of his character.

Act IV, No. 35: récitatif et quintette, No. 36: récitatif et septuor, No. 37: duo

Dramatic situation

Following the consummation of desire by Dido and Aeneas in a cave during the orchestral interlude (Chasse royale et orage), Dido's conscience troubles her; her growing love for Aeneas conflicts with her vow to remain loyal to her murdered

husband. At the same time her sister Anna, as the voice of her entourage, wishes to see her happy and to win a strong ruler through the alliance with Aeneas (Narbal, however, foresees trouble because of Aeneas's mission to found a new Troy in Italy). In the recitative for Dido and Aeneas, No. 35, she asks him to tell her more about Andromache's fate. Aeneas conveys crucial information that will help Dido give in to love: although her captor Pyrrhus had killed her father-in-law Priam, and his father Achilles killed her husband Hector, Andromache has yielded and married Pyrrhus. Aeneas observes with satisfaction Dido's astonishment and her distress. The bard Iopas, Narbal and Anna join Dido and Aeneas for the Quintet.

Aeneas opens the next recitative (No. 36) by inviting the company to banish sorrow and celebrate the loveliness of the African night. Ascanius and Panthus join the above for the septet, with chorus. The love duet follows the intimacy initiated in the septet. As the lovers disappear from the scene, Mercury appears on a beam of moon light and utters three cries of 'Italie'.

Musical characterization

In the first recitative (No. 35) the voices of Dido and Aeneas intertwine while the harmonic texture moves mainly down through descending fifths. This traditional harmonic path symbolizes agreement in this opera.³⁰ Dido turns to Aeneas with G⁷ and C major chords, then moves to F major (b. 8), closing her request in B^b major (b. 13). Aeneas takes this B^b major, a key related to his qualities of leadership and to the Trojan March, and indirectly takes the tonality down a fifth to E^b major. A momentary shift via

³⁰ See above, for example, No. 7, where Priam and Aeneas act in a common cause.

the dominant 7th of the G minor, *sf* (b. 17) turns chromatically to C minor to depict the despair of the enslaved Andromache, and then to C major (b. 19). For the conclusion of Andromache's story, parallel to Dido's, Aeneas shifts to flat VI, A^b major (bs. 22-3). It is Dido who now ascends to B^b (as the dominant of E^b, b. 24). Aeneas victoriously asserts this key through an echoing sequence on the melodic rising fourths of her phrase. A chromatic shift changes the atmosphere (b. 26) for the Quintet; nevertheless Dido follows the descending fifth process from E^b to A^b and D^b at the beginning of the quintet (No. 35, b. 33).

In the first section of the Quintet Dido repeats what Aeneas had told in the recitative about Andromache. The repeated story, followed the growing confidence (established through repetition), drives her to use an ascending fifth to the dominant, A^b major (bs. 31-44). Aeneas now repeats her repetition of his own narrative, with an addition to the symbolic language: the goal of his phrase is B^b minor (b. 55), a key associated with disaster in the opera. The culmination of the Quintet comes with all five singing, including Aeneas, who has been silent since the dialogue that ended in bar 55; he sings now three phrases, starting bar 101:

- 1) Didon soupire / mais le remords s'enfuit
- 2) Didon soupire / mais son coeur, oui, son coeur est absous
- 3) le remords s'enfuit / et son coeur est absous

The first phrase starts with a reciting tone (b. 101), as does the second. The pulsing syncopation started in the dialogue (bs. 33-72) resumes at bar 98, but halts with

Aeneas's expression of relief; this coincides with his highest pitch, g^{b1} (b.114), in the second line quoted. His last phrase 'le remords s'enfuit...' (b. 118) opens with the pitch f^1 and is partly echoed at the end of the quintet when Aeneas sings (564/128) 'Mais banissons ces tristes souvenirs', starting from the same f^1 . These 'souvenirs' are his device to persuade Dido to accept their love affair: all he had to do is tell the story and wait. And indeed the splendid night sounds in the septet overlap Aeneas's last words at the outset of No. 36. Solo violins soar in tremolo over slowly moving harmonies in the violas and the enchanted night is there.

Aeneas's short recitative (No. 36) preceding the septet characterizes the splendid night with high tremolo on muted strings, a dream-like atmosphere, the glamour of which (as Aeneas foresees) will banish the clouds in Dido's mind. This atmosphere reigns in the Septet, a largely homophonic ensemble to which Berlioz added a decorative line for Dido.³¹

In the Duet the lovers recover from the exhilaration felt in the postlude of the septet, and comment about it. The instrumentation continues the sensual feeling of the postlude: cellos and clarinet in their high register (bs. 11-12, bs. 21-4) and cor anglais (bs. 33-6) have soloistic roles in different combinations.

Summary for Act IV

In Act IV Aeneas appears in his most personal guise, not as a leader or as a 'pious' believer in the gods, but as a lover, in which respect he cannot be acquitted of thoughtlessness. He does everything to please Dido and win her confidence, while

³¹ On the late addition of Dido to what was originally a Sextet, see NBE 2C/755.

subtly undermining her resistance. In music Aeneas the lover fully adapts himself to Dido, and demonstrates little independence outside the recitatives. His narrative and comments before the septet place him in the centre of the frame and show unexpected tenderness. Aeneas abandoned his duties of leadership for a while, and when resumed they will prove fatal for Dido.

**Act V, No. 41: récitatif et air; No. 42: scène; No. 43: scène et chœur;
No. 44: duo et chœur**

Dramatic situation

A solitary sailor is singing a nostalgic melody (No. 38). As he falls asleep Panthus comes in (No. 39), calling for action; he foresees Aeneas breaking the ties with Dido. The chieftains join Panthus. The gods are sending clear signs of their disapproval of the delay; an invisible force causes their arms to clash and they too have seen the ghost of Hector. Conversely there are Trojan sentries who enjoy the peaceful situation and do not wish to leave (No. 40). In Aeneas's recitative (No.41), we learn something that we have not witnessed, namely the discord between Aeneas and Dido about his unavoidable departure, her horrified reaction and his distress. In the Air Aeneas contemplates the bitter moment of parting, his urge to see Dido once more, and his feeling of guilt, which was such that even Mercury's appearance was not enough to guarantee his departure. But the ghosts of Cassandra, Hector, Cherebus and Priam appear to remind him of his duty (No. 42) and order him to leave. Aeneas finally follows their orders, calling the Trojans to take position on board (No. 43).

Dido comes amid the thunder to look for Aeneas (No. 44), discovering the preparations for departure. She feels humiliated and does not listen to Aeneas's arguments. All his replies are treated as weak excuses. He swears true love, but Dido resents excuses. She speaks openly about her own death. Aeneas's response is firm; he believes in his divine mission. Dido tries twice more to hold him back and when she realizes his determination she finally admits the gods' power over love, curses them and him, and leaves. Aeneas and the Trojans cry 'Italie'. Ascanius arrives, Aeneas goes on board, and we see no more of him.

