Chicago Symphony Orchestra
Riccardo Muti Zell Music Director
Yo-Yo Ma Judson and Joyce Green Creative Consultant

Thursday, November 3, 2016, at 8:00
Friday, November 4, 2016, at 8:00
Saturday, November 5, 2016, at 8:00
Tuesday, November 8, 2016, at 7:30

James Levine Conductor

Mozart
Symphony No. 31 in D Major, K. 297 (Paris)
Allegro assai
Andante
Allegro

Schoenberg
Five Pieces for Orchestra, Op. 16
Presentiments
Things Past
Summer Morning by a Lake (Colors)
Peripeteia
The Obbligato Recitative

INTERMISSION

Berlioz
Symphonie fantastique, Op. 14
Dreams—Passions (Largo—Allegro agitato ed appassionato assai)
A Ball (Waltz: Allegro non troppo)
A Scene in the Country (Adagio)
March to the Scaffold (Allegretto non troppo)
Dream of a Witches’ Sabbath (Larghetto—Allegro)

CSO Tuesday series concerts are sponsored by United Airlines.
The Chicago Symphony Orchestra is grateful to WBBM Newsradio 780 and 105.9 FM for their generous support as media sponsor of the Tuesday series.
This program is partially supported by grants from the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency, and the National Endowment for the Arts.
Wolfgang Mozart
Born January 27, 1756; Salzburg, Austria
Died December 5, 1791; Vienna, Austria

Symphony No. 31 in D Major, K. 297 (*Paris*)

As early as 1773, Mozart started talking about leaving his hometown, the picture-postcard village of Salzburg that he had grown to hate, from the residents whose lowbrow tastes tried his patience—“one can’t have any proper social intercourse with those people”—to the “coarse, slovenly, dissolute court musicians” for whom he often wrote. But since he was still a teenager, he realized that for the next few years he would simply have to escape from time to time, accepting performing gigs and commissions in places he longed to visit, maybe even live. “Salzburg is no place for me,” he wrote to his father from Munich in 1777, where he openly advertised his availability for a permanent job.

It was Paris that held the greatest allure for the young Mozart. He went there at the age of twenty-two, accompanied by his mother, in March 1778. His stay, which lasted just over six months, was a disappointment, a personal tragedy, and something of a professional disaster. He found the people ill-mannered and the streets filled with “indescribable muck”—it was not the city he remembered from his one previous childhood visit. Throughout their stay, his mother grew increasingly bored and unwell. She died in Paris early in July, casting a much darker cloud over Mozart’s state of mind. But by then, he had managed to write some fine music in Paris, including this bold new symphony that quickly took the city’s name as its own.

When Mozart sat down to begin this score, he had not written a symphony in four years, an unusually long hiatus in his consistently busy—and sometimes frantic—compositional career. But the pause had done him good, as had the new ideas he picked up on his recent travels, particularly in Munich and Mannheim. And the resources available in Parisian orchestras, which were bigger than any he had ever heard (and filled with many superb players), prompted him to expand his palette, adding flutes and timpani, and, for the first time in a symphony, clarinets as well. This new symphony is scored for the largest orchestra he had ever used. In many ways, it marks the beginning of Mozart’s new symphonic style.

Like so many things in Mozart’s Paris sojourn, the rehearsals for his new symphony did not go well. “I was really frightened,” Mozart wrote home. “All my life I have heard nothing worse;
you can’t imagine how they botched the symphony twice in a row and scratched away at it.” He asked for another rehearsal. There was no time, he was told. He went to bed that night “in a discontented and angry frame of mind,” and when he awoke in the morning he decided not to attend the concert. But then he changed his mind, only to discover that the Paris public was wild about his new piece.

Mozart writes just three movements. The first movement opens with grand music, grandly scored for Paris’s best musicians. “In the middle of the opening allegro,” he wrote to his father, “there is a passage that I knew people would like; the whole audience was carried away by it, and there was tremendous applause”—during the movement, as well as at its conclusion. There are two versions of the central Andante, the second allegedly written when the Paris impresario complained that the original one was overflowing with too many ideas. (Scholars still debate which one is which, because, in fact, they are both abundantly packed with “ideas.”) The finale, with a brilliant fugato midway through and much ingenious counterpoint throughout, was tailor-made to leave a lasting impression on the locals. Having been told that Parisians liked their finales to begin boldly and loudly, using all the instruments on stage, Mozart deliberately began his quietly and with just the violins. When the full ensemble then burst in, after eight measures, the first-night audience started to clap, enjoying not only the music but the joke. “I was so happy,” Mozart said, “as soon as the symphony was over I went off to the Palais Royal and had a large ice.”

