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## Herminie a performer's guide to Hector Berlioz's Prix de Rome cantata

Rosella Lucille Ewing

*Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College*

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*HERMINIE*  
A PERFORMER'S GUIDE TO HECTOR BERLIOZ'S  
*PRIX DE ROME CANTATA*

A Written Document  
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Musical Arts

in

The School of Music and Dramatic Arts

by  
Rosella Ewing  
B.A. The University of the South, 1997  
M.M. Westminster Choir College of Rider University, 1999  
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## DEDICATION

I wish to dedicate this document and my Lecture-Recital to my parents, Ward and Jenny. Without their unfailing love, support, and nagging, this degree and my career would never have been possible.

I also wish to dedicate this document to my beloved teacher, Patricia O'Neill. You are my mentor, my guide, my Yoda; you are the voice in my head helping me be a better teacher and singer. I can never thank you enough for your patience, wisdom, and support.

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I must acknowledge Dianne Frazer who accompanied the Lecture-Recital of this piece. Berlioz is never easy to play on the piano, even when he's writing for a "little bourgeois orchestra," and Dianne did a beautiful job. I also wish to thank Dr. Stephen Wilbur who assisted my rehearsals of this piece before the performance.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge Professor Dugg McDonough, who inspired me to come to LSU for my doctorate in the first place.

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## ABSTRACT

*Herminie* (1828) is a secular cantata which Hector Berlioz composed for the *Prix de Rome* competition on a libretto by Pierre-Angé Vieillard de Boismartin. This document begins by placing the composition of *Herminie* within the biographical context of Berlioz's life and musical output. It outlines the early education of Berlioz and discusses significant individuals and events which influenced his compositional style, as well as the rules, prizes, and expectations of the *Prix de Rome* competition. A discussion of the cantata libretto follows, including a comparison with the source of the text, the poem *Gerusalemme liberata*. Included in this discussion is a brief summary of the life of Torquato Tasso, author of *Gerusalemme liberata*, and other works inspired by this epic poem. This document also summarizes the musical form of the cantata, and examines how Berlioz highlighted the meaning of the text with his music. In addition, the document explores the musical themes from *Herminie* which Berlioz used in the *Symphonie fantastique* and the "Chant Sacré" of his *Neuf Mélodies irlandaises*, both composed in 1830. This document concludes with helpful information for the prospective performer; this includes an analysis of several available recordings of the work, a comparison of the two published editions, and a discussion of various vocal and artistic challenges.

## INTRODUCTION

Hector Berlioz has long been celebrated as, not only an innovative symphonist, but also the father of French *mélodie*. Early in his career, when he was studying composition at the Conservatoire in Paris, it was expected of young composers to vie for the *Prix de Rome* as a mark of their readiness and worthiness to pursue a professional career. The final step in this contest was the composition of an orchestrated cantata. In 1828, for his third attempt at the *Prix de Rome*, Berlioz composed the cantata *Herminie*, and won second place. Although the account of this composition in his *Memoires* suggests that he was trying to curb his instincts and follow the expectations of the conservative judges, this composition contains the germs of his genius in the areas of orchestration and vocal writing, as well as important musical themes which he borrowed for later compositions.

The first chapter of this paper places this composition in historical and biographical context by detailing Berlioz's family situation, previous education, early influences, and his teachers and critics at the Conservatoire. In the year preceding the composition of *Herminie*, Berlioz encountered three entities which would prove to be tremendous influences on the rest of his life and his work: the plays of William Shakespeare, performances and scores of the symphonies of Beethoven, and an enchanting young actress named Harriet Smithson. The immediate and enduring effect of these influences is detailed in Chapter One. The *Prix de Rome* with its history, rules, and expectations, as well as the complex judging procedure, is also discussed. This discussion is followed by a summary of Berlioz's earlier and later attempts for the prize. Chapter One concludes with Berlioz's story of how, despite its rejection by many persons of the musical establishment, *Herminie* received second place, thanks to the support of the other artists of the Académie des Beaux Arts.