Musical Characterization

No. 41, *Récitatif mesuré*

The recitative follows a Duo for subsidiary characters, a sharp contrast to Aeneas's decision to leave. In fact, the interpolated duet of sentries was a late addition (summer 1859), after the completion of the opera. The original plan had Aeneas entering immediately after No. 39.³² The change provided Berlioz with an opportunity to highlight once more Aeneas's entry with the sound of strings, absent in the preceding duo of sentries (No. 40, except for pizzicato 'walking bass'). With its third use, this instrumental procedure becomes a hallmark. The first time Berlioz used this device in Act I scene 2 it was for Cassandra's entry, explained in his above mentioned letter to Liszt; the two later uses are reserved for Aeneas; in his first entry, No. 7, and again here. Berlioz liked the idea of contrast for dramatic purposes, but did not trust his audience to appreciate it. In a note in the autograph he ironically remarks that in case the director of

³² See Hugh Macdonald 'Composition', in Ian Kemp (ed.), *Hector Berlioz: Les Troyens*, 61.

the opera, actors, the conductor, the firemen, the technicians, or the lighting men, will find this passage shocking, he will be glad to relieve them from their grief by cutting out this duo.³³

Panthus's call for the Trojans to leave (No. 39) was accompanied by a syncopated figure in the upper strings, against the downbeat minims in the cello (603/19-28, see Ex. 3a): 'Préparez tous, Il faut partir enfin'. This syncopated motive now introduces Aeneas's decision to leave (No. 41, rhythmic pattern b in Table 6), linking it to Panthus's prediction (No. 39), and it accompanies Aeneas's 'Inutiles regrets, je dois quitter Carthage' (621/1-25). It recurs as a reminder for the departure each time Aeneas mentions this point, directly or indirectly (Ex. 3b), such as 'ma sainte entreprise' or 'le sort des Troyens'.

The strings accompany Aeneas in his 'measured recitative' with another striking rhythmic pattern (see Ex. 3c). This rhythmic pattern has a more vigorous bass part, including syncopation, leaps, rests and shorter note values (rhythmic pattern c in Table 6), and indeed it begins when Aeneas remembers the attitude and appearance of Dido: 'Non, je ne puis oublier la paleur frappant de mort son beau visage'.

Charles Rosen pointed to Gluck's influence in 'the use of a syncopated ostinato, reinforced by accent... the "Lacrimosa" from the *Requiem* could never have come into

³³ 'J'oubliais de dire qu'on peut encore ... supprimer le *Duo des Soldats*, dont la familiarité un peu grossière produit un contraste si tranché avec le chant mélancolique du matelot qui le précède et l'air passionné d'Enée qui le suit. On a trouvé en France que le mélange du genre tragique et du genre comique était dangereux et même insupportable au théâtre, comme si l'opéra de Don Giovanni n'était pas un admirable exemple du bon effet produit par le mélange, ... comme si enfin Shakespeare n'était pas là. Il est vrai que pour la plupart des Français Shakespeare n'est pas même autant que le soleil pour des taupes. Car les taupes peuvent ressentir au moins la chaleur du soleil'. NBE 2c/840.

being without Gluck'.³⁴ Berlioz used the syncopated ostinato to invigorate Aeneas's hard decision. Another influence of Gluck is the use of echo. Berlioz's echoes go in both directions: from voice to the orchestra and *vice versa*. Aeneas's heroic as well as his exasperated exclamations are echoed even thrice, others twice and some just once; but his one cry of grief is pre-echoed by wind instruments: 'Frappant de mort son beau visage'. Although the technique of echo goes back to the Baroque and Gluck (*Orfeo*), but these echoes do not imitate a natural phenomenon, but Aeneas's inner voice, expressed by the ambient instrumental music. Table 6 shows the instrumental echoes and their deployment.

Table 6 also shows the instances where the above-mentioned rhythmic patterns are absent, and the harmonic path. The harmonic, rhythmic and instrumental inflections express Aeneas's conflict. A certain self-confidence is felt about two thirds of the way through (bs. 57-67), with the E^b major on the text: 'invoqué la grandeur de ma sainte entreprise, L'avenir de mon fils et le sort des Troyens', where the rhythmic pattern b and the echo come back. The mood is truncated with the break in the rhythmic pattern that leads triumphantly to a G^b broken chord (bs. 67-68). This triumphant exaltation is again truncated; the rhythmic pattern changes to the more active one, minor keys: C minor and F minor end his reminiscences with low register sustained notes of the clarinets and basses, sounding hollow open fifths (bs. 91-92).

The two rhythmic patterns (b and c), present for most of the time, disappear altogether in four expressive moments:

³⁴ Charles Rosen, *The Classical Style* (London, 1971), 179.

1) Bars 26-29: Aeneas remembers Dido's reaction when he has told her about his need to depart. The pattern halts as does the voice; there remain only the woodwinds with contrary-motion note-against-note counterpoint to the semi-chromatic melody. These outstanding four bars contrast starkly with what preceded and what follows. The prolonged dominant resolves to A minor and not to F minor, and it seems that this is the moment when Aeneas remembers vividly Dido's reaction to his decision to part, as he had told her. Indeed the next thing Aeneas says is just that.

2) Bars 41-48: Aeneas speaks of Dido's silence and her fixed stare. The orchestral analogue is a sustained texture, as if this memory freezes time and action. Slow passing-notes define the mood; this is another simple contrapuntal technique turned to expressive ends.

3) Bars 67-68: An ascending chromatic scale, *crescendo*, replaces the syncopated pattern, silencing Aeneas's voice before the phrase: 'La triomphale mort'.

4) Bars 90-2: in the middle of the last phrase, the words 'la terrible eloquence' are again accompanied by sustained notes; the vigorous rhythmic pattern stops, to resume and end the recitative.

The phrase, 'Pour couronner ma gloire, aux champs Ausoniens' (bar 75) drives forcefully ahead: Aeneas sings his ascending line from g^b to g^{b1} over five bars while the basses have a contrary motion from g^b landing on A^b . The two melodic lines reach the dominant 7th of D^b , as Aeneas expresses his vain hope for Dido's understanding. This chord resolves as an augmented 6th to C minor, attaining a vocal climax on g^1 (bar 80). The motive of 'Rien n'a pu la toucher' recalls the motive of 'ont brisé mon courage',

with the one-fold echo (Ex. 4a, b). The recitative is through-composed, therefore a repetition of a motive stands out, especially as it is echoed in both places. Aeneas's grief sounds genuine in this instrumental surrounding.