Arnold Schoenberg
Born September 13, 1874; Vienna, Austria
Died July 13, 1951; Brentwood, a suburb of Los Angeles, California

Five Pieces for Orchestra, Op. 16

Every great artist has a way of dealing with professional crises—writer’s block, nerves, fear of failure, whatever. Schiller thought the smell of rotten apples stirred his hesitant imagination. Colette picked fleas from her cat, waiting for inspiration. Arnold Schoenberg turned to painting.

The crisis afflicting Schoenberg, however, wasn’t simply the daily struggle to produce something of value, but the more profound realization that he had taken musical language to the edge; he was left contemplating the abyss. In the finale of his Second String Quartet, completed in 1908, Schoenberg didn’t even indicate a key signature—an outward sign that tonality had been abandoned. Moments into the movement a soprano begins to sing, “I feel the air of another planet”—new, bracing air that Schoenberg had begun to breathe as well.

The following year, after writing the George-Lieder, Schoenberg steeled himself for the revolution he had started:

With the George songs I have for the first time succeeded in approaching an ideal of expression and form which has been in my mind for years. Until now, I lacked the strength and confidence to make it a reality. But now that I am conscious of having broken through every restriction of a bygone aesthetic; and though the goal toward which I am striving appears to me a certain one, I am, nonetheless, already feeling the resistance I shall have to overcome; I feel now how hotly even the least of temperaments will rise in revolt, and suspect that even those who have so far believed in me will not want
to acknowledge the necessary nature of this development . . . I am being forced in this direction . . . I am obeying an inner compulsion which is stronger than any upbringing.

In 1909, Schoenberg began to paint in earnest. He had been led to painting by Richard Gerstl, a pushy young artist who had begun a secret affair with Schoenberg’s frail wife Mathilde and was found out in the summer of 1908, during the Schoenbergs’ summer holiday in Gmunden. Mathilde and Gerstl fled back to Vienna. Schoenberg was devastated; he even contemplated suicide. Ultimately Mathilde returned to her husband, and it was Gerstl who actually killed himself, in November 1908. Shortly thereafter, his life and his work both in total chaos, Schoenberg began to paint his pictures, mostly faces of despair. Some, clearly, were self-portraits. Within two years he had done sixty oils. Their value as art is secondary to the role they played in Schoenberg’s creative life as he oversaw one of the great crises in music. Their usefulness to Schoenberg as he tried to erase the memory of another painter from his life also cannot be denied.

That, then, is the background for the Five Pieces for Orchestra. In 1909, the year he attacked canvas unrelentingly, Schoenberg also wrote several works that marked a turning point both in his career and in the direction of modern music: the Three Piano Pieces, op. 11; the Five Pieces for Orchestra; the one-act opera Erwartung; the song cycle The Book of the Hanging Gardens—every one a landmark, each a shock to the musical establishment.

The Five Pieces were written during the summer of 1909. In mid-July Schoenberg wrote to Richard Strauss, who had offered to look at some “not too long” pieces:

They are short orchestral pieces (duration from one to three minutes) without cyclic connection. So far I have three ready, a fourth can follow in a few days at most, and two or three others might come along later. . . . Since they are not a cycle one could easily perform just three or four. Three I should think would be the minimum for them not just to fizzle. The orchestration does not exceed the customary; the difficulty certainly does.

