

Instructional Packets 17-21, 6th-8th Grade

Hello Students!

Continue onward!

The First assignment is going to be a similar guided reading assignment, but on nineteenth century program music.

The second assignment will be another listening one, and again as a reminder if you don't have internet I understand. It is just very hard to understand what the text is saying if you can't listen to the music.

Best,

Cassandra Ellswood



eMusic

Beethoven, *Ruins of Athens*, "Turkish March"

eLGs

25 Berlioz, *Symphonie fantastique*

26 Smetana, *The Moldau*

ONLINE TUTOR



www.wwnorton.com/enjoy

Composers: Romantic

Hector Berlioz

Bedřich Smetana

Cultural Perspective

11. Music, Folklore, and Nationalism

Resources: Romantic

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Quizzes: Romantic

Reviewing 18

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Romantic Program Music

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The Nature of Program Music

"The painter turns a poem into a painting; the musician sets a picture to music."
—ROBERT SCHUMANN

KEY POINTS

- Romantic composers cultivated *program music*—instrumental music with a literary or pictorial association supplied by the composer—over *absolute music*.
- The four main types of program music include the *concert overture*, *incidental music* to a play, the *program symphony* (a multimovement work), and the *symphonic poem* (a one-movement work).

Program music is instrumental music that has literary or pictorial associations; the nature of these associations is indicated by the title of the piece or by an explanatory note—the "program"—supplied by the composer. A title such as *King Lear* (by Berlioz) suggests specific characters and events, while the title *Pièces fugitives* (*Fleeting Pieces*, by Clara Schumann) merely labels the mood or character of the work. Program music, we saw earlier, is distinguished from absolute, or pure, music, which consists of musical patterns that have no literary or pictorial meanings.

This genre was of special importance in the nineteenth century, when musicians became sharply conscious of the connection between their art and the

world about them. It helped them to bring music closer to poetry and painting, and to relate their work to the moral and political issues of their time.

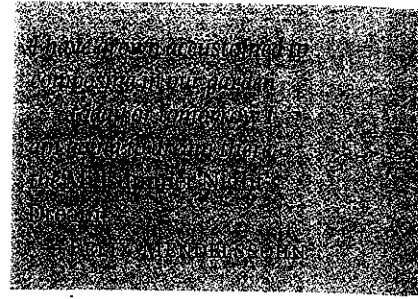
Varieties of Program Music

One impulse toward program music came from the opera house, where the overture was a rousing orchestral piece in one movement designed to serve as an introduction to an opera (or a play). Many operatic overtures achieved independent popularity as separate concert pieces. This pointed the way to a new type of overture not associated with an opera: a single-movement concert piece for orchestra based on a literary idea, such as Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet*. Such a composition, the *concert overture*, might evoke a land- or seascape or embody a poetic or patriotic idea.

Another species of program music, *incidental music*, usually consists of an overture and a series of pieces to be performed between the acts of a play and during important scenes. The most successful pieces of incidental music were arranged into suites (such as Mendelssohn's music for Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Beethoven's music for the play *The Ruins of Athens*). Incidental music is still important today, in the form of film music and background music for television.

The passion for program music was so strong that it invaded even the most hallowed form of absolute music, the symphony. Thus came into being the *program symphony*, a multimovement orchestral work. We will consider one of the most important examples of a program symphony—Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*.

Eventually, the need was felt for a large form of orchestral music that would serve the Romantic era as well as the symphony had served the Classical. Franz