Example 3: Panthus's and Aeneas's common motive, Nos. 39, 41

a. No. 39; Panthus's hasty entry, bs. 19-21; rhythmic pattern b

19

b. No. 41; bs. 1-25

1

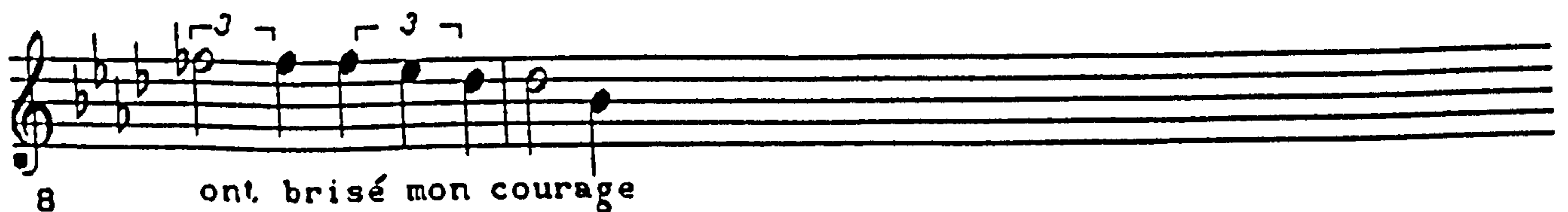
c. No. 41; bs. 30-40; rhythmic pattern c

30

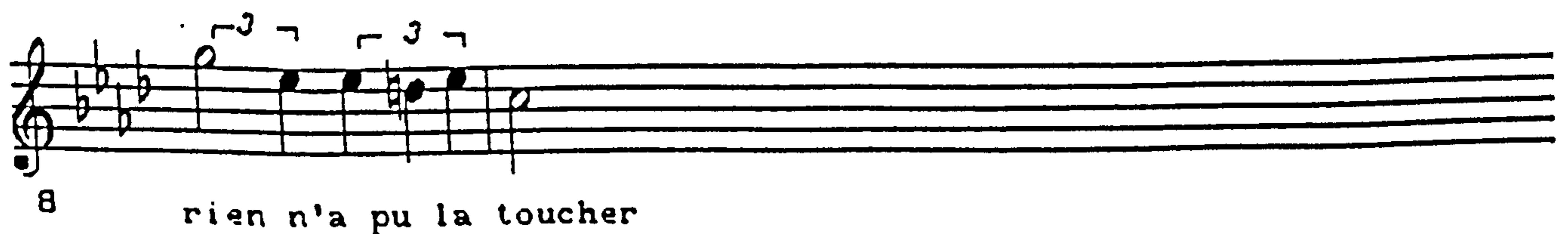
When Aeneas sings about his and Dido's personal feelings, he is accompanied by strings alone. It is pertinent to recall that in Act I, when Aeneas was addressing the gods, Berlioz used the same tradition of endowing the strings with quasi-celestial power (cf. No. 9, *récitatif et chœur*, 151-2/1-5; 8-11). Mozart used a similar effect in *Idomeneo* (No. 27), for Idamante's recitative; when he finally understands his father's rejection, he is accompanied by sustained strings (465/57).³⁵ Berlioz, far from respecting the conventional recitative-aria division, uses his musical language to express genuine feelings in both parts. Traditionally the recitative is the location where the action moves forward and the aria stops for contemplation. The free character of the recitative must have tempted Berlioz to fill it with emotions, to the point where the recitative reveals best the character's innermost feelings.

Example 4: recurring motive with echo, No. 41

a. b. 20



b. b. 80



³⁵ I am grateful for this observation to Julian Rushton.

Table 6: Rhythmic patterns underlining Aeneas's recitative No. 41

TEXT	BAR	R.P	Harmony	INSTRUMENTS
Orchestral introduction	1-5	b	diminished	st. w.
Inutiles regrets!	5-7	b	f	st., w. echox3
je dois quitter Carthage!	9-12	b	f	st.
Didon le sait, son effroi, sa stupeur, En l'apprenant	14-9	b	f	st.
ont brisé mon courage	20-2	b	diminished	st. w. echox2
Mais je le dois il le faut!	23-5	b	V/f	st. w.
	26-9	--	C	w.w.
Non, je ne puis oublier la pâleur	30-3	c	a	st.
Frappant de mort son beau visage	34-9	c	a	st. w. ant.
Son silence obstiné, ses yeux	40-4	--	diminished	st. w.
Fixes et pleins d'un feu sombre	45-7	--	\flat II, dim.	st. w.
En vain ai-je parlé des prodiges sans nombre	49-	c	d-g-	st.
Me rappelant l'ordre des dieux,	-56	c	C-V/ E ^b	
Invoqué la grandeur de ma sainte entreprise,	57-61 61-2	b	E ^b	st. echo w.w.
L'avenir de mon fils et le sort des Troyens,	63-7	b	E ^b	st.
	67-8	---		st. w.
La triomphale mort par les destins promise,	69- 73-4	b	G ^b	st. echo w.w.
Pour couronner ma gloire aux champs ausoniens;	75-9	b	G ^b	st. w.w.
Rien n'a pu la toucher;	80-2	c	c	st. w. echox2
sans vaincre son silence J'ai fui de son regard	83-89	c	f	st. (w)
	90			
la terrible eloquence	91-2	--	(\flat II)	bass, cl.
	93-7	c	f	st. (w)

KEY

R.P. = rhythmic pattern st. strings
anticipation x3= 3 times

w.w.=woodwinds

w.= winds

ant. =

No. 41: Air

The air focuses on Aeneas's tormented situation, already exposed in the recitative. It has in common with the recitative the rich exploitation of diverse orchestral roles. The air has the conventional two parts of an Italian double aria (cantabile-cabaletta), without the intervening recitative (tempo di mezzo). The first part—the Andante—has a pastoral character, in F major, 6/8 meter, with obbligato accompaniment by solo horn; an association with Andromache's pantomime (No. 6) comes to mind. The two characters share sorrowful situations, and the music uses similar symbolic language, confided even in No. 41 in large part to the orchestra: the singing horn, and the strings' sobbing figure (627/100-114), which illustrate the characters' states of mind more eloquently than could be done by the words, (117/27-33, cf. 627/100-103). The appoggiatura major second in the woodwinds (bar 99), repeated by Aeneas in bar 101, becomes a minor second (bs. 105, 107), and invades the andante as a sigh motive (see for example in bar 122: 'En déchirant ton coeur'); it is also a reminiscence of Andromache's pantomime. The sighing appoggiatura is a traditional symbol, which this opera uses more frequently than do his other dramatic works, to form part of the *tinta* of the epic opera.³⁶ Another traditional technique, used effectively in the recitative and again here is the use of echo.³⁷ The echo here too reverses sometimes the conventional pattern: the voice echoes the instrumental part, as for example when the oboe in bar 122

³⁶ The appoggiatura is not untypical of Berlioz, despite his stated dislike of appoggiaturas used in excess (impartially expressed in relation to Bellini and Wagner's *Tristan*). But they form a natural part of his melodic vocabulary (consider the 'idée fixe' in the *Symphonie fantastique*). Their topical use as sighs is prominent in Cassandra's response to Choroebus, where she is represented by the oboe: No. 2, pp. 63-4.

³⁷ We find echoing instruments in Hylas's song.

with a half step, by anticipation renders Aeneas's part more reflective, as if he is responding to an inner voice.

In the second section of the air, the *Allegro agitato*'s orchestral introduction presents gradual rises over repeated fourths; these will recur at the end of the section, when Aeneas expresses his extreme despair for abandoning Dido (bar 231). If Aeneas at that point had second thoughts about leaving for his mission, the ghosts of his heroic compatriots will abruptly change them (No. 42). Berlioz made this compositional choice apparently to highlight Aeneas's conflict.