Chapter Two examines the text of *Herminie*, starting with a brief biography of Torquato Tasso, the author of *Gerusalemme Liberata*, the source of the story. *Gerusalemme Liberata* is a baroque epic poem about the First Crusade. Tasso's biographical sketch is followed by a summary of that epic poem and a more in-depth look at Herminie's story and character. Very little information is available about the librettist Pierre-Ange Vieillard de Boismartin; the discussion of his career and other works is, therefore, brief. Chapter Two includes a discussion of the text of the cantata and a comparison of that text with Canto Six of *Gerusalemme Liberata*, from which the cantata episode is taken. It concludes with some thoughts on Herminie's character and the internal struggle between love and duty which she undergoes at this point in the narrative (which is the crux of the cantata text). Finally, Chapter Two contains a comparison of the character Erminia in Tasso's poem and Herminie in the cantata text.

Chapter Three explores the other aspect of Berlioz's *Herminie*: the music itself. It begins with a musical analysis, which is followed by an analysis of the text setting. In this analysis, I have commented on the changes Berlioz made to Boismartins' text, specifically noting how he highlighted specific words and phrases. The third section of Chapter Three explores the recurring musical theme Berlioz used, and how he transforms it through the piece. One interesting aspect of studying the early works of Berlioz is his tendency to reuse material from these works in later, better known works. He reworked the *Prière* from the third aria of *Herminie* into the "Chant Sacré" of his *Neuf Mélodies irlandaises* (1830). More importantly, an early version of the *idée fixe* from the *Symphonie Fantastique* (1830) is used as a recurring theme in *Herminie*; its first appearance is as the opening theme of the orchestral introduction. Chapter Three concludes with an examination of the similarities and differences in these musical materials.

Since this paper is entitled “A Performer’s Guide,” Chapter Four addresses the vocal challenges for the performer. In addition to reviewing and summarizing the information that a performer will find most useful, such as where the music enhances or belies the content of the text, Chapter Four discusses several technical challenges I encountered in preparing this piece. These include breathing, dynamics, phrasing, and coordination with the accompanist. Many sources remark upon the preponderance of directions about mood, style, and tempo, as well as the unrealistic metronome markings. Therefore, Chapter Four includes a discussion of some appropriate alternatives, including those used in various recordings by respected artists including Dame Janet Baker. Finally, stylistic options and factors in the emotional journey of the cantata are discussed in Chapter Four. Appendices to this paper include an original translation, with a transcription of the text in the International Phonetic Alphabet, and a discography.

## CHAPTER ONE

### BIOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT

Hector Berlioz's place among the innovators of the Romantic symphony and French *mélodie* is undeniable. One of his early compositions, *Herminie*, an orchestrated cantata for the *Prix de Rome* competition, contains many youthful seeds of his genius for orchestration and vocal writing. In order to appreciate these elements, one must first be familiar with Berlioz's musical education, the conservative predilection of the judges for the *Prix de Rome*, and the radically transforming elements which were influencing the impressionable young man.

#### **Early Education and Enrollment at the Conservatoire**

Louis-Hector Berlioz was born in December of 1803 in La Côte-Saint-André, a small town over 300 miles southeast of Paris. His father, Louis-Joseph, was a medical doctor who intended Hector to follow in his footsteps. An "intelligent and methodical" man, Louis-Joseph was responsible for most of Hector's early education.<sup>1</sup> Louis-Joseph taught Hector languages, geography, and anatomy, as well as the rudiments of music with the help of Hector's uncle, Félix Marmion, an amateur singer and violinist.<sup>2</sup>

As a child, Hector's exposure to music was very limited. According to David Cairns, music in La Côte in the early 1800's

was part of the background of life, but largely in popular, unsophisticated forms: church litanies, the horns of the hunt, the shepherds' pipes, the fife-and-drum music to which the schoolchildren marched at the seminary down the road, the folk-tunes sung by the labourers in the fields and the women at their household chores. ... The contemporary French romance – that amiable, sentimental genre, traces of whose popular origins survived in its gently lilting dance rhythms – marked the limit of sophistication in the everyday musical culture of La Côte. Songs extracted from the operas-comiques of Grétry, Dalayrac, Boieldieu and

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Bloom, *The Life of Berlioz* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 11.