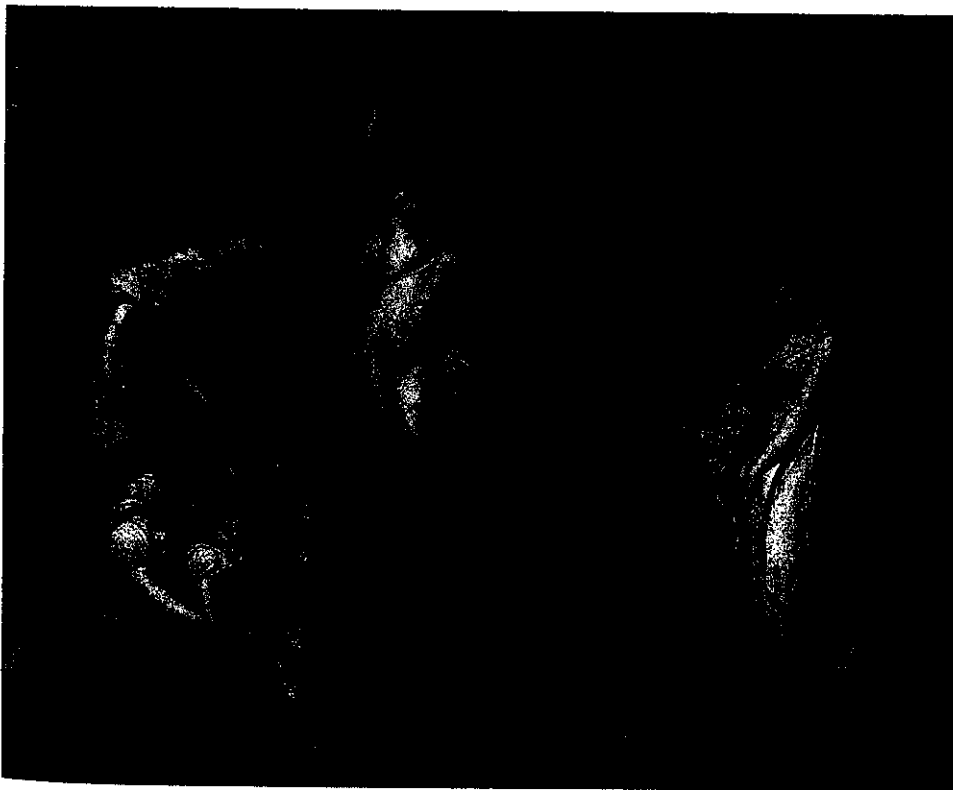


The concert overture

Incidental music



Program symphony



Shakespeare's play *A Midsummer Night's Dream* inspired Felix Mendelssohn's incidental music as well as this fanciful canvas by **Henry Fuseli**, *Titania and Bottom* (c. 1790). (Tate Gallery, London)

Symphonic poem

Liszt filled this need with the creation of the *symphonic poem* (he first used the term in 1848), the nineteenth century's one original contribution to the large forms. Liszt's *Les préludes* is among the best-known examples of this genre.

A symphonic poem is a piece of program music for orchestra, in one movement, which in the course of contrasting sections develops a poetic idea, suggests a scene, or creates a mood. It differs from the concert overture, which usually retains one of the traditional Classical forms, by being much freer in its structure. The symphonic poem (also called *tone poem*) gave composers the flexibility they needed for a big single-movement form. It became the most widely cultivated type of orchestral program music through the second half of the century. We will study two examples: *The Moldau*, by the Bohemian composer Bedřich Smetana, and *Prelude to "The Afternoon of a Faun,"* by Claude Debussy.

Program music is one of the most striking manifestations of nineteenth-century Romanticism. This new, descriptive genre impelled composers to express specific feelings; it proclaimed the direct relationship of music to life.

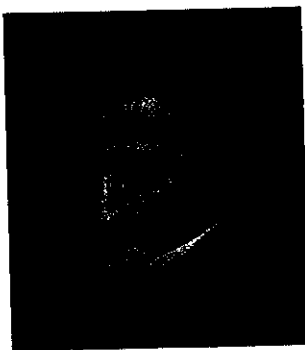
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Berlioz and the Program Symphony

"To render my works properly requires a combination of extreme precision and irresistible verve, a regulated vehemence, a dreamy tenderness, and an almost morbid melancholy."

KEY POINTS

- French composer and conductor Hector Berlioz won a coveted composition award for *Symphonie fantastique*, a five-movement program symphony.
- The program for the work drew on his personal life and on his infatuation and courtship with the actress Harriet Smithson; his other symphonic works drew from Romantic literary sources.
- Berlioz was an innovative writer for orchestra, introducing new colors and instrumental techniques to the ensemble; he also wrote a treatise on orchestration.
- The five movements of *Symphonie fantastique* are unified by a recurring theme (*idée fixe*) representing his beloved.



Hector Berlioz

The flamboyance of Victor Hugo's poetry and the dramatic intensity of Eugène Delacroix's painting found their counterpart in the works of Hector Berlioz, the first great exponent of musical Romanticism in France.

His Life

Hector Berlioz (1803–1869) was born in France in a small town near Grenoble. His father, a well-to-do physician, expected the boy to follow in his footsteps.

and at eighteen Hector was sent away to attend medical school in Paris. The conservatory and the opera, however, intrigued Berlioz much more than the dissecting room. The following year, the fiery youth made a decision that horrified his upper-middle-class family: he gave up medicine for music.