The echo becomes now a dialoguing echo, and with varied response, that is, more integrated into the texture; i.e., Aeneas's first phrase is a rising arpeggio in dotted rhythm, with the words 'En un dernier naufrage' (b. 143) echoed and varied by woodwinds and first violins. The echo again reverses roles when strings anticipate and Aeneas echoes (bs. 192/194, 206/208, reaching the highest pitch, c^2). This phrase in turn is again echoed (b. 210). A rhythmic effect adds a nuance of disagreement to the echo: Aeneas's last words in the air, doubled by woodwinds, echo the violins' broken chords (bars 238-40 cf. 240-42), at a distance of three half-bars, thus shifting the heard bar-line by a minim; the violins echo again in bar 242, to meet the voice at last in bar 243, as a symbol of agreement. Since the echo is prominent, Berlioz clearly distinguishes between the rhetoric of dialoguing orchestral parts and simultaneously sounding voice and instruments. When the latter occurs, Berlioz added *colla voce* (b. 227), after a dialogue between voice and instruments (bs. 213-226). This happens when Aeneas expresses his wish to see Dido: the strings in unison have swift rising scales

interpolated in his phrase (bs. 222, 224, 226); only to descend stepwise in unison with the voice. The orchestra has been switching between different optional roles: as cross-reference for association, as an echo of an inner voice, as anticipating Aeneas's expression, as a call for attention, and as reinforcement, enhancing dramatic expression.

Nos. 42, 43 - Scène et Cheour

The ghostly figures appear before Aeneas, who piously addresses them beneath the strings' sustained notes in the high register. In a very short recitative his mind is made up and he sings about sacrificing Dido and obeying their orders. The next number (No. 43) is continuously linked by a short bridge, moving from G minor to B^b major, the heroic Trojan key, symbolizing the passage from ghostly scene to the alarming call to action.

The steady dotted rhythm, along 30 bars that open No. 43, alerts the audience as Aeneas's call to arms. The rhythm appeared first in No. 9 (153/13 ff.); next we find it in Aeneas's restless dream in No. 12 (205/8), as a reminiscence, and here—as an angular contrast to the preceding scene of indecision—as an expression of his move to action, now merging with the 'Marche troyenne'. But at the moment Aeneas summons his son, the strings change from the dotted rhythm to *tremolo strettissimo* (b. 32) and the key drops a major third (F - D^b), an important sign in the opera symbolizing some kind of revelation.³⁸ The steady dotted rhythm resumes its motion thereafter, and the woodwinds join to fortify Aeneas's promise to the gods to fulfil his task, culminating in the calls of 'Italie', still with the dotted rhythm.

The frenzied drive stops again when Aeneas turns to look back at Dido's palace (bar 81). At this moment the rhythm and instrumentation suggest a reminiscence of the opening of the recitative No. 41, when Aeneas remembered how hard Dido had taken the news of his departure. Here too, the woodwind triplets are themselves a remote reminiscence of the finale to Act II (291/254-8), when the women stab themselves while calling upon Aeneas as savior of the Trojan race, leading to the first cry of 'Italie'. We find here a conflation of the prediction of the mission and the drive to fulfil it, passing over Dido, who is sacrificed by Aeneas for the fulfillment of that mission. One can argue that the device is too subtle, but the connections are nevertheless suggestive.

The harmony is particularly eloquent: Aeneas imparts self-confidence through the ascending fifths. G minor was prepared at the end of the previous scene (No. 42), and maintained for three bars, but the heroic key of the opera, B^b, is a momentary goal, and marks the start of the scene. Nevertheless, B^b is not settled; instead, a chromatic move to A^b (derived from the Trojan March) begins a rise by fifths (b. 7) to F major (V of F, b. 26); then the dramatic bVI comes with the remembrance of his son. Aeneas gains control of himself, and his orders become firm (bs. 37-40) as the key moves up another fifth to A^b major, the point where the ascent began. The rhythmic drive returns and hints of the 'Marche troyenne' are heard (e.g. bs. 49-51), with repeated cries of 'Italie'. The dominant of B^b is never absent for long over 30 bars (63-92), with more reminders of the Trojan march. With the change in orchestration, when Aeneas addresses Dido (b. 81), the pedal moves to the upper winds, while the lower strings have expressive

³⁸ Rushton, 'The Overture' (1985), 125.

motives interpolated into Aeneas's role. We also hear a solitary fast ascent in the strings (bs. 101-2), a reminiscence to the ascents when Aeneas was determined to see Dido (No. 41, 635/222ff). The result is a stratification, involving instrumentation, rhythm (triplets against cut time) and harmony, in a texture as complex as Aeneas's conflict. Harmonic instability reigns for the prediction of his destined fatal end (bs. 102-end), to which he goes not by his own will, sacrificing his love for Dido and hers for him. The G^b major pedal, for six penultimate bars, is interpreted at the last bar as bVI in B^b minor, the key of disaster.³⁹

Conclusions

The special atmosphere of *Les Troyens* and the characterization of Aeneas result from a combination of musical techniques, listed and summarized below. While the opera's style is well rooted in nineteenth-century musical vocabulary, at the same time it pays tribute to an antiquated style. Music and text carry the listener to remote centuries whose values and customs make one feel one is going back in time and space. Mythological themes were popular in the eighteenth century, and stopped being in vogue in the nineteenth century; furthermore, the treatment of character was never as individual and deep as in *Les Troyens*.

The procedures that Berlioz employed and adapted to his objectives are:

³⁹ The original plan for the opera was cut from the end of No. 43 (p. 658) to the what is now the closing stage of No. 44 (p. 674). The additional duet, No. 44, is dominated by Dido and adds little to the character of Aeneas. Berlioz wrote in a note in the Autograph that if the singer who sings Dido's role does not have a voice that imparts energy, it is better to leave out this duo. NBE 2C/840.

- Echo does not endow its traditional rural character to music; it enables the character to dialogue with his/her inner voice. Instrumental echo also heightens heroic moments and inner conflicts, through amplification.
- Traditional harmonic procedures such as key progression around the cycles of fifths, which by this date are conservative, contribute here to the solemn atmosphere; at the same time they provide background to more drastic procedures (moves to bVI, or other chromatic progressions). These traditional progressions are reserved for heroic moods of Aeneas when the circle moves up in 5ths—a more unusual procedure—or where there is accord with Priam or with Dido, when the 5ths move down the circle—a traditional procedure.
- Berlioz also used the in-vogue procedure of reminiscence motives, as a contextual frame.
- Contrast between drastic musical procedures in adjacent dramatic situations highlights crucial moments. With all its being an evident procedure, in this expanded epic work it promotes important turning points.
- The texture of sustained strings chords over a stretch of time, in which a special event takes place, as in the farewell Aeneas bids from his son, has its roots in the Baroque period.

Musical means for characterization of Aeneas and of dramatic situations

Although Aeneas comes into the scene as a warrior, he is not a two-dimensional stereotype. His drawbacks and sensitivities portray him as a fully-rounded personality.

His sense of duty eventually overcomes emotional impediments to achieve his historic mission.

