

Fantastic Berlioz

"HOW many great artists," wrote the late André Gide, "win their case only on appeal." For Hector Berlioz the appeal is not yet over, and though, by and large, invective has turned to reassessment, the romantic Berlioz legend with its amplification of faults and fictions will take a long time to die. "A tipsy chimpanzee" could have composed as well, wrote one critic while Berlioz was still alive—a comment that justified the composer's own remarks that criticism was living like a dog, "either biting or licking"; and he at least knew both aspects of it.

One composition that has provided unlimited ammunition for both those who like and those who dislike his music is the *Symphonie Fantastique*, a work which will be performed by the National Orchestra in a concert at the Lower Hutt Town Hall on Thursday, October 31.

This "Episode in an Artist's Life," in five parts, made its official appearance in Paris on December 5, 1830. In the programme the composer wrote that he had "aimed at developing from certain scenes what they contain that is musical."

There are five movements: *Appassionata*, *Waltz*, *Pastoral*, *Death March*, and *Witches' Dance*. "It is the final two movements that justify the title fantastic," writes Jacques Barzun, "and it was praise when the *Figaro* termed the entire work 'bizarre' and 'monstrous.' ... If to this day the *Witches' Dance* finale still seems modern and aptly monstrous, one can gauge its effect on eardrums unaccustomed to dissonance, clashing rhythms, and polytonality."

To have a work parodied, it has been said, is a sign of success—for the parody to be appreciated the original must be well known. Berlioz was accorded this compliment in a public parody of the *Symphonie Fantastique* only four years after its first official performance. "You will hear a grand Symphony," the audience were told, "An Episode in a Gambler's Life. To make my dramatic thoughts understood I have no need of words, singers, or scenery. All this, gentlemen, is in my orchestra. You will hear my hero speak. You will see him portrayed from head to foot, and at the second reprise of the first allegro, I will show you how he puts on his necktie. Ah, the wonders of instrumental music!"

Symphonie Fantastique (the second half of the concert at Lower Hutt) will be recorded and broadcast from YAs, 3YZ and 4YZ at 2.0 p.m. on Sunday, November 3. In the first part of this same concert (all YCs, 8.0 p.m., Thursday, October 31) the works to be heard are the Concerto for Piano and Orchestra in F Major, K.459, by Mozart (soloist David Galbraith); Sibelius's *Swan of Tuonela*, and the Overture to *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.

Also next week in a concert from the Auckland Town Hall (1YC, Saturday, November 2), the Australian soprano Glenda Raymond with other soloists, the Auckland Choral Society, and the Auckland String Players conducted by Ray Wilson, will present the Mozart Mass in C Minor for four solo voices, chorus, orchestra and organ.

In 1782, Mozart mentioned in a letter to his father that he was writing a choral work to celebrate his engagement to Constanze Weber, and that she would be given the main solo (soprano) part. The work (the Mass in C Minor) was, however, never completed; a strange fact when it is considered that this is probably the only major work



HECTOR BERLIOZ

that Mozart ever wrote for himself. One can only suppose that more urgent compositions (for which he would get paid) took prior place.

Besides Glenda Raymond, the other soloists taking part in this Mass are Mona Ross (mezzo-soprano), Maurice Larsen (tenor) and Donald McIntyre (bass); with Trevor Sparling at the organ. Also included in this programme of choral music is Vaughan Williams's *Serenade to Music*, and the seldom heard Beethoven Fantasia for piano, chorus and orchestra in which the solo piano part will be played by David Galbraith.

Opera by Walton

The fifth and last of the English opera series to be heard this month

from the YCs is Sir William Walton's *Troilus and Cressida*. This work was originally commissioned by the BBC and had its first performance at Covent Garden in November, 1954. Its success was immediate, and *Troilus and Cressida* went into the repertoires of companies all over the world. "For Italian tastes it is a singer's opera," wrote *The Times* music critic, "for German, a music-drama; for us it is English by origin and nature; for all it is universal in its address in the international language of dramatic music."

Christopher Hassall drew the libretto of *Troilus and Cressida* from Chaucer's narrative poem, but added many new ideas, notably in the delineation of the character of Cressida herself. Both Chaucer and Shakespeare leave her fate uncertain, in this opera version she commits suicide. Some of the musical highlights are the opening chorus in front of the Temple of Pallas, the orchestral interlude between the scenes of Act II, the great sextet, and the cumulative power of Cressida's closing scene before she stabs herself with Troilus's sword.

The performance, to be heard from all YCs at 8.0 p.m. on Tuesday, October 29, is by the Covent Garden Opera Chorus and Orchestra conducted by Sir Malcolm Sargent, with the following soloists: Richard Lewis (tenor) as Troilus, Magda Laszlo (soprano) as Cressida, Peter Pears (tenor) as Pandarus, and Geraint Evans (baritone) as Antenor.



EIGHT Symphonies by the 18th century composer William Boyce, and works by Rubbra, Hindemith, Dvorak, Malcolm Arnold, Larsson, Quincy Porter, Clive Douglas, and Douglas Lilburn will be heard in a series of eight programmes by the Alex Lindsay Orchestra which begin this week (9.35 p.m., Friday, October 25) from all YC stations. The soloist for the Rubbra work, "Medieval Latin Lyrics," is the baritone Donald Munro, and other soloists to be heard in the series are James Hopkinson (flute) in the Arnold Flute Concerto, and Ken Wilson (clarinet) in the same composer's Clarinet Concerto. The study of Alex Lindsay reproduced above is from a pen-and-ink sketch by R. J. Waghorn, of Wellington.

(Solution to No. 871)

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Clues Across

- Set China tea if your object is producing a condition of insensibility (11)
- Put me back to study an enemy cruiser (5).
- For a sprain I naturally take this (7).
- I'm no seer, but it's coming into view! (8).
- A group of players, but no company! (4).
- Unruffled French lake in a backward hollow (6).
- A baby one is not a child model (but probably hopes for a model child!) (6).
- "A bruised — shall he not break" (Isaiah, 42, 3) (4).
- Skill in devising expedients is part of what inspires our centennial celebrations (8).

"THE LISTENER" CROSSWORD

- Aiming crookedly to the east—just fancy! (7).
- The centre may be waged, and the whole may fix your wages (5).
- These waters are troubled for young lovers (11).
- Rigorous always in the south-east (6).
- A tree of greater age (5).
- Slight indication. (If not quite straight forward, it could even be thin.) (4).

Clues Down

- The broken heart of 2 across of which this is the singular form (5).
- You may get an adept deal from this scatter-brain (5, 4).
- So acting produces one who holds that there is no certain knowledge of anything but material phenomena (8).
- Flavour, as in a broken nose (6).
- You will find these springs distorted in a broken shop (4).
- Going up this hill-top is utter nonsense (3).
- Study the round trip in outline (7).
- These club men are enough to make a saint roar (9).
- If it weren't extinct, would this creature make a raid on us? (8).
- Allows to step back round an untidy border (7).
- Something to drink in an oriental eating-house (3).

No. 872 (Constructed by R.W.H.)

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