The Romantic revolution was brewing in Paris, and Berlioz, along with Hugo and Delacroix, found himself in the camp of "young France." Having been cut off by his parents, he gave music lessons and sang in a theater chorus to make ends meet. He became a huge fan of Beethoven and of Shakespeare, to whose plays he was introduced by a visiting English troupe. Berlioz fell madly in love with an actress in this troupe, whose portrayals of Ophelia and Juliet excited the admiration of the Parisians. In his *Memoirs*, which read like a Romantic novel, he describes his infatuation with Harriet Smithson: "I became obsessed by an intense, overpowering sense of sadness. I could not sleep, I could not work, and I spent my time wandering aimlessly about Paris and its environs."

In 1830, Berlioz was awarded the coveted Prix de Rome, which gave him an opportunity to live and work in Italy. That same year he composed the *Symphonie fantastique*, to this day his most celebrated work. Upon his return from Rome, he commenced a hectic courtship of Harriet Smithson. There were strenuous objections from both their families, and violent scenes, during one of which the excitable Hector attempted suicide. But he recovered, and the two were married.

Now that the unattainable ideal had become his wife, Berlioz's passion cooled. It was Shakespeare he had loved rather than Harriet, and in time he sought the ideal elsewhere. All the same, the first years of his marriage were the most fruitful of his life. By age forty, he had produced most of the works on which his fame would rest.

In the latter part of his life, Berlioz conducted his music in all the capitals of Europe. Paris, however, resisted him to the end. For his last major work, the opera *Béatrice et Bénédict*, he wrote his own libretto after Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*. Following this effort, the embittered composer wrote no more. He died seven years later, at sixty-six.

His Music

Berlioz was one of the boldest innovators of the nineteenth century. His approach to music was wholly individual, his sense of sound unique. From the start, he had an affinity in his orchestral music for the vividly dramatic or pictorial program.

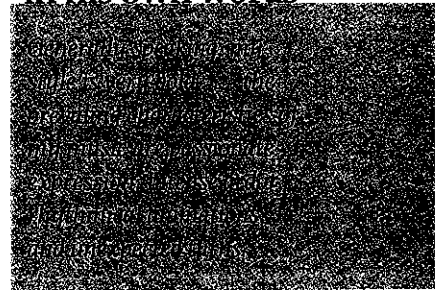
His works show the favorite literary influences of the Romantic period. *The Damnation of Faust*, for example, was inspired by Goethe; *Harold in Italy* (a program symphony with viola solo) and *The Corsair* (an overture) are based on works by the English poet Byron. Shakespeare is the source for the overture *King Lear* and for the dramatic symphony *Romeo and Juliet*.

Berlioz's most important opera, *The Trojans*, on his own libretto after the ancient Roman poet Virgil, has been successfully revived in recent years. His sacred vocal works, including the Requiem and the Te Deum, are conceived on a similarly grandiose scale.



Harriet Smithson

in his own words



Orchestral works

Vocal works

Principal Works

Orchestral music, including overtures *Waverley* (1828), *Rob Roy* (1831), *Le roi Lear* (*King Lear*, 1831); and program symphonies *Symphonie fantastique* (1830), *Harold en Italie* (*Harold in Italy*, 1834), *Romeo et Juliette* (1839)

Choral music, including a Requiem Mass (1837), *Te Deum* (Hymn of Praise, 1849), *La damnation de Faust* (*The Damnation of Faust*, 1846), and the oratorio *L'enfance du Christ* (*The Childhood of Christ*, 1854)

3 operas, including *Les Troyens* (*The Trojans*, 1858) and *Béatrice et Bénédicte* (1862)

9 solo vocal works with orchestra

Writings on music, including an orchestration treatise (1843/55)

It was in the domain of orchestration that Berlioz's genius asserted itself most fully. His daring originality in handling the instruments opened up a new world of Romantic sound. His scores, calling for the largest orchestra that had ever been used, abound in novel effects and discoveries that would serve as models for all who came after him. Indeed, the conductor Felix Weingartner called Berlioz "the creator of the modern orchestra."

Symphonie fantastique

Berlioz wrote his best-known program symphony when he was twenty-seven years old, drawing its story from his personal life. "A young musician of morbid sensibility and ardent imagination, in . . . lovesick despair, has poisoned himself with opium. The drug, too weak to kill, plunges him into a heavy sleep accompanied by strange visions. . . . The beloved one herself becomes for him, a melody, a recurrent theme that haunts him everywhere."