The first entrances of two of the main characters, Cassandra and Aeneas, are alarming; in both, the instrumental surrounding or ambient music changes drastically. This circumstance brings closer together the two characters who share the struggle to save the Trojan people.⁴⁰

Phrase structure reveals Aeneas's sincere bewilderment to the point of losing self-control. He gradually regains control, as is reflected by clearer phrase-structures in his entrance recitative, where his rise from an agitated messenger to a potential leader becomes clear. Again, when Aeneas is prepared to fight the Greeks as a last uphold against the fall of Troy, his first steps are uncertain, expressed in irregular phrase structure that becomes regular with the gain of confidence (No. 13).

Rhythmic figures are rhetorical tools that help us visualize dramatic situations: confusion, move to action, decisiveness. Conversely, lack of rhythmic movement halts time and concentrates on a dramatic situation.

Aeneas sounds more convincing when he uses the anapest accent, first in the urge to bring in the wooden horse, and again, when events prove this decision to have been wrong, in his search for another solution: to flee or to fight. Aeneas's move to action is defined by a pattern of repeated dotted rhythms in the strings, sometimes fortified by winds. The recurrence of the model in similar situations makes its use significant.

The Instruments assume dramatic tasks too numerous to recite here. The most obvious one is the textless pantomime of Andromache, sonorously represented by the clarinet. Others are the interpolations of instrumental music within monologues, in which significant motives suggest subconscious currents. They are demonstrated in the examples cited above.

The use of reminiscence motives or recurring motives in dramatic situations:

A decisive motto of the opera is the 'Marche troyenne'. It appears in key positions, even when Aeneas goes to war against the Numidians, or when Anna foresees the new links between Dido and Aeneas. The 'destruction motive' has its roots in Cassandra's prophecy and is extensively found in the depiction of the destruction of Troy. The 'invasion theme' takes a symbolic role since it recurs as long as the menace of invasion exists, albeit not as a remote reminiscence, since it is heard for the first time when the danger appears and is confined to the Act III finale. This would be the case with Nos. 39 and 41, were No. 40 not interpolated. The interpolation turns the recurrence into reminiscence. The case in point is Panthus's prediction that the Trojans will leave, and indeed when Aeneas calls his soldiers the music originating in Panthus's material accompanies Aeneas (Nos. 39 and 41).

There is a hint of Andromache's mourning pantomime when Aeneas leaves his son in the hands of Dido. Later, in the andante of the air (No. 41), when Aeneas knows he will forsake Dido, Andromache's memory comes again as a musical association in the

⁴⁰ It is noticeable that it is the ghost of Cassandra, in no. 42, who speaks last, together with Choroebus; and although they say less than the ghosts of Priam and Hector, their intervention appears to be decisive. Berlioz had intended originally to include Cassandra's personal motive at this point; one wonders why he did not.

obbligato wind instrument, and in the sobbing strings. There is also a faint recollection, in bars 119-121, of the 'nuit d'ivresse' of the love duet, which shares the slow 6/8 metre.⁴¹

Archaic techniques gain their effectiveness when they come in juxtaposition with new and original gestures such as daring harmonic inflections. Some of these points occur throughout the opera as hallmarks, and endow it with its own hue, its *tinta*. Others are specific for certain situations or help characterize Aeneas's personality and the opera as a whole.

Berlioz's use of these means point to the end of characterization, which is the result of deep comprehension of the human side of heroes.

⁴¹ This duet is quoted in Dido's final air, 'Adieu, fiere cité'. See Rushton, 'Dido's *Monologue* and *Air*'. In Kemp, *Hector Berlioz, Les Troyens*, 180.

CONCLUSIONS

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Objective:

The basic premise for this study is that in opera, characterization by means of music is possible. In chapter 1, it was suggested that attentive listening offers similar rewards as painstakingly reading a novel. I hope to have succeeded in demonstrating ways to gain insight into the ways in which Berlioz's musical idiom aspires to be communicative. Support for this requirement comes from Berlioz's own writings, for instance his critique of Weber's *Der Freischutz* (see chapter 5).

Theoretical considerations

Definition of characterization, and of the multi-disciplinary components of opera, were first steps to clarify the foundation of the argument. Opera is of course not the only genre in which we may look for characterization; but others that focus on character are centered on the verbal text, whether spoken, acted, or read. Comparison between genres in artistic works contemporary to Berlioz helps in two directions. The more important of these is considerations of contemporary aesthetics, the *Zeitgeist*, without which artistic expression is likely to fail to communicate. The second goal of the comparison is to find similar and different aspects of characterization in the different genres that could contribute to better understanding of the approach of the artist to a protagonist.

Some of these issues that are worthy of comparison are the different ways in which time is deployed in different genres, as well as cross references between genres; they play a significant role in defining the methods of characterization peculiar to opera.

Opera is more sparing with words; but music requires more time to express itself. The

comparison shows some obvious advantages for music, such as the use of musical instruments to provide colour, or the capacity to present events simultaneously, which may include the possibility of showing different aspects of a personality at the same time.

Aspects of the *Zeitgeist*

The individual was considered of prime importance for the romantics, especially the individual's inner life. Art had a mission to extract, distill and accentuate the most important features out of the everyday events. This was the case in poetry, literature, painting, and music. From readings of Berlioz's contemporaries, it appears that opera has some common features with each of the literary forms, but more so that nevertheless it is a genre *sui generis*. One can also sense his contemporaries, like Berlioz himself, being urged to express the inner feelings, to understand the motivations of the protagonists in a drama, to grasp their 'psychological essence'.¹ When we look at contemporaries' reception of Berlioz's operas we find that these show how much he was appreciated mainly by first rank artists, but otherwise generally misunderstood.

Research is never ending, and the relatively undeveloped field of Berlioz research needs more documentary as well as analytical work for better understanding of his music. This in turn will enable us to profit from Berlioz's achievements that require intelligent, attentive listening; a claim that is based upon Berlioz's own preaching and practice. His writings provide a creed which includes his mode of listening to opera. It is an active form of listening, demanding imaginative response to what the music 'tells'

¹ Roland Barthes, see epigraph to chapter 1.

us. Berlioz found subtle meaning in places one would not usually expect it; that is, in music of the past, in composers such as Spontini, Monsigny, and above all his idol Gluck. His vivid description of how music can express disruption or affection is original and enlightening.

Despite the interest of the subject, most writings on characterization prove to be concerned with the aspects of the libretto. Of course there cannot be any useful discussion of musical characterization in the opera without reference to the libretto, but still less can we afford to neglect the music. Characters may be depicted as rounded (three-dimensional) or as flat, using E. M. Forster's terms. Peter Kivy distinguishes also between modes of representation: a dramatic character may be a shallow person but intensely represented as such, or could be a strong personality, but flatly represented.² Nevertheless, Kivy would appear to form the chief opposition to the concept of three-dimensional musical characterization, since he claims that music conveys only stereotypes, assigning a person to a class of characters rather than fixing his or her individuality. For him, in so far as a character's depth is apparently revealed in music, it is an illusion, resulting from the beauty of the music, and not a definable reality.

Considering the aesthetic views of artists of the romantic movement, we witness a shift in importance towards the inner states of the mind which are perhaps better communicated by music. One can read these principles in great detail in the writings of Victor Hugo, Alfred de Vigny and others (see chapter 1).