I believe it will really be impossible just to read the score. One would almost need

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<th>COMPOSED</th>
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<th>FIRST PERFORMANCE</th>
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<td>September 3, 1912; at a Promenade Concert in London, England</td>
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<th>INSTRUMENTATION</th>
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<tr>
<td>three flutes and two piccolos, two oboes and english horn, three clarinets, bass clarinet and contrabass clarinet, three bassoons and contrabassoon, six horns, three trumpets, four trombones and tuba, timpani, xylophone, tam-tam, cymbals, bass drum, triangle, harp, celesta, strings</td>
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<th>APPROXIMATE PERFORMANCE TIME</th>
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<th>FIRST CSO PERFORMANCES</th>
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<tr>
<td>October 31 and November 1, 1913, Orchestra Hall. Frederick Stock conducting (U.S. premiere)</td>
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<td>July 13, 1963, Ravinia Festival. Robert Craft conducting</td>
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<th>CSO PERFORMANCES, THE COMPOSER CONDUCTING</th>
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<th>MOST RECENT CSO PERFORMANCES</th>
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<td>June 28, 1974, Ravinia Festival. James Levine conducting</td>
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<td>October 21, 22, and 23, 2004, Orchestra Hall. Daniel Barenboim conducting</td>
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<td>September 17, 2005, Kultur- &amp; Kongresszentrum, Lucerne, Switzerland. Daniel Barenboim conducting</td>
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<th>CSO RECORDINGS</th>
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<td>1953. Rafael Kubelik conducting. Mercury</td>
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<td>1994. Daniel Barenboim conducting. Teldec</td>
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to take them on in blind faith. I do have tremendous confidence in them, especially with respect to sonority and atmosphere. And that is all they are about—absolutely not symphonic, completely the opposite, no architecture, no structure. Only a kaleidoscopic, uninterrupted changing of colors, rhythms, and moods.

Strauss wasn’t interested. “You know that I am glad to help and that I also have courage, but your pieces are such bold experiments in content and sound that for now I just dare not offer them to the more than conservative Berlin audience.” Undaunted, and probably not surprised, Schoenberg finished the pieces quickly—the fifth and last on August 11—and then waited three years to hear them performed. In the meantime, three of the pieces (the first, second, and fourth), were played in an arrangement for two pianos, eight hands, in Berlin early in 1912. Anton Webern was one of the pianists. The première took place in September 1912 in London, conducted by Sir Henry Wood, who remembered the occasion as one of two in his life when he was hissed.

Schoenberg’s music, even the richly romantic early pieces like Transfigured Night, had always caused trouble. As early as 1898, there was a disturbance after the performance of some of his songs, “and since then,” Schoenberg later said, “the scandal has never stopped.” The Five Pieces maintained this tradition perfectly.

Frederick Stock and the Chicago Symphony gave the first American performance of the Five Pieces on October 31, 1913. It was, in fact, the first orchestral music by Schoenberg played in this country. In the next day’s Chicago Examiner, the headline read: “CUBIST MUSIC IS HISSED AT ORCHESTRA HALL”; the subtitle: “Arnold Schoenberg’s Five Pieces Provoke Staid Audience to Demonstration.” In the Record-Herald, Felix Borowski, who was also the Chicago Symphony’s program annotator, recalled nervous laughter spreading through the hall. “Many listeners held their programs before their faces and shook convulsively.”

Understanding and acceptance can hardly have been expected of the Chicago public as it encountered musical revolution for the first time, for even some of Schoenberg’s staunchest allies, people also poised on the brink of modern music, were beginning to lose faith. That same year Richard Strauss wrote to Alma Mahler, “Only a psychiatrist can help poor Schoenberg now . . . He would do better to shovel snow instead of scribbling on music paper.” Strauss was, of course, confronting his own fears—by 1913 he had turned away from the blood-chilling music of his pioneering opera Elektra—written the same year as the Five Pieces—to the genteel charm of the eighteenth century in Der Rosenkavalier. The two men, who once stood together on the frontier, never spoke to each other again, literally or figuratively. In fact, in 1914, when Schoenberg was asked to say something to honor Strauss’s fiftieth birthday, he replied, “He is no longer of the slightest artistic interest to me, and whatever I may once have learned from him, I am thankful to say I misunderstood.”

By then Schoenberg understood that friendship and acceptance, not to mention more luxurious commodities like fame and fortune, were the price to be paid for following this rough new road. Even in 1945—his name by then as well known as any in serious music—his application for a Guggenheim grant was turned down.

