Program

One Hundred Twenty-First Season

Chicago Symphony Orchestra
Riccardo Muti Music Director
Pierre Boulez Helen Regenstein Conductor Emeritus
Yo-Yo Ma Judson and Joyce Green Creative Consultant

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Thursday, September 23, 2010, at 8:00
Friday, September 24, 2010, at 8:00
Saturday, September 25, 2010, at 8:00
Tuesday, September 28, 2010, at 7:30

Riccardo Muti Conductor
Gérard Depardieu Narrator
Mario Zeffiri Tenor
Kyle Ketelsen Bass-baritone
Chicago Symphony Chorus
Duain Wolfe Director

Music by Hector Berlioz
Symphonie fantastique
Dreams—Passions (Largo—Allegro agitato e 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)

Intermission

Lélio, or the Return to Life
”The Fisherman,” Ballad by Goethe
Chorus of the Shades
Song of the Brigands
Song of Bliss—Hymn
The Aeolian Harp—Memories
Fantasy on Shakespeare’s The Tempest

Gérard Depardieu
Mario Zeffiri
Kyle Ketelsen
Chicago Symphony Chorus

First Chicago Symphony Orchestra performances

Supertitles by Hugh Macdonald

CSO Tuesday series concerts are sponsored by United Airlines.
Steinway is the official piano of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.
This program is partially supported by grants from the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency, and the National Endowment for the Arts.
This week, Riccardo Muti introduces the work Berlioz viewed as his signature artistic statement—the evening-long pairing of his most famous composition, the *Symphonie fantastique*, long a staple of our orchestra’s repertory, and its little-known sequel, *Lélio*, never before performed by the CSO. Berlioz wrote *Lélio* as the “conclusion and complement” of his *Symphonie fantastique*—the resolution of the earlier work’s tortured tale, a response to the symphony’s cliff-hanger ending, and, above all, a testament to the healing power of music. Together, they formed the *Episode in the Life of an Artist*—a daring mix of autobiography and fantasy, symphony and theater, music and literature, that is truly *sui generis*, a unique work of creative imagination and brazen self-expression.

Even during Berlioz’s lifetime, *Lélio* was rarely performed with its companion. And only once, in a performance staged by fellow pioneer Franz Liszt in 1855, did Berlioz see his complete dramatic work, the *Episode in the Life of an Artist*, presented as he envisioned it, with the symphony played on the first half, and then with a curtain drawn in front of the musicians as *Lélio* opens—to suggest that we are hearing the music of the artist’s imagination—and then raised for the *Lélio* finale, as music itself—the true subject and “hero” of the composition—takes center stage. This week’s performances of the *Symphonie fantastique–Lélio* double bill attempt to recreate the essence of Berlioz’s own concept—moving from the realm of instrumental drama in the first half to theater in the second, as an actor takes the stage to tell Berlioz’s tale, while a simple scrim separates reality and creative fantasy—and draws a temporary line between a modern-day Chicago audience and the daring sounds of Berlioz’s imaginary world.
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 repertory 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

**Composed**
between January and April 1830

**First Performance**
December 5, 1830, in Paris

**First CSO Performance**
December 2, 1892, Theodore Thomas conducting, at the Auditorium Theatre

**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), timpani, snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, low-pitched bells, two harps, strings

**Approximate Performance Time**
49 minutes

**CSO Recordings**

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**Hector Berlioz**
Born December 11, 1803, Côte-Saint-André, France.
Died March 8, 1869, Paris, France.
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 pages 26A–26B of our book.]

Even in 1830, the fuss over the program couldn’t disguise the daring of the music. Berlioz’s new

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. The passage from this state of melancholy reverie, interrupted by a few fits of groundless joy, to one of frenzied passion, with its gestures of fury, of jealousy, its return of tenderness, its tears, its religious consolations—this is the subject of the first movement.

**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 he has recently found some reason to entertain—all concur in affording his heart an unaccustomed calm, and in giving a more cheerful color to his ideas. He reflects upon his isolation; he hopes that his loneliness
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 motive, 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 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 will soon be over.—But what if she were deceiving him!—This mingling of hope and fear, 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 formerly sung in the funeral rites of the Catholic Church], *sabbath round-dance*. The sabbath round and the *Dies irae* are combined.
**GRANDE SALLE DU CONSERVATOIRE DE MUSIQUE.**

Dimanche 9 Décembre 1832, à une heure précise,

**GRAND CONCERT DRAMATIQUE,**

Donné par M. Hector Berlioz.