² Peter Kivy, 'How did Mozart do it? Replies'. In: *The Fine Art of Repetition* (Cambridge, 1993), 182.

A libretto, unlike poetry, is frequently deficient in true expression of feelings: it is dry, unemotional, poetically impoverished. The new literary trends of the nineteenth century, as expressed in Hugo's writings, are not concerned with librettos, which are only the canvas for the opera. Perhaps for this reason Berlioz aspired to control, and eventually to write his own librettos. A. R. W. James, speaking of nineteenth-century librettos says:

With the single exception of Emile Deschamps, no attempt was made to renew *la poésie d'Opéra* which was to remain in reality rather an art of verse than an art of poetry.³

Berlioz in *Les Troyens* applied the poetic style. '*Les Troyens* reads as more 'poetic' than Scribe, the omnipresent composer of nineteenth-century librettos'.⁴ Yet opera characters clearly are not dry, unemotional, or indeed poetically impoverished. Surely this is because the music is the bearer of poetic meaning.

We deal here with two levels of characterization:

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| First level | Two-dimensional, flat characters (Forster): in Kivy's terms this is characterization. |
| Second level | Three-dimensional, rounded characters (Forster): in Kivy's terms, animation. |

First level exposes stereotypes, which are instantly recognized, and do not need an elaborate text or music for their identification. They are represented through stock

³ A.R.W. James, 'Berlioz the Poet?', in Kemp, *Hector Berlioz, Les Troyens*, 75.

⁴ *Ibid*, 70.

musical figurations and visually through imitative gestures. Indeed they just duplicate what anybody can read in the libretto.

The second level of characterization is the realization by musical means of the characteristics of the person, which are not sufficiently presented in the libretto. Since these means are not evident by a first listening or by an audience that is not acquainted with Berlioz's style, they require clarification to be communicative. Instrumental music can replace the gesture of the actor (Kivy's assumption) or the verbal reflections in a novel, but it can also express the subconscious motives of the character. This often happens when music supplies meaningful sounds for the time span between speeches or between phrases in a speech. This last method is particularly significant for Berlioz who so often leaves major events to the imagination. For instance the consummation of love in *La Damnation de Faust*,⁵ or in *Les Troyens*, the *Chasse Royale et Orage*. In *Benvenuto Cellini* the situation is different, music alone does not explain inner feelings; it illustrates the events in this opera that should catch the eye and ear of the public.

Entering the world of opera requires a willingness to accept rules not valid outside this genre. Lindenberger claimed that 'Once we elect to attend an opera, we become predisposed to making narrative sense of what we see and hear'.⁶ Operatic conventions allow for allusion, for artificiality of expression. Berlioz did not make much use of this permissive attitude, in the formal sense, but he did not break with fundamental premises of the genre which, for instance, allow Dido to sing as she is dying. But her singing at this point is naturalistic (unlike, say, that of Gilda in *Rigoletto*), and gains

⁵ See Katherine Reeve, 'The Damnation of Faust', *Berlioz Studies* (Cambridge, 1992), 161.

force from expression rather than from any extended vocal display. In this austere creed Berlioz was indeed a disciple of Gluck.

The role of the orchestra

The orchestra is a prime conveyor of gesture, therefore it is certainly a principal agent of first-level characterization. But we would argue that it could also in a way very special to opera and to Berlioz bear second-level characterization. The cue for this interpretation comes from Berlioz's own words on new ways to compose and interpret instrumental music—the 'expressive instrumental' genre (see chapter 5)—ways which lend themselves to analysis. The orchestra tells us about emotions where words are mute—either because these are not fitting for words or words are unable to express. The orchestra can express simultaneous feelings that overflow from the same person. These can be represented by superimposed melodies previously heard apart; instrumental music marked first by text or action and becomes symbolic upon recurrence, or instrumental colour, which Berlioz identified in his *Grand Traité* as expressive of particular sentiments. Berlioz often explains retrospectively, by means of words, orchestral gestures that could be interpreted in more than one way without the aid of words (i. e. Margarita's soliloquy).

I have attempted to answer the questions about to whom the orchestral sounds are directed, and what kind of messages they can convey. Acoustically the potential listeners can be everyone in the theatre: people on stage and the audience. Participating characters are usually orchestra-deaf, as part of the make-believe universe of opera. The

⁶ Herbert Lindenberger, *Opera the Extravagant Art* (Ithaca, 1984), 133. SEE chapter 1, on conventions.

orchestra expresses some features of their being, but unless they are supernatural (like Mephisto) they may 'experience' music's message but not 'consciously' hear it. On the other hand, a sympathetic audience is, in effect, an ally of the composer; it receives direct communications from the composer via clues offered by the orchestra.

Gesture

I support Kivy's claim that the orchestra plays out the equivalent of the actor's gesture in the play,⁷ with a major reservation that this is not all the orchestra conveys. Pantomime was a French tradition, exemplified in grand opera by Auber in his *La Muette de Portici*, where the title role is dumb. If it was only gesture the orchestra plays out it would have doubled the dumb-girl's gestures and would add nothing to her message. In *Les Troyens* the pantomime expresses Andromache's grieving for her husband's death. The clarinet expresses her pain and the crowd responds with commentary; the strings take an active part in the mourning.⁸ Berlioz here provided unequivocal signs to decode his symbolic use of the orchestra. At Aeneas's hasty entrance, although he is also seen running into the stage, the orchestra explains the character of his running with its irregularity and excitement. Irregularity also characterizes Cellini's impetuous personality. An actor does not need to gesticulate excessively in order to portray his character. Margarita shivers when she sees her lover for the first time and tremolos portray her gesture faithfully.

⁷ Kivy, 'Opera Talk', in *The Fine Art of Repetition* (Cambridge, 1993), 156.

⁸ See chapter 5 and 8.

In addition to replacing or confirming the gestures of the actor, the role of the orchestra may include the expression of unspoken feelings and of the subconscious feelings.

Unspoken feelings

Berlioz's talent and knowledge of instrumentation was acknowledged in his own time, but the interpretation of his use of instruments as all-pervasive in characterization of dramatic situations and of distinctive characters was less explicitly acknowledged. If one comprehends the clues Berlioz gave to communicate meaning, characterization becomes almost as clear as in a novel. Music can surprise, shock, please, soothe, or imitate real recognizable sounds. But in order for music to express specific feelings, communicate dramatic situations or abstract concepts, the composer needs to recruit complementary resources, whether external to music or internal. By external resources I mean text accompanied by music or used as titles. Internal resources, indigenous to music are hardly possible, unless in association with some external event. Such an association is made possible by creating signs. Signs can use instrumentation or harmony or rhythm or melodic motives; once labeled they acquire autonomy. This method serves for expressing feelings while the voice is silent, doubling the emotive effect. For instance Margarita's soliloquy before she sings 'Le Roi de Thulé' forms a continuity, where voice and instruments alternate, expressing her state of mind verbally and instrumentally. Here we learn about her feelings retrospectively, since text labels the instrumental phrases upon recurrence (see chapter 8).