<sup>2</sup> David Cairns, *Berlioz: the Making of an Artist 1803-1832*, Rev. ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 67.

lesser practitioners were purchased or copied for the entertainment of the salon or adapted for the ballroom (and ... for the church).<sup>3</sup>

In 1817, a Monsieur Imbert became a music teacher in the small town of La Côte. He had been second violinist in one of Lyon's theaters, and also played the clarinet. He moved to La Côte to conduct the band of the National Guard and to give private voice and instrument lessons to some of the wealthier families. Imbert came to the Berlioz house every day and taught young Hector. Monsieur Imbert formed a quartet with Félix Marmion and two other string players in the town; the quartet played a string quartet by Ignaz Playel, which was possibly the most sophisticated music to which Berlioz was exposed during his childhood and adolescence. Later he discovered a few songs from Gluck's *Orphée* arranged with guitar accompaniment in his father's library. Certainly, Hector never heard any orchestra music or saw any opera productions. But his interest in music was undeniable. When Imbert arrived in the spring of 1817, Hector was 13 and had taught himself to play a type of recorder. Imbert taught him how to sing, to play the flute, and to sight-read music. With Imbert's instruction, Berlioz improved enough to play virtuoso concertos by Drouet, who had been a flautist at the court of Napoleon.<sup>4</sup>

In 1818 Monsieur Imbert was replaced by François-Xavier Dorant who gave guitar lessons to Hector and his younger sister Nancy for a full year. Dorant encouraged young Hector in his first forays into composition. Near the end of 1818, Berlioz began to form the conviction that he would become a composer. This conviction was "an act of faith, sustained by the imagination," and a piece of manuscript paper with 24 staves on it.<sup>5</sup> It was also aided by Michaud's *Biographie universelle* in which Berlioz read the articles about the lives and works of famous composers; he was inspired by descriptions of their symphonies and operas. He had had

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<sup>3</sup> Cairns, 67.

<sup>4</sup> Cairns, 67, 70-71, 75.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 80.

no instruction in composition, although he had tried to read Rameau's *Elémens de musique théorique et pratique* which assumed the reader already possessed some knowledge of music theory, and was therefore incomprehensible to Hector. But he was undeterred. After borrowing the parts for the string quartet by Pleyel and writing them out as a score, which he studied using Catel's *Treatise on Harmony*, he succeeded in composing a few chamber pieces. In the spring of 1819, he wrote to two Paris publishers in an attempt to get these pieces published. Presumably, the response was negative.<sup>6</sup>

It would be inaccurate to say that Louis-Joseph never encouraged his son's musical talent; after all, he paid for music lessons and instruments. However, he was determined that Hector should be a doctor. Hector moved to Paris in 1821 and enrolled in the Faculty of Medicine according to his father's wishes. He even passed the exam at the end of two years and earned the *bachelier-ès-sciences physiques*. But he never practiced medicine, despite his family's unwavering objections to a musical career. His mother considered any career linked to the theater one "that leads to disgrace in this world and damnation in the next."<sup>7</sup> During the two years of medical school, Berlioz learned as much as he could about musical composition by attending the opera (where he assimilated all the elements of dramatic music), and by copying out the works of his favorite composers in the library of the Conservatoire, then called the *École royale de musique*.<sup>8</sup>

Berlioz's earliest musical heroes were Spontini, Salieri, and especially Gluck, whom he idolized. A year before he finally enrolled in the Conservatoire to begin his formal training in August of 1826, he became a private pupil of Jean-François Lesueur. Before working with

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 77-80.

<sup>7</sup> Hector Berlioz, *The Memoirs of Hector Berlioz*, trans. David Cairns (New York: Knopf, 2002), 39.

<sup>8</sup> Bloom, *Life of Berlioz*, 13, 15, 20.



Lesueur almost all of Berlioz's early music (except those first chamber pieces) was strophic song, and much of that is now lost.<sup>9</sup> One notable exception was his cantata on the poem "The Arab Horse" by Millevoye, which he showed to Lesueur in order to become one of his students.<sup>10</sup> When he finally entered the Conservatoire, Berlioz was "a well-prepared young musician, tutored and self-taught, seeking experience, refinement, and a passport to a professional career."<sup>11</sup> When it was clear that further training in counterpoint was also necessary, Berlioz enrolled in Antonin Reicha's counterpoint and fugue course in October that same year. He studied for two years with Reicha and four years with Lesueur.<sup>12</sup>

Jean-François Lesueur was chapel master for the Bourbon monarchs, as he had been for Napoleon before them.<sup>13</sup> His musical style was essentially Classical, though David Cairns writes that he was "the source of certain [Romantic] stylistic features which in our ignorance of his work we think of as originating with Berlioz."<sup>14</sup> Cairns describes Lesueur's grand operas as being "proto-Romantic," especially *La mort d'Adam* which united diverse performing arts, used "recurring motifs" and had an "epic scope."<sup>15</sup> However, Lesueur was far from the "feared and envied innovator" he had been; when Berlioz met him, at the age of sixty-two, he had become fairly conservative and was scarcely remembered for his theater compositions.<sup>16</sup> This did not stop Lesueur and Berlioz from developing a very close relationship; the older composer confided the stories of his early struggles and later honors to his young student.<sup>17</sup> Lesueur was sympathetic to Berlioz's plight with his family; he even wrote to Dr. Berlioz and implored him

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<sup>9</sup> Julian Rushton, *The Music of Berlioz* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 8.