When Schoenberg wrote the Five Pieces, he gave each one a number and a tempo marking—at the Chicago première that is how they were listed—but his publisher quickly asked for titles “for technical reasons,” as Schoenberg put it. In a diary entry, he continued:

. . . I’ve found titles which are at least possible. All in all don’t find the idea sympathetic. Because the wonderful thing about music is that you can say everything so that those who know understand everything and at the same time you haven’t given away those secrets that you don’t even admit to yourself. But titles give things away. Besides, the music has said whatever needs to be said. If words were necessary they’d be in there. But music still says more than words.

The titles Schoenberg provided don’t give anything away, though they still bothered him. Twice he changed the name of the third piece, from Chord Colorations to Colors to Summer Morning by a Lake (Colors).
Schoenberg calls for a very large orchestra, but he uses it much as Mahler does, writing for ever-shifting ensembles of soloists and reserving the entire force for rare moments. The first piece, *Presentiments*, in Schoenberg’s most explosive mood, spends much of its time—103 measures to be exact—over a single, unsettled chord. The climax is violent. *Things Past* is somber and reflective, a glance back at the music of an earlier, simpler time. D minor maintains a certain pull. This is beautiful and expressive music, yet we’re reminded of what Schoenberg said after first hearing Mahler’s Ninth Symphony in 1913: “It conveys an almost passionless embodiment of beauty perceptible only to those who can renounce animal warmth and feel at home in the coolness of the spirit.”

The most celebrated of the pieces, *Summer Morning by a Lake (Colors)*, begins with a single chord, *ppp*, which gradually and almost imperceptibly changes colors as instruments enter and exit. There’s an extraordinary stillness at the heart of this music, filled with delicate, sonorous events. It’s the quietest, subtlest of the Five Pieces, and in its own way the most revolutionary. Schoenberg had just finished *Summer Morning* when he wrote to Strauss of his confidence in the pieces’ sonority and atmosphere: “And that is all they are about.” But writing a composition entirely about color—with “no architecture, no structure”—was at that time as daring as anything Schoenberg could do.

*Peripeteia*, a word derived from Greek drama, implies sudden change, an unexpected reversal of fortune. The music is highly unstable, swinging wildly in mood and gesture toward a fierce climax. The last piece, *The Obbligato Recitative*, explores new ground with its continuously evolving melodic line, freed from traditional repetition and symmetry, and left to unfold in ever-new ways—an idea carried to its extreme a few weeks later in *Erwartung*.

Schoenberg painted only infrequently after the period of the Five Pieces for Orchestra. The climax of his career as a painter came in October 1910, with a one-man show of some forty oils. The critics were no more tolerant than the music press. “Now he paints,” one began. “From the first glance it is terrible. One recoils in horror.” Yet, where it mattered most, he found acceptance. In January 1911 he received a letter from the important Russian painter Vasily Kandinsky; it marked the beginning of a long friendship. At the 1910 show, three paintings were sold, all anonymously to Gustav Mahler, who, perhaps more than anyone, knew the young composer’s hardships and admired the courage of this tough, unloved, fearless pioneer.

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**Hector Berlioz**  
Born December 11, 1803; La Côte-Saint-André, France  
Died March 8, 1869; Paris, France

**Symphonie fantastique, Op. 14**

“I come now to the supreme drama of my life,” Berlioz wrote in his *Memoirs*, at the beginning of the chapter in which he discovers Shakespeare and the young Irish actress Harriet Smithson. “Shakespeare, coming up on me unawares, struck me like a thunderbolt,” he wrote after attending *Hamlet*, given in English—a language Berlioz did not speak—at the Odéon Theater on September 11, 1827. But it was Smithson appearing as Ophelia, and then four days later as Juliet, who captured his heart and set in motion one of the grandest creative outbursts in romantic art.

Berlioz began the *Symphonie fantastique* almost at once, and it immediately became a consuming passion. Throughout its composition, he was obsessed with Henriette, the familiar French...
name for her he had begun to use, even though they wouldn’t meet until long after the work was finished. On April 16, 1830, he wrote to his friend Humbert Ferrand that he had “just written the last note” of his new symphony, one of the most shockingly modern works in the repertoire and surely the most astonishing first symphony any composer has given us. “Here is its subject,” he continued, “which will be published in a program and distributed in the hall on the day of the concert.”

