

Mastering Equipment Used In Our Recordings



HIGH DEFINITION TAPE TRANSFERS

BERLIOZ

SYMPHONIE FANTASTIQUE

ANDRE VANDERNOOT / L'ORCHESTRE NATIONAL

Digital: Weiss ADC2 Analog to Digital Converter
Mytek ADC192 Modified by Steve Nugent of Empirical Audio
Lynx AES16 used for digital I/O
Antelope Audio Isochrone OCX Master Clock
Weiss Saracon Sample Rate Conversion Software
Weiss POW-r Dithering Software
Analog: Studer 810 Reel to Reel with JRF Magnetics Custom Z
Heads & Siltech wiring
Aria tape head pre-amp by ATR Services
Manley Tube Tape Pre-amps Modified by Fred Volz of Emotive
Audio
Cables: Purist Audio Design, Pure Note, Siltech
Power Cords: Purist Audio Design, Essential Sound Products
Vibration Control: Symposium Acoustics Rollerblocks, Ultra
platforms, Svelte shelves
Sonic Studio CD.1 Professional CD Burner using Mitsui Gold
Archival CD's

Symphonie Fantastique Berlioz fell in love with an Irish actress, Harriet Smithson, after attending a performance of Shakespeare's Hamlet with her in the role of Ophelia, on 11 September 1827. He sent her numerous love letters, all of which went unanswered. When she left Paris they had still not met. He then wrote the symphony as a way to express his unrequited love. It premiered in Paris December 5 of 1830, and Harriet was not present. She eventually heard the work in 1832 and realized that she was the genesis. The two finally met and were married on October 3, 1833. While the marriage was happy for several years, they were divorced nine years later, partially due to the language barrier between them.

The symphony is a piece of program music which tells the story of "an artist gifted with a lively imagination" who has "poisoned himself with opium" in the "depths of despair" because of "hopeless love." There are five movements, which was unconventional for a symphony at the time:

1. Rêveries - Passions (Dreams - Passions)
2. Un bal (A Ball)
3. Scène aux champs (Scene at the Country)
4. Marche au supplice (March to the Scaffold)
5. Songe d'une nuit de sabbat (Dream of a Witches' Sabbath)

First movement: "Rêveries - Passions"

The movement is radical in its harmonic outline, building a vast arch back to the home key, which, while similar to the Sonata Form of classical composition, was taken as a departure by Parisian critics. It is here that the listener is introduced to the theme of the artist's beloved, or the *idée fixe*. Throughout the movement, there is a simplicity of presentation of the melody and themes, which Schumann compared to "Beethoven's epigrams", ideas which could be extended, had the composer chosen to. In part, it is because Berlioz rejected writing the very symmetrical melodies then in academic fashion, and instead looked for melodies which were, "so intense in every note, as to defy normal harmonization", as Schumann put it.

Second movement: "Un bal"

The second movement takes a rather plain waltz theme, again, derived from the *idée fixe* at first, and then transforming it. It is filled with running ascending and descending figures . While one critic called it "vulgar"^[citation needed], the intent was to portray a single lonely soul amidst gaiety, as Berlioz wrote while composing it.

Third movement: "Scène aux champs"

The third movement opens with the English horn and offstage oboe tossing back and forth a characteristic melody meant to evoke the horns in the mountains. The English horn represents the artist and the oboe his beloved. The melodies of these instruments represent the artist and his beloved calling back-and-forth. This intent, to evoke a spirit of the country side inhabited by, not mere rustics, but people who were one with their place is part of Romanticism and can be traced back to the ideas of such writers as Goethe. The *idée fixe* comes back. The movement swells to a peak, as if the artist is pushing away the idea of his beloved, the dramatic sounds fall away. The sound of distant thunder comes, in an innovative passage for four timpani players on two sets of timpani: it ends without resolution.

Fourth movement: "Marche au supplice"

The fourth movement, which Berlioz claimed to have written in a single night (but which he actually took from an unfinished project, the opera *Les Francs-juges*), is filled with blaring horns and rushing passages, and scurrying figures

which would later show up again in the last movement. The movement describes a dream, in which the artist is executed for killing the love of his life. It uses a grotesque version of the theme by Berlioz's extraordinary technique of orchestration, mixing string pizzicato, woodwind staccato, brass chords and a single loud stroke of percussion, forming a highly unusual series of tone colors. The scene ends with a single short fortissimo G-minor chord that represents the fatal blow: the dropping of the trap door, or perhaps the guillotine blade; the series of pizzicato notes following can be seen to represent the rolling of the severed head into the basket. Immediately prior to the musical depiction of the beheading, there is a brief, nostalgic recollection of the *idée fixe* in a solo clarinet, as though representing the last conscious thought of the executed man; after his death, the final nine bars of the movement contain a victorious series of tutti G major chords, seemingly intended to convey the cheering of the onlooking throng.

Fifth movement: "Songe d'une nuit de sabbat"

The last movement, often played as a tone poem by itself, has a brooding opening, the sound of spirits marching through the grave yard. It consists of a famous E-flat clarinet solo presenting the *idée fixe* as a vulgar dance tune; the call of church bells; a burlesque of a famous plainchant, the *Dies Irae*; and a fugue meant to represent, as Berlioz privately admitted, a giant orgy. There are a host of effects (including *col legno* playing in the strings), from the bubbling of the witches cauldron to the blasts of wind. The ending is also unique in that Berlioz combines the sombre *Dies Irae* melody with the wild fugue of the *Ronde du Sabbat* (Sabbath Round).

André Vandernoot

Born: June 2, 1927 - Brussels, Belgium Died: November 6, 1991 - Brussels, Belgium

The Belgian conductor, André Vandenoort, received training at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Brussels and at the Vienna Academy of Music. In 1951 he was a laureate in the Beesañçon conducting competition. From 1954 André Vandenoort appeared regularly as a conductor with the Orchestre National de Belgique in Brussels. In 1958 he was named to the post of ist instructor of the Royal Flemish Opera in Antwerp. He was music director of the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie in Brussels from 1959 to 1973. In 1974-1975 he was music director of the Orchestre National de Belgique. From 1976 to 1983 he held the title of 1st guest conductor of the Antwerp Philharmonic. He also was music director of the Noordhollands Philharmonic in Haarlem in 1978-1979. From 1979 to 1989 he was also chief conductor of the Orchestre Symphonique de la RTBF in Brussels.

Hector Berlioz Symphonie Fantastique

Andre Vandernoot conducts the L'orcheste National

1 - DAYDREAM PASSIONS

2 - A BALL

3 - SCENE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

4 - MARCH TO THE SCAFFOLD

5 - DREAM OF THE WITCHES SABBATH

Transferred from a Command Classics 4-track tape 2-Track Tape

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