Subconscious feelings

Provided that the signs were made clear in advance, instruments can express subconscious sentiments as well. For instance, Aeneas's troubled sleep while Troy is falling in ruins is expressed instrumentally. Realistic imitative voices mix with the subconscious feelings of discomfort, until the destruction noise grows louder (as Berlioz writes into the score) and Aeneas wakes up.

So often in Berlioz, even if we do not have solid proof of what textless music means, the diverse signs that the composer gives attest that he intends it to be understood as descriptive, atmosphere laden, in short characterizing.

Characterization of a whole opera

Opera is more than plot and music. It is a world within the universe, a self-contained entity. Hugo expressed marvelously the nature of such a work of art that is imbued in a special substance, like the sap that invades and reaches the farthest remove twig of the tree. He added that once you are within the boundaries of that tree you do not know it, you start feeling it when you enter or when you exit this universe (see chapter 1). The analyses of three of Berlioz's dramatic compositions indeed show differential environments for each of them.

In *Benvenuto Cellini* we find the descriptive character of dramatic situations, without special worry for coherence. The Renaissance atmosphere is portrayed as far as spirit of freedom is concerned; this includes the impetuous character of Cellini, the street carnival, the 'gothic' chanting, the Pope and his entourage. There is Teresa with her

anxiety, which does not reflect a uniquely Renaissance idiom, but is an invention that can suit any love story. She is thoroughly characterized from just one point of her character (Kivy's representation). We see here the seminal phase of concern for characterization of an opera and of characters, not fully realized.

In *La Damnation de Faust* we enter a completely different era, atmosphere, dramatic situation and location. Predominantly we sense the diabolic character: Berlioz invented dramatic situations that suit supernatural circumstances. These embrace immediately grasped procedures, such as the use of the tritone, the brass chords, the horrible cries in Pandaemonium, but also more subtle means such as the use of applied time differently from real time.

In *Les Troyens* the main characteristic of the whole opera, with its epic theme, is the use of old procedures in new guises:

- The ascent of keys by fifths for dramatic situations, whether private or public, that involve hope or preparation for victory. Dido's yielding to love pursues this track, following the example of Andromache (see the Quintet).
- The descent of keys by fifths is the more conservative procedure. This is used here for agreement between the leading figures.
- The use of echo reminds one of Gluck and serves for intensification of Aeneas's declamations.

- The use of sustained string chords to evoke a spiritual atmosphere is a reminiscence of the Baroque evocation of a religious sentiment. Here Aeneas's most intimate moments, which are reserved for his son or for Dido, employ this sound.

The role of the voice

Characters deliver meaningful messages by singing the written 'trace', which may demand uncomfortable pitches at passionate moments. The importance of the text can only be limited, since its articulation is not secured. It is therefore the vocal melodic line that externalizes the sentiments. Berlioz never used an extreme range for singers just for the sake of impressing audience or displaying the singers' ability; therefore when he used extreme ranges it is always for dramatic reasons, such as expression of despair, heroism, or public mission. Cellini's second aria is a case in point. Cellini is yearning for tranquility, to distance him from his present troubles. An expressive moment in the aria is his high c^2 , the very same note the excessive use of which (as 'Ut de poitrine) Berlioz had ironically commented upon. The typical style of singing in the French tradition is the declamatory style, which suited Berlioz's dramatic aims, and is the usual style of singing of his protagonists. Very rarely does Berlioz use coloratura for his female singer. He entrusts one to Teresa in a frivolous moment, when she is glad to be rid of her father. Italian in its associations, coloratura here may be part of the *couleur locale*. Apart of the written 'trace', the singer's quality of voice and his/her rendering of Passion play a role in characterization. For these reasons performance practice of singers influences characterization in performance, within the limitations imposed by the text; this consideration, however, is excluded from this study (see chapter 2).

Summary

In first presenting a set of concepts, based on the accumulated knowledge, and discerning my accepted premises, I made room for investigating the actual unique methods with which Berlioz gave life and character to his protagonists. Accumulation of detail about the operas studied revealed depth of character (second level) and characterization of dramatic situations. It also revealed the character of whole operas, their *tinta*. We sense the latter more easily than we can locate it in terms that might appeal to philosophy, but we are not talking philosophy by music criticism, and musical terms seem appropriate for the aim of this study. Therefore the phenomenological approach—looking at phenomena *in situ*—is considered if not ‘proof’, at least an indication that there is content on the level of characterization when that detail can be shown to be distinct from what is offered by the libretto.

Although specific Berlioz research is gradually taking breadth, his compositions are not often cited in general textbooks. Apparently the reason is that it is difficult to attach to him a particular school, he is out of the mainstream. Researchers usually look for generalized qualities by which they can neatly put a composer in place and classify the work. Berlioz was an independent thinker, adhering to no class, but to the new stream of romantic artists in any discipline. At the same time he was not a total innovator, since he employed classical procedures along with new, original ones. The reason that his operas are not often performed may be the difficulty of his musical language for performers and public reception alike.

By analyzing Berlioz's compositions and arriving at these conclusions, I do not claim to explain the composer's intentions. Nattiez goes as far as stating that: 'The esthetic process and the poietic process do not necessarily correspond';⁹ I aimed however at getting as close as possible to the composer's mind. I hope to have proven my hypothesis that music contributes to characterization where text fails.

⁹ Jean-Jacques Nattiez, *Music and Discourse* (Princeton, 1990), 17.

APPENDIX: Why did the Opera Benvenuto Cellini Fail?*

It is too easy to assume that the norm at the Opéra was the historical Grand Opéra. Investigation of the repertoire at the Opéra between the years 1827-1841, as listed in Lajarte's catalogue,¹ reveals a somewhat different picture.

It is commonly stated that while the Grand Opéra evoked historical events, the opéra comique centered on everyday life, and on ideas of social interest. Jean-Michel Brèque argues that the subject of *Benvenuto Cellini* was unusual for an opera in 1838, being an 'opéra-manifeste' proclaiming the artist's mistreatment.² On the Opéra's stage this topic was revolutionary, as Brèque claims, but contemporary Romantic writers had already dealt with the artist as a hero, and his mission. Indeed, checking the repertory of the Opéra in those years shows that contrary to the common belief, as expressed by Brèque and others, the variety of topics for an opera was large; therefore *Benvenuto Cellini* cannot be considered exceptional. *La Muette de Portici* (1828) had a revolutionary message, and indeed it opened an era of romantic grand opéra. Another probable model for Berlioz could have been Beethoven's *Fidelio*, which Berlioz knew well and wrote about, with the heroine's struggle for Liberty; this too has an opéra-comique origin.³ Théophile Gautier claimed that the mistake was not writing openly in the announcements for the opera that it was an opéra comique, since people expected from the composer of the *Requiem* to write only this kind of solemn music.⁴

There was in fact a mixture of topics for works presented at the Opéra, including entertaining topics such as *Le Dieu et la Bayadère* by Auber to a libretto by Scribe. This opera included only two acts and enjoyed 147 performances (see Table 1). The four- to five-act structure commonly stated as conventional was not yet standardized in the

¹ *Bibliothèque Musicale de l'Opéra. Catalogue Historique. Chronologique.* Paris: published under the auspices of the French Ministry of Education, 1878.