Then follows the sketch of a story as famous as any in the history of music: the tale of a man who falls desperately in love with a woman who embodies all he is seeking; is tormented by recurring thoughts of her, and, in a fit of despair, poisons himself with opium; and, finally, in a horrible narcotic vision, dreams that he is condemned to death and witnesses his own execution. Berlioz knew audiences well; he provided a title for each of his five movements and wrote a detailed program note to tell the story behind the music. A few days before the premiere, Berlioz’s full-scale program was printed in the *Revue musicale*, and, for the performance on December 5, 1830, two thousand copies of a leaflet containing the same narrative were distributed in the concert hall, according to Felix Mendelssohn, who would remember that night for the rest of his life because he was so shaken by the music. No one was unmoved. It is hard to know which provoked the greater response—Berlioz’s radical music or its bold story. For Berlioz, who always believed in the bond between music and ideas, the two were inseparable. In an often-quoted footnote to the program as it was published with the score in 1845, he insisted that “the distribution of this program to the audience, at concerts where this symphony is to be performed, is indispensable for a complete understanding of the dramatic outline of the work.” [Berlioz’s own program note appears on page 32 of our book.]

Even in 1830, the fuss over the program couldn’t disguise the daring of the music. Berlioz’s new symphony sounded like no other music yet written. Its hallmarks can be quickly listed: five movements, each with its own title (as in Beethoven’s *Pastoral Symphony*), and the use of a signature motif, the *idée fixe* representing Harriet Smithson that recurs in each movement and is transformed dramatically at the end. But there is no precedent in music—just three years after the death of Beethoven—for his staggeringly inventive use of the orchestra, creating entirely new sounds with the same instruments that had been playing together for years; for the bold, unexpected harmonies; and for

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**COMPOSED**

January–April 1830

**FIRST PERFORMANCE**

December 5, 1830; Paris, France

**INSTRUMENTATION**

two flutes and piccolo, two oboes and two English horns, two clarinets and E-flat clarinet, four bassoons,

four horns, two trumpets and two cornets, three trombones and two ophicleides (traditionally played by tubas), timpansi, snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, low-pitched bells, two harps, strings

**APPROXIMATE PERFORMANCE TIME**

56 minutes

**FIRST CSO PERFORMANCES**

December 2 and 3, 1892, Auditorium Theatre. Theodore Thomas conducting

July 20, 1943, Ravinia Festival. Efrem Kurtz conducting

**MOSC REC ordings**


1983. Claudio Abbado conducting. Deutsche Grammophon


1995. Daniel Barenboim conducting. Teldec

2010. Riccardo Muti conducting. CSO Resound

July 16, 2015, Ravinia Festival. Nikolaj Znaider conducting

July 16, 2015, Ravinia Festival. Nikolaj Znaider conducting

**FIRST CSO PERFORMANCES**

December 2 and 3, 1892, Auditorium Theatre. Theodore Thomas conducting

July 20, 1943, Ravinia Festival. Efrem Kurtz conducting

**MOST RECENT CSO PERFORMANCES**

December 5, 6, 7, 8, and 10, 2013, Orchestra Hall. Stéphane Denève conducting

July 16, 2015, Ravinia Festival. Nikolaj Znaider conducting

Harriet Smithson as Ophelia in Charles Kemble’s 1827 Paris production of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*
melodies that are still, to this day, unlike anyone else’s. There isn’t a page of this score that doesn’t contain something distinctive and surprising. Some of it can be explained—Berlioz developed his idiosyncratic sense of harmony, for example, not at the piano, since he never learned to play more than a few basic chords, but by improvising on the guitar. But explanation doesn’t diminish our astonishment.