<sup>10</sup> Berlioz, *Memoirs*, 24.

<sup>11</sup> Bloom, *Life of Berlioz*, 24.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 16-18, 21, 22.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>14</sup> Cairns, *Berlioz 1803-1832: The Making of an Artist*, 234.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 234.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 117.

<sup>17</sup> Berlioz, *Memoirs*, 26.

not “to oppose the God-given vocation of a son who ‘oozed music at every pore.’”<sup>18</sup>

Unfortunately, this had little influence on Berlioz’s father. Berlioz’s respect and love for his former teacher never faltered, despite Lesueur’s reaction to Beethoven which eventually led Berlioz to view his harmonic theories as antiquated.<sup>19</sup> One of the first compositions written under the influence of Lesueur was the *Messe solennelle* which was performed, despite a disastrous first rehearsal, in July of 1825.<sup>20</sup> Parts of the *Symphonie fantastique*, the Requiem, *Benvenuto Cellini*, and the Te Deum were derived from this early Mass.<sup>21</sup>

Berlioz entered the Conservatoire only after his first attempt at the *Prix de Rome* failed to get him past the initial fugal exercise. Although skeptical at first, Berlioz soon began to appreciate that Antonin Reicha’s instruction in counterpoint was, in fact, something he needed.<sup>22</sup> Antonin Reicha was a contemporary of Beethoven and had been a fellow-student in Bonn, before he came to France.<sup>23</sup> Berlioz describes him as “admirable” and “extremely clear.” Reicha greatly valued his knowledge of mathematics and its applications to music, and enjoyed “abstract permutations and elaborate musical jokes.”<sup>24</sup> In Berlioz’s opinion, Reicha was “all for progress in certain branches of music,” but he realized that Reicha “conformed to routine even while despising it.”<sup>25</sup> As a teacher, Reicha was very devoted to his students’ success.<sup>26</sup> Berlioz learned a great deal from Reicha, whose influence can be seen in the fugal passages of Berlioz’s works, as well as in the general polyphonic nature of his music.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Cairns, 128.

<sup>19</sup> *Memoirs*, 25, 82-3.

<sup>20</sup> Bloom, *Life of Berlioz*, 22.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>22</sup> Cairns, 214.

<sup>23</sup> Berlioz, *Memoirs*, 48.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 48-49.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>27</sup> Cairns, 214-125.

Even before enrolling in the Conservatoire, Berlioz had the misfortune to make a bad impression upon its new director, Luigi Cherubini. Cherubini was the composer of more than two dozen Italian and French operas; moreover, Beethoven considered him to be a composer of the same stature of Haydn and Mozart.<sup>28</sup> As director, Cherubini worked hard to improve the school, by increasing the faculty, renovating the building, and purchasing new equipment.<sup>29</sup> Cherubini also felt that the number of students should be reduced and only French citizens should be allowed to enroll.<sup>30</sup> Another of Cherubini's edicts declared that men and women should use different entrances on opposite sides of the library building. Berlioz was not yet enrolled at the time this rule was instituted, but frequented the library to study scores. He unintentionally broke this rule and entered by the "female" door.<sup>31</sup> Berlioz later related the ensuing confrontation most amusingly in his *Memoirs*, duplicating Cherubini's Italian accent and enraged stammering. Berlioz's impudent answer to Cherubini's demand to know his name caused the irate director to chase him around the library "knocking over stools and reading-desks in a vain attempt to catch [him]."<sup>32</sup> Berlioz escaped, and fled with the retort that Cherubini would not have him or his name but that he would "soon be back to study Gluck's scores."<sup>33</sup> When he was later "officially introduced" to Cherubini, Berlioz was not sure whether the great man remembered this incident.<sup>34</sup> However, it is clear that Cherubini did not approve of Berlioz's style of music and particularly his affinity with Beethoven. He therefore opposed Berlioz's promotion in many future encounters, including his repeated attempts at the *Prix de Rome*.