**PROGRAMME.**

| 1re. | RÉVERIES — PASSIONS. |
| 2e. | UN BAL. |
| 3e. | SCÈNE AUX CHAMPS. |
| 4e. | MARCHE DU SUPPLICE. |
| 5e. | SONGE D’UNE NUIT DU SABBAT. |

**LE RETOUR A LA VIE.**

| 1re. | MÉLOLOGUE, (mélange de musique et de discours) en six parties, faisant suite à la Symphonie fantastique ; paroles et musique de M. H. Berlioz. Le rôle parlé de l’artiste sera récité par M.|
| 2e. | MONOLOGUE DE L’ARTISTE. |
| 3e. | LE PÊCHEUR, Ballade imitée de Goethe, chantée, avec Piano seul, par M. A. Duvot. |
| 4e. | MONOLOGUE DE L’ARTISTE. |
| 5e. | CHOEUR D’OMBREES (avec Orchestre). |

**MONOLOGUE DE L’ARTISTE.**

| 1re. | SCÈNE DE LA VIE DE BRIGAND. |
| 2e. | Chant, Chœur et Orchestre ; le capitaine, chanté par M. H. Berlioz. |
| 3e. | MONOLOGUE DE L’ARTISTE. |
| 4e. | CHANT DE BONHEUR (avec Orchestre et Harpe), chanté par M. A. Duvot. |
| 5e. | MONOLOGUE DE L’ARTISTE. |
| 6e. | PANTASIE SUR LA TEMPÊTE. (Drame de Shakespeare) pour Chœur et Orchestre. |

L’Orchestre, composé de plus de 100 musiciens, sera dirigé par M. HABENECK.

Le Piano sera tenu par M. FESSY.

**PRIX DES PLACES**: Balcon, Stalles et Premières, 6 fr. — Secondes et Rés-de-Chaussée, 5 fr. — Parterre, 3 fr. — Amphithéâtre, 2 fr.

On trouvera des Billets chez M. Rémy, au Conservatoire ; M. Schlesinger, rue de Richelieu, no. 57 ; M. Puyel, boulevard Montmartre ; MM. Lemoine, rue de l’Échelle ; M. Mesnonier, rue Dunois ; M. Prey, place des Victoires.

**LA SALLE SERA ÉCLAIRÉE.**

VINCENT, fil et successeur de M. V. BALLARD
Imprimeur, rue J.-J. Rousseau, n° 1.
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 continued: “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.
Lélio, ou le retour à la vie (Lélio, or the return to life)

The idea of writing a sequel to the Symphonie fantastique was inspired not by Berlioz’s infatuation for Harriet Smithson, but by word that his real-life fiancée, Camille Moke, had dumped him for another man—the famous piano manufacturer Camille Pleyel. Berlioz got the news as he was on his way to Rome, to take up residence as the Prix de Rome scholar-ship winner. He was immediately plunged into another emotional crisis that would work itself out only through the creation of a new work of art, in which Camille Moke was quickly divested of her own identity and absorbed into the ongoing Smithson fantasy. (He also hatched a plan to murder the parties in question and to kill himself, a scheme that was wisely set aside, although he apparently did throw himself into the sea on a particularly bleak day in Genoa only to be rescued by bystanders who thought he had accidentally fallen from the city’s ramparts.)

Berlioz first mentioned his new composition on June 6, 1831, when he described it to his sister Adèle as “a work half music, half poetry.” By then, he had made the expeditious decision to take pieces of music he had recently composed and link them with theatrical monologues which he would write himself. “This is to be performed after the symphony and will make a complete concert.” The bulk of the work was finished in little more than a week. Berlioz called his new piece a mélologue, a conflation of the words monologue and melodrama that he borrowed from Thomas Moore’s “On National Music, A Melologue,” which he had read in a French translation.

Long before he decided to call the work Lélio, Berlioz had his title: The Return to Life. “The story begins after the ‘Dream of a Witches’ Sabbath,’” [the finale of the Symphonie fantastique] at the moment when the artist returns to life,” he wrote. Berlioz considered

**COMPOSED**
1831, revised 1855

**FIRST PERFORMANCE**
December 9, 1832, Paris

These are the first CSO performances

**INSTRUMENTATION**
actor, tenor, and bass-baritone soloists; four-part chorus; and an orchestra consisting of two flutes and piccolo, two oboes and english horn, two clarinets, four bassoons, four horns, two trumpets and two cornets, three trombones and ophicleide (traditionally played by tubal), side drums, bass drum, tam-tam, cymbals, harp, piano, strings
Lélio “the conclusion and complement” of the Symphonie fantastique, and the character of Lélio, a speaking role designed for a “first-rate dramatic actor,” is the same artist who is represented musically in the symphony. Lélio is more than just a sequel, however—it is a kind of tableau vivant, in which Berlioz’s tale is suddenly brought to life before our eyes, its essence no longer relegated to the printed program, but spoken and sung, with an actor on stage to portray the hero, who is, of course, Berlioz himself. The symphony has become a musical drama for soloists, chorus, and orchestra; the theater of Berlioz’s imagination is now the concert hall in which we sit.

The Symphonie fantastique and Lélio were first performed together on December 9, 1832—almost exactly two years to the day after the premiere of the symphony. The printed announcement for the double bill promised a “grand concert dramatique,” which was something of an understatement, given the extraordinary vision of Berlioz’s symphonic concept—only eight years after the premiere of Beethoven’s watershed Ninth Symphony. (Berlioz had seen the score to Beethoven’s work but hadn’t yet heard it performed.) Victor Hugo, Alexander Dumas, Franz Liszt, and Luigi Cherubini were in the audience, as was Harriet Smithson, who had unwittingly inspired the entire evening of music without knowing it. The next day, Berlioz reported to Adèle that the concert was an “extraordinary success” and that he was “covered with applause,” although the press response—Berlioz counted “twenty-one or twenty-two” reviews—ranged from rapture to outright hatred. Nonetheless, it was Lélio, not the Symphonie fantastique, that made Berlioz the darling of the avant-garde set in Paris, then the center of the musical world. As the Journal des débats reported after the premiere, “This young man has from this day forward an audience at his feet.”