Idée fixe

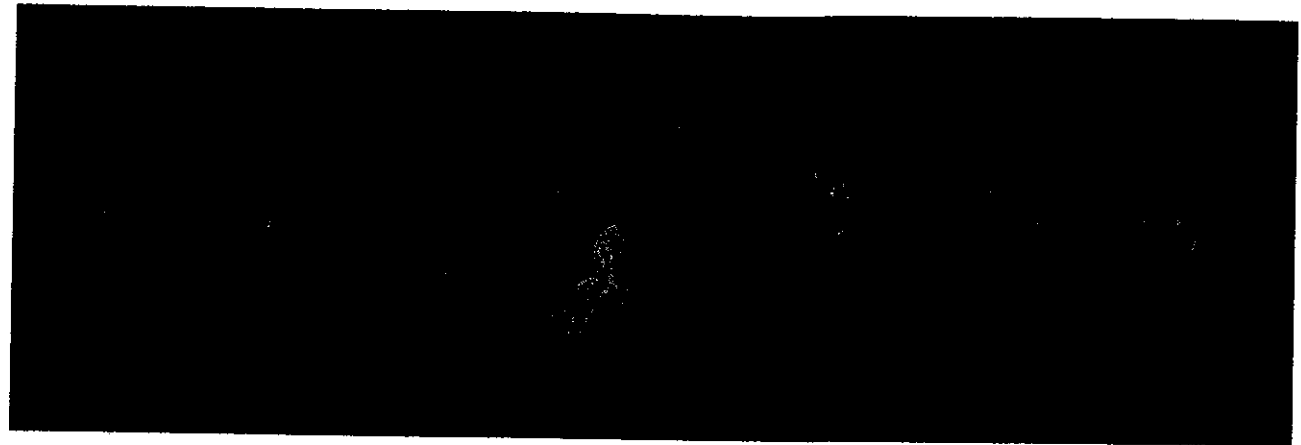
The symphony's recurrent theme, called an *idée fixe* (fixed idea), symbolizes the beloved; it becomes a musical thread unifying the five diverse movements, though its appearances are varied in harmony, rhythm, meter, tempo, dynamics, register, and instrumental color. (See Listening Guide 25 for theme and analysis.) These transformations take on literary as well as musical significance, as the following description by Berlioz shows.

The program

I. *Reveries, Passions*. "[The musician] remembers the weariness of soul, the indefinable yearning he knew before meeting his beloved. Then, the volcanic love with which she at once inspired him, his delirious suffering . . . his religious consolation." The Allegro section introduces a soaring melody—the fixed idea.

II. *A Ball*. "Amid the tumult and excitement of a brilliant ball he glimpses the loved one again." This dance movement is in ternary, or three-part, form. In the middle section, the fixed idea reappears in waltz time.

III. *Scene in the Fields*. "On a summer evening in the country he hears two shepherds piping. The pastoral duet, the quiet surroundings . . . all unite to fill his heart with a long absent calm. But she appears again. His heart contracts. Painful forebodings fill his soul." The composer said that his aim in this pastoral movement was to establish a mood "of sorrowful loneliness."



IV. *March to the Scaffold.* "He dreams that he has killed his beloved, that he has been condemned to die and is being led to the scaffold. . . . At the very end the fixed idea reappears for an instant, like a last thought of love interrupted by the fall of the blade."

V. *Dream of a Witches' Sabbath.* "He sees himself at a witches' sabbath surrounded by a host of fearsome spirits who have gathered for his funeral. Unearthly sounds, groans, shrieks of laughter. The melody of his beloved is heard, but it has lost its noble and reserved character. It has become a vulgar tune, trivial and grotesque. It is she who comes to the infernal orgy. A howl of joy greets her arrival. She joins the diabolical dance. Bells toll for the dead. A burlesque of the *Dies irae*. Dance of the witches. The dance and the *Dies irae* combined."

The fourth movement, a diabolical march in minor, exemplifies the nineteenth-century love of the fantastic. The theme of the beloved appears at the very end, on the clarinet, and is cut off by a grim *fortissimo* chord. In this vivid portrayal of the story, one clearly hears the final blow of the blade, the head rolling, and the resounding cheers of the crowd. In the final movement, Berlioz enters into a kind of infernal spirit that nourished a century of satanic operas, ballets, and symphonic poems. The mood is heightened with the introduction of the traditional religious chant *Dies irae* (Day of Wrath) from the ancient Mass for the Dead.

There is a grandeur of line and gesture in the music of Berlioz, and an abundance of vitality and invention. He is one of the major prophets of the era.