² *L'Avant-Scène Opéra* 142 (1991), p. 21.

³ See Paul Robinson, *Beethoven: Fidelio* (Cambridge, 1996).

⁴ See *Dossier de Presse (1838)*. Edited by Peter Bloom (N.P. 1995), 117.

period 1827-1841.⁵ Table 1 lists all opera first performances at the Opéra between 1827-1841. It shows the date of first performance, title, composer and librettist, the number of performances until 1876, the number of acts, and the main dramatic themes of the operas.

Table 2 lists only the operas performed around 1838, including revivals, thus illustrating the state of the repertoire, which included newly composed operas side by side with operas that have been presented over several years and were still in demand. It emerges that:

a) Out of 25 operas listed in Table 1, only 13 got over one hundred performances; seven were a total failure, having fewer than ten performances.

b) Screening the operas' layouts and topics shows that there were no rigid requirements either for the length of a work (number of acts), or for particular genres. The list of operas shown in Tables 1 and 2 demonstrates the variety of topics, including comic operas side by side with tragic stories, romances, historical stories, heroic, devilish, fantastic, exotic and religious topics.

When *Benvenuto Cellini* was accepted for the Opéra, Duponchel, its director, limited Berlioz to two acts with a single ballet, in the first act's finale, which became the Carnival. From Table 1 we can see that this structure was not uncommon. Moreover, Lajarte wrote about *La Xacarilla* that its brevity was one of its advantages, because it permitted cohabitation with a different ballet in different evenings.⁶ Therefore, *Benvenuto Cellini's* relative brevity could be a reason for its inclusion in the Opéra's repertory. Berlioz had indeed hoped that this would happen, as he wrote to Liszt:

⁵ David Charlton, "On the nature of *Grand Opéra*," in *Les Troyens* (Ian Kemp, ed.) (1988), 96.

⁶ Lajarte, op. cit.

A présent *Benvenuto* sera joué aussi souvent que le permettront les arrangements des ballets. Je dépends en conséquence des caprices de Fanny Elssler; elle est enchantée de danser *devant moi* (terme de coulisses) mais ... le nombre des ballets dont l'étendue permet de les donner avec mon ouvrage est très petit ...;⁷

So it did not happen. It was well known that many people came to the opera to watch the ballet, which had nothing in common with the drama. The Carnival was indeed part of the drama, but, Marian Smith observes:

Conversations between [characters of the opera and characters of the ballet]... occurred ...rarely, because in nearly all of the operas of the period [the July Monarchy] ballet characters mingled with opera characters only in crowd scenes and divertissements....⁸

This was the case with the Carnival scene of *Benvenuto Cellini*. The facts show that the opera's failure was in spite of its being in line with the requirements of the Opéra and public's expectations.

⁷ CG II, 622, Paris, 22 January 1839. The article that Berlioz refers to is the one cited above as 'Le Persée de Benvenuto Cellini' appearing in the *Revue et Gazette Musicale*, 13 January 1839.

⁸ Marian Smith, "'Poésie lyrique" and "Chorégraphie"'. *Cambridge Opera Journal* 4 (1992), 6.

**TEXT BOUND INTO
THE SPINE**

Table 1: First performances of operas, staged in the opéra between 1827-1841 *

Date of first perf	Title	Composer	Librettist	No. of acts	Theme and period of play	No. perf.*
29-6-27	Macbeth	Chelard	de l'Isle, Hix	3	Medieval, tragedy	5
29-2-28	La Muette de Portici	Auber	Scribe, Delavigne	5	Renaissance, revolutionary theme	471
20-8-28	Le Comte Ory	Rossini	Scribe, Poirson	2	Medieval, comic romance	373
3-8-29	Guillaume Tell	Rossini	Bis, Jouy	4	Historic, revolt	330
15-3-30	Francois Ier à Chambord	Ginestet	Saint Yon, /Fougeroux	2	Renaissance	6
13-10-30	Le Dieu et la Bayadère	Auber	Scribe	2	Entertaining	147
6-4-31	Euryanthe	Weber	Castil-Blaze (transl)	3		4
20-6-31	Le Philtre	Auber	Scribe	2	Comic romance	242
21-11-31	Robert-le-diable	Meyerbeer	Scribe	5	Devilry	593
1-10-32	Le Serment	Auber	Scribe, Mazerès	3	Romance	102
27-2-33	Gustave III//Le Bal Masqué	Auber	Scribe	5, then 4	Historic opera	40, then 33
3-10-34	Don Juan	Mozart	Deschamps, Castil-Blaze	5	Semi-seria moral tale	143
23-2-35	La Juive	Halévy	Scribe	5	Medieval, religious conflict	431
29-2-36	Les Huguenots	Meyerbeer	Scribe	5	Renaissance, historic tragedy	620
14-11-36	La Esmeralda	Bertin	Hugo	4	Historic, moral	6
3-3-37	Stradella	Niedermeyer	Deschamps, Pacini	5, then 2		17
5-3-38	Guido et Ginevra	Halévy	Scribe	5	Renaissance, romance	44
10-9-38	Benvenuto Cellini	Berlioz	Barbier, de Wailly	2	Renaissance, the artist	4
1-4-39	Le Lac de Fées	Auber	Scribe, Melesville	5	German ballad, enchanted lake	30
11-9-39	La Vendetta	de Ruolz	Pillet, Vannois	3, then 2		7
28-10-39	La Xacarilla	Marliani	Scribe	1	A Romance about disreputable characters	112
6-1-40	Le Drapier	Halévy	Scribe	3		8
10-4-40	Les Martyrs	Donizetti	Scribe	4	Religious conflict	20
2-12-40	La Favorite	Donizetti	Royer, Vaez	4	Medieval romance	481
19-4-41	Le Comte de Carmagnole	Thomas	Scribe	2		8
7-6-41	Le Freischütz	Weber	Pacini, Berlioz	3		114

Table 2: List of operas performed in the Opéra in August and September 1838* and date of their first performance

Operas & Ballets	First Performance
La Muette di Portici (227)	1828
Guido et Ginevra (26)	1838
La Esmeralda (17); La Sylphide (2)	1836
Les Huguenots (84)	1836
Guillaume Tell (170)	1829
Le Serment (20); Le Diable boiteux (50)	1832
Benvenuto Cellini (4)	1838
Le Comte Ory (201); La Tempête (6); Gustave III (116)	1828
La Juive (76)	1835
Don Juan (36)	1834
Le Philtre (115); La Sylphide	1831

*Numbers in brackets indicate number of performances of the work to 1838, including incomplete performances, as recorded in - *JOURNAL, Théâtre de l'Opéra IX, 1831-1850.*⁹
La Sylphide, Gustave III, La Tempête, are ballets.

Table 3: Distribution of solo numbers in selected operas

	I	II	III	IV	V
Le Philtre	5	0			
La Juive	0	1	1	1	0
Le lac des fées	1	2	0	1	0
Guido et Ginevra	2	1	2	0	1
La Favorite	1	0	1	1	
Benvenuto Cellini	2+2	0+2			

⁹ The Ms. is housed at the *Bibliothèque de l'Opéra* in Paris.

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