The breakup with Camille generated the inspiration for Lélio, but, oddly, none of its music. For that, Berlioz turned to six independent works he had recently composed, convinced that the power and candor of the linking monologues would override the diversity of the musical numbers themselves. The first is a setting of Goethe’s ballad “The Fisherman,” composed in 1827 and scored—stunningly in this context—for just tenor voice and solo piano, with one brief interjection from the violins, playing the now-familiar idée fixe. Berlioz next turned to a choral reworking of Cleopatra’s haunting invocation to the Pharaohs from the cantata Cléopâtre he wrote for the Prix de Rome competition in 1829, which now becomes music for the ghost scene from Hamlet. This is followed by the brilliant, free-spirited Song of the Brigands for bass-baritone and male chorus, probably a new version of the lost “Chansons de pirates,” a setting of Victor Hugo from 1829. (It was while he was in Italy that Berlioz had adopted a kind of impetuous and carefree lifestyle he could not even
imagine when he lived in Paris.) The next two numbers are taken from *La mort d’Orphée*, Berlioz’s first submission for the Prix de Rome in 1827. The first, a gentle ode, is scored for tenor solo and orchestra, with lavish harp accompaniment. The second is a hushed Larghetto for orchestra alone. It is all the more moving because of its restraint, brevity, and breathtakingly eloquent clarinet solo. For his finale—the music that emerges from behind the curtain to speak directly to us—Berlioz turned to the elaborate Fantasy, for voices and orchestra, on Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* that he composed in 1830. The prominent piano part was inspired, in happier times, by the playing of Camille Moke (like “an army of fairies dancing on the keys”), although her original role, in Berlioz’s life and in this music, has now been completely erased by Berlioz’s belief in the power of Shakespeare, love and friendship, the consolations of art, and the restorative power of music.

Harriet Smithson finally entered Berlioz’s life in person on December 10, 1832, the day after the first performance of the complete *Episode in the Life of an Artist*. By coincidence, she was performing in Paris at the time—in another bizarre set of circumstances, she was staying in the same apartment on the rue Richelieu where Berlioz himself had lived before going to Rome, while he had taken up residence across the street, where she had once roomed. Berlioz had heard nothing of her whereabouts for two years. Now, through the intervention of a friend, Smithson was given a box-seat ticket to Berlioz’s concert, where she took in the astonishing story of Berlioz’s passion—all the while sitting a mere ten feet from the composer—without, as Berlioz later recounted, ever thinking “that the heroine of this strange and doleful drama might be herself.” But, after intermission, during the performance of *Lélio*, with its focus on Shakespeare, and in particular on Juliet and Ophelia, her most popular roles, Smithson suddenly began to suspect the improbable truth. “From that moment,” Berlioz wrote, “she felt the room reel about her; she heard no more but sat in a dream, and at the end returned home like a sleepwalker, hardly aware what was happening.” The next day, she and Berlioz came face to face for the first time. By mid-December they were romantically involved. “Yes, I love her,” Berlioz wrote to Liszt. “I love her and I am loved in return.” In February, he asked her to marry him, and she accepted. Despite strenuous family objections on both
The first page of Berlioz’s manuscript for the Fantasy on Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*
sides, they were wed on October 3, 1833. They weren’t even happy together for six years. A son, Louis, was born in August 1834; by the early 1840s, the couple had drifted apart. With her acting career over and her marriage crumbling, Harriet grew increasingly despondent. “Her state of mind is always deteriorating, her alarm and jealousy exceed belief,” Berlioz told Adèle. “I need an immense store of patience.” Harriet’s jealousy wasn’t unfounded—in 1842, Berlioz made a secret trip to Brussels with a young singer, Marie Recio, whom he had met the previous year—and Berlioz’s patience did eventually begin to wear out. “I don’t know how it will all end; yet it must come to an end,” he said in 1844. “My life is wrecked.” Later that year, he set up house with Marie, the relationship with Harriet by now almost as much a fiction as before they met.

In 1848, Harriet had a stroke from which she never recovered. She was eventually completely paralyzed. Berlioz was attentive and caring, visiting her regularly, and he began to take a new interest in their son, to whom he had previously been indifferent. Harriet died on March 3, 1854. After a respectable interval, Berlioz married Marie, who had been his companion for a dozen years. The day before their wedding, he finished writing his memoirs, in which the entire story of his remarkable love for Harriet Smithson is told in painstaking detail and Marie is not even mentioned once.

Phillip Huscher is the program annotator for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

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LÉLIO PRODUCTION CREDITS
Jason Brown, lighting designer
Patrick Sinozich, supertitle coordinator
Anya Plotkin, production stage manager
Scrim design and construction by Chicago Scenic Studios, Inc.