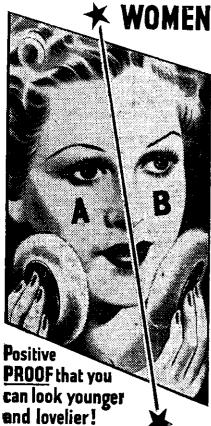
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STRANGE 66 FAUST 99 AGAIN BUT BY BERLIOZ

"Your Own Thoughts of Heaven and Hell"

"I am in wild spirits! Joy! By Heaven! Joy!" "Je suis foudroyé!" (Struck by

lightning.)

"I believe I have rarely attained to such a poignant truthfulness of melodic accent set in such a storm of sinister harmonies."

HIS is Berlioz speaking, in letters written to friends during his life, and the quotations illustrate the character of the musician.

He was excitable, nervous, temperamental, everything that the genius of tradition ought to beand he was a genius. He remains, in fact, the presiding genius of French music, holding a place in the art of that nation which Shakespeare holds in English drama, or Goethe in the German.

Early in his life he was struck by three "thunderbolts." The first was Shakespeare, the second Beethoven, and the third, Goethe. When first he saw Hamlet he was foudroyé. With Bee-thoven the same happened. But when Berlioz first encountered the works of Goethe he managed to write of the experience with a less tempestuous use of metaphor. He seems to have been as deeply affected, but not too com-pletely excited to permit the contact to inspire his own work.

All he could do when he saw the beautiful Irish Harriet Smithson in Hamlet was write for her what he called "a heart-rending farewell," which is called "Elegie" in his "Irlande" collection. He thought it might appeal to the more emotionally appreciative English or Germans, but for the French and Italians he had no hope—"such a piece is incomprehensible to the greatest part of the French, and absurd and mad to Italians."

First New Zealand Performance

But Goethe's "Faust" only gave him "a strange and profound impression."
Although "firmly resolved never to unite my feeble tones to your sublime ones," as he said in one of his flowery letters to him inevitably and was finally published, first as "Eight Scenes from lished, first as "Eight Scenes from Faust" (Opus 1), and later as the basis for one of his finest works, "The Damnation of Faust."

For New Zealand listeners the performance of this work by 2YA at 8 p.m. on Sunday, July 14, will open up almost a new world in music. It has not often been performed or played publicly in New Zealand, if at all, and, in fact, is not commonly heard outside the three European capitals of London, Paris and Berlin—and not often even

But it is music that stirs and excites far more vehemently than Gounod's. It is this comparison which will inevitably be made, since the NBS is deliberately

This article describes something of the tempestuous genius of Berlioz, the French composer, whose "Damnation of Faust" will be broadcast next week by 2YA in time for comparison with Gounod's interpretation of the same devilish theme. The writer explains how the same story is made to seem so different - by the genius of the greatest of French musicions



HECTOR BERLIOZ

broadcasting the Berlioz "Faust" just after the Centennial season of Gounod's

An "Out-of-Doors" Musician

The most musically deaf listener in the country will surely find in this piece something to attract attention. There is nothing mechanical about Berlioz, nothing of the drawing room or concert chamber; nothing even of the opera stage. He is an out-of-doors musician, if that metaphor may be used to convey some impression of the sweep and intensity and freedom of his feelings.

His story of "Faust" differs from Gounod's. For most listeners the most obvious difference will be that Berlioz closes his opera with Mephistopheles claiming Faust, while Gounod introduced this seeming climax very much earlier. In addition, Berlioz gives Faust an earlier meeting with the beautiful Marguerita. Another point of comparison will be found in Berlioz's use of the "Racckzy March" against Gounod's "Soldiers' Chorus."

Not To Be Compared

In effect, however, the two works are not to be compared. There is an intensity about Berlioz's music which is not felt even with Gounod's most magnificent lyrics and choruses.

The story, of course, is the same. This is the same "Faust" whose tale has been told up and down New Zealand during the last three months, and, in fact, every time an opera company has visited New Zealand.

It could easily become monotonous. Although it must be said that Gounod's work has survived an extraordinary amount of performing it has to be admitted that the NBS took a risk of dulling the theme by repetition in putting this item into the programmes next week.

But the risk is only obvious at first glance. With the music of Berlioz there is no risk of dullness or monotony. His genius gives the work an emotional intensity which will make it seem new, strange, and exciting beside the now familiar Gounod.

Beautiful ballet music, romantic love songs, brilliantly pictorial music for gnomes, sylphs, sprites, will-o-thewisps, and spirits of fire, tell this story. There is the "Song of the Flea" and the "Song of the Rat," Berlioz's entrancing "Within These Bowers," the aria sung by Mephistopheles when he has changed Faust into a young man, and leaves him to dream of Marguerita while he sleeps on a bed of roses.

The Ride to Hell

All these are "such stuff as dreams are made on," but it is the climax of The Ride to the Abyss" which will give to listeners their own real thoughts of hell and heaven.

"Upl" cries Mephisto, "Up! Up!" and as they ride to Hell on the two black horses Vortex and Giaour, Faust laments, the Devil rejoices at another stolen soul, frightened peasants pray as they fly past, the elements storm, and horrible phantoms show themselves --skeletons dangling beside the downward path, monstrous birds flapping about

At last the intensity of the music lessens.

It is almost a relief.

Faust is delivered into the flames, but not before he is given a vision of Marguerita welcomed into Heaven by a choir of angels.

For this performance of a great work by a great French composer, the singers and orchestra are most suitably all French. Marguerita is Mirielle Berthon, Faust is Jose de Trevi (both of the Paris Opera), Mephistopheles is Charles Panzera, and Brander is Louis Morturier, (both of the Opera Comique, Paris). The choruses are by the Choir of Saint-Gervais,