None of this was lost on Berlioz’s colleagues. According to Jacques Barzun, the composer’s biographer, one can date Berlioz’s “unremitting influence on nineteenth-century composers” from the date of the first performance of the Symphonie fantastique. In a famous essay on Berlioz, Robert Schumann relished the work’s novelty; remembering how, as a child, he loved turning music upside down to find strange new patterns before his eyes, Schumann commented that “right side up, this symphony resembled such inverted music.” He was, at first, dumbfounded, but “at last struck with wonderment.” Mendelssohn was confused, and perhaps disappointed: “He is really a cultured, agreeable man and yet he composes so very badly,” he wrote in a letter to his mother. For Liszt, who attended the premiere—he was just nineteen years old at the time—and took Berlioz to dinner afterwards, the only question was whether Berlioz was “merely a talented composer or a real genius. For us,” he concluded, “there can be no doubt.” (He voted for genius.) When Wagner called the Symphonie fantastique “a work that would have made Beethoven smile,” he was probably right. But he concluded: “The first movement of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony would seem an act of pure kindness to me after the Symphonie fantastique.”
In fact, it was Berlioz’s discovery of Beethoven that prompted him to write symphonies in the first place. (There are two more which followed shortly: Harold in Italy in 1834 and Romeo and Juliet in 1839.) At the same time, Berlioz also seems to foreshadow Mahler, for whom a symphony meant “the building up of a world, using every available technical means.” The Symphonie fantastique did, for its time, stretch the definition of the symphony to the limit. But it didn’t shatter the model set by Beethoven. For it was a conscious effort on Berlioz’s part to tell his fantastic tale in a way that Beethoven would have understood, and to put even his most outrageous ideas into the enduring framework of the classical symphony.

At the premiere, Berlioz himself was on stage—playing in the percussion section, as he often liked to do—to witness the audience cheering and stomping in excitement at the end. Later, in his Memoirs, he admitted that the performance was far from perfect—“it hardly could be, with works of such difficulty and after only two rehearsals”—but that night he knew that he had the public in his camp, and that with the recent, coveted Prix de Rome under his belt, his career was about to skyrocket.

Phillip Huscher has been the program annotator for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra since 1987.

BERLIOZ’S PROGRAM NOTE FOR THE SYMPHONIE FANTASTIQUE

PART ONE: DREAMS—PASSIONS
The author imagines that a young musician, afflicted with that moral disease that a well-known writer calls the vague des passions, sees for the first time a woman who embodies all the charms of the ideal being he has imagined in his dreams, and he falls desperately in love with her. Through an odd whim, whenever the beloved image appears before the mind’s eye of the artist, it is linked with a musical thought whose character, passionate but at the same time noble and shy, he finds similar to the one he attributes to his beloved.

This melodic image and the model it reflects pursue him incessantly like a double idée fixe. That is the reason for the constant appearance, in every movement of the symphony, of the melody that begins the first Allegro.

PART TWO: A BALL
The artist finds himself in the most varied situations—in the midst of the tumult of a party, in the peaceful contemplation of the beauties of nature; but everywhere, in town, in the country, the beloved image appears before him and disturbs his peace of mind.

PART THREE: A SCENE IN THE COUNTRY
Finding himself one evening in the country, he hears in the distance two shepherds piping a ranz des vaches in dialogue. This pastoral duet, the scenery, the quiet rustling of the trees gently brushed by the wind, the hopes and fears, these ideas of happiness disturbed by black presentiments, form the subject of the Adagio. At the end, one of the shepherds again takes up the ranz des vaches; the other no longer replies.—Distant sound of thunder—loneliness—silence.

PART FOUR: MARCH TO THE SCAFFOLD
Convinced that his love is unappreciated, the artist poisons himself with opium. The dose of the narcotic, too weak to kill him, plunges him into a sleep accompanied by the most horrible visions. He dreams that he has killed his beloved, that he is condemned and led to the scaffold, and that he is witnessing his own execution.

The procession moves forward to the sounds of a march that is now somber and fierce, now brilliant and solemn, in which the muffled noise of heavy steps gives way without transition to the noisiest clamor. At the end of the march the first four measures of the idée fixe reappear, like a last thought of love interrupted by the fatal blow.

PART FIVE: DREAM OF A WITCHES’ SABBATH
He sees himself at the sabbath, in the midst of a frightful troop of ghosts, sorcerers, monsters of every kind, come together for his funeral. Strange noises, groans, bursts of laughter, distant cries which other cries seem to answer. The beloved melody appears again, but it has lost its character of nobility and shyness; it is no more than a dance tune, mean, trivial, and grotesque: it is she, coming to join the sabbath.—A roar of joy at her arrival.—She takes part in the devilish orgy.—Funeral knell, burlesque parody of the Dies irae [a hymn previously sung in the funeral rites of the Catholic Church], sabbath round-dance. The sabbath round and the Dies irae are combined.