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<sup>28</sup> Bloom, *Life of Berlioz*, 18.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 18, 20.

<sup>31</sup> Berlioz, *Memoirs*, 34.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 36.

Berlioz in his turn felt that, as a teacher, Cherubini was “narrow and hidebound.”<sup>35</sup> Berlioz disagreed with Cherubini’s “canonization of fugue” as fundamental to all composition, and his “general insistence on the sanctity of the ‘rules.’”<sup>36</sup>

### **Musical and Extra-Musical Influences**

One of the earliest musical influences in Berlioz’s life was C.W. von Gluck, whom he encountered through his biography and scores before he ever heard one of his operas performed. Despite this limited exposure, Berlioz based his aesthetic model of drama on Gluck’s works. Gluck was a fundamental entity in Berlioz’s decision to become a composer. Shortly before he composed *Herminie*, Berlioz encountered three other entities which would affect his life and music as greatly as his worship of Gluck; these were the music of Beethoven, the dramatic works of Shakespeare, and a young actress named Harriet Smithson. The immediate and lasting influences of these entities will be examined in the following sections.

Berlioz first encountered the music of Gluck through several of the arias from his *Orphée* arranged for guitar accompaniment which Berlioz discovered in his father’s library.<sup>37</sup> However, it wasn’t until he read the article about Gluck in Michaud’s *Biographie universelle* that he discovered that composer’s “heroic efforts to emancipate himself from the vain and frivolous conventions of Italian opera,” and his determination to create a “new, more austere and grander, unified art based on the principle of fidelity of dramatic expression.”<sup>38</sup> Berlioz was deeply moved by Gluck’s devotion to “dramatic truth” and he adopted this aesthetic as his own.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Cairns, 214.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Cairns, 67.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 82.

When he first arrived in Paris, Berlioz's first experience at the opera was a production of Salieri's *The Danaïads* which excited him because, as he writes, "I discerned, imitated by Salieri, all the characteristics of Gluck's style as I had conceived it from the pieces from his *Orphée* in my father's library."<sup>40</sup> Three weeks after his arrival in Paris, Berlioz was at last able to witness his idol's work in performance when *Iphigénie en Tauride* played at the Opéra on November 26, 1821.<sup>41</sup> It was this performance that confirmed Berlioz in his conviction "that in spite of father, mother, uncles, aunts, grandparents, friends, I would be a musician."<sup>42</sup> When he discovered that the Conservatoire library was open to anyone, Berlioz writes that "the desire to go there and study the works of Gluck, for which I already had an instinctive passion but which were not then being performed at the Opéra, was too strong for me."<sup>43</sup> He spent April of 1824 copying the score of *Iphigénie en Tauride* and "annotating it with enthusiastic comments."<sup>44</sup>

As greatly as Berlioz revered Gluck and what he called "high dramatic music," so did he despise Rossini and the Italian school of opera. He saw Rossini's style as "diametrically opposed" to what he admired about Gluck.<sup>45</sup> In his objections to Rossini, Berlioz cites what he calls "Rossini's melodic cynicism, his contempt for dramatic expression and good sense, his endless repetition of a single form of cadence, his eternal puerile crescendo and brutal bass drum."<sup>46</sup> Unfortunately, Berlioz tended to regard "Mozart with a certain coolness" as well, "since *Don Giovanni* and *Figaro* ... were always done at the Italian Opera, by Italians, in Italian. Therefore they belonged to the Italian school, and were guilty by association."<sup>47</sup> In addition, his

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<sup>40</sup> *Memoirs*, 22.

<sup>41</sup> Cairns, 105.

<sup>42</sup> *Memoirs*, 23.

<sup>43</sup> *Memoirs*, 23.

<sup>44</sup> Cairns, 151.

<sup>45</sup> *Memoirs*, 51-52.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 52

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

first encounter with *The Magic Flute* had been in the “travestied form of *The Mysteries of Isis*” as arranged by Lachnith,<sup>48</sup> and he writes that he had come across “a passage in Donna Anna’s music in which Mozart has unhappily written a most deplorable vocalise ... I could not help feeling that his dramatic principles were not to be trusted, and my enthusiasm sank almost to zero.”<sup>49</sup> In his words, “the dramatic works of this great composer had presented themselves in a bad light. It was some years before more favourable conditions enabled me to appreciate their charm and lovely perfection.”<sup>50</sup> Weber, on the other hand, Berlioz found delightful; he had a free pass to the *Odéon* pit so he attended as many performances as he could of Weber’s *Der Freischütz* (translated and severely truncated as *Robin des bois*).<sup>51</sup> As Berlioz’s first introduction to German Romanticism, Weber’s music was very different than that to which he was accustomed. As he heard and studied more of Weber’s music, his fascination with it intensified.<sup>52</sup> Weber was merely a prelude to the effect Beethoven had upon the impressionable young composer.