Francisco Goya (1746–1828) anticipated the passionate intensity of Berlioz's music in this painting of the *Witches' Sabbath*, c. 1819–23. (Museo del Prado, Madrid)

Fourth movement

Fifth movement

Listening Guide 25



CD: CHR/STD 5/19–24, SH 3/9–14

Berlioz: *Symphonie fantastique*, Fourth Movement

(6:34)

DATE OF WORK: 1830

GENRE: Program symphony, 5 movements

PROGRAM: A lovesick artist in an opium trance is haunted by a vision of his beloved, which becomes an *idée fixe* (fixed idea).

Romantic Program Music Reading Guide

The Nature of Program Music

In your own words what does Program Music mean?

What is the most successful piece of incidental music written during this time period?

What is another name for symphonic poem? _____

Berlioz and the Program Symphony

What did Berlioz's father want him to be when he grew up? _____

What is Berlioz's most famous celebrated work? _____

What author did Berlioz look up to? _____

What is the name for a reoccurring theme in a program symphony, ex. Symphonie Fantastique? _____

In your own words please describe each of the movements of Symphonie Fantastique:

- I. _____

- II. _____

- III. _____

- IV. _____

- V. _____

Berlioz Listening Assignment

Below are the program notes written by Berlioz himself in 1845. I would like you to read through the program notes and pick which movement you find most interesting. From there I would like you to find a recording of that movement on YouTube/ Spotify (this piece is really really really famous, should be easy) and listen to it. From there I would like you to write a short paragraph (3-4) sentences on how you think the music does or does not line up with the program notes.

Part one

Daydreams, passions

The author imagines that a young musician, afflicted by the sickness of spirit which a famous writer has called the vagueness of passions (*le vague des passions*), sees for the first time a woman who unites all the charms of the ideal person his imagination was dreaming of, and falls desperately in love with her. By a strange anomaly, the beloved image never presents itself to the artist's mind without being associated with a musical idea, in which he recognises a certain quality of passion, but endowed with the nobility and shyness which he credits to the object of his love.

This melodic image and its model keep haunting him ceaselessly like a double *idée fixe*. This explains the constant recurrence in all the movements of the symphony of the melody which launches the first allegro. The transitions from this state of dreamy melancholy, interrupted by occasional upsurges of aimless joy, to delirious passion, with its outbursts of fury and jealousy, its returns of tenderness, its tears, its religious consolations – all this forms the subject of the first movement.

Part two

A ball

The artist finds himself in the most diverse situations in life, in the tumult of a festive party, in the peaceful contemplation of the beautiful sights of nature, yet everywhere, whether in town or in the countryside, the beloved image keeps haunting him and throws his spirit into confusion.

Part three

Scene in the countryside

One evening in the countryside he hears two shepherds in the distance dialoguing with their 'ranz des vaches'; this pastoral duet, the setting, the gentle rustling of the trees in the wind, some causes for hope that he has recently conceived, all conspire to

restore to his heart an unaccustomed feeling of calm and to give to his thoughts a happier colouring. He broods on his loneliness, and hopes that soon he will no longer be on his own... But what if she betrayed him!... This mingled hope and fear, these ideas of happiness, disturbed by dark premonitions, form the subject of the adagio. At the end one of the shepherds resumes his 'ranz des vaches'; the other one no longer answers. Distant sound of thunder... solitude... silence...

Part four

March to the scaffold

Convinced that his love is spurned, the artist poisons himself with opium. The dose of narcotic, while too weak to cause his death, plunges him into a heavy sleep accompanied by the strangest of visions. He dreams that he has killed his beloved, that he is condemned, led to the scaffold and is witnessing *his own execution*. The procession advances to the sound of a march that is sometimes sombre and wild, and sometimes brilliant and solemn, in which a dull sound of heavy footsteps follows without transition the loudest outbursts. At the end of the march, the first four bars of the *idée fixe* reappear like a final thought of love interrupted by the fatal blow.

Part five

Dream of a witches' sabbath

He sees himself at a witches' sabbath, in the midst of a hideous gathering of shades, sorcerers and monsters of every kind who have come together for his funeral. Strange sounds, groans, outbursts of laughter; distant shouts which seem to be answered by more shouts. The beloved melody appears once more, but has now lost its noble and shy character; it is now no more than a dance tune, trivial and grotesque: it is she who is coming to the sabbath... Roar of delight at her arrival... The funeral knell tolls, parody of the *Dies irae*,** the *dance of the witches*. The dance of the witches combined with the *Dies irae*.