On February 15, 1828, the Conservatoire Orchestra and its Société des Concerts were founded.<sup>53</sup> Prior to this, the only venue for orchestral music had been rare concerts given by the *Opéra* orchestra which Berlioz described as “an inadequate orchestra [playing] on a stage far too large and acoustically unsuitable.”<sup>54</sup> The first concert of the Société des Concerts on March 9 began with Beethoven’s *Eroica* symphony; on April 13 the concert featured his Fifth Symphony.<sup>55</sup> In the hands of the Conservatoire Orchestra, these symphonies “were performed

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 65-67, 70.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 69-70.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 70.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 61.

<sup>52</sup> Cairns, 194.

<sup>53</sup> *Memoirs*, 80.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 80.

with a flawlessness and fire that kindled the imaginations of all who heard them,” not the least of which was the impressionable young Berlioz.<sup>56</sup> He writes, “Beethoven opened before me a new world of music, as Shakespeare had revealed a new universe of poetry.”<sup>57</sup> While many were excited by this novelty, Beethoven became a fundamental example for Berlioz.<sup>58</sup> Berlioz’s enthusiasm for Beethoven did not go unnoticed by Lesueur. Lesueur avoided going to hear Beethoven’s symphonies for as long as he could; when he finally did attend, he sat in the back near no one he knew.<sup>59</sup> Immediately after hearing Beethoven’s Fifth, Lesueur was flustered and moved; but later when Berlioz finally got him to talk about it his reply was disappointing to his student: “That sort of music should not be written.”<sup>60</sup> It was this “dogged refusal to accept the evidence of his senses” which finally led Berlioz to break away from Lesueur’s theories and make his own path – a fact which, out of respect, he tried to hide from his revered teacher.<sup>61</sup> Beethoven became the most powerful influence in the new path of composition which Berlioz took.<sup>62</sup> But the form this influence took was inspirational rather than imitative: Berlioz adopted Beethoven’s “harmonic freedom, the emancipation of the timpani, the combination of different rhythms and meters, and ... melodic disintegration. ... But the formal processes are quite different.”<sup>63</sup> Certainly, for Berlioz the most influential and inspirational aspect of Beethoven’s music was how he increased the expressive possibilities of the symphony and expanded the bounds of form.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Bloom, 18.

<sup>57</sup> *Memoirs*, 80.

<sup>58</sup> Bloom, 18.

<sup>59</sup> *Memoirs*, 81.

<sup>60</sup> *Memoirs*, 82.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

<sup>62</sup> David Cairns, “Berlioz and Beethoven,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Berlioz*, ed. Peter Bloom (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000 ), 224.

<sup>63</sup> Cairns, “Berlioz and Beethoven,” 226.

<sup>64</sup> Cairns, *Berlioz, The Making of an Artist*, 235.

It may seem strange to us that someone who so admired the Classical composer Gluck could be so moved and influenced by the Romantic Beethoven. Berlioz wrote an article in 1830 entitled “A summary of Classical Music and Romantic Music” which might help to clarify his view. In the article, he makes the distinction between “what is dead and what is alive and vital.”<sup>65</sup> His thesis was that Romantic and Classical music differ not in “period” but in “attitude;” that Romantic music is “true to itself, not being hampered by preconceived rules.”<sup>66</sup> Berlioz describes Beethoven’s orchestral compositions as “a completely new style on an unprecedented scale.”<sup>67</sup> But he concludes that Gluck was also a Romantic; “the first composer to break the chains of academicism and throw off the still more burdensome yoke of routine.”<sup>68</sup> For Berlioz, the measure of what constituted Romantic music was “truth of expression ... and its necessary condition, the liberty of the artist.”<sup>69</sup> This was the creed by which he lived, which was to shape all his works to come.

A London theater company led by Charles Kemble came to Paris in the late summer of 1827 to perform translations of Shakespearean plays at the *Odéon*.<sup>70</sup> Although this was “Shakespeare abridged and expurgated,” the young French Romantics were enthralled.<sup>71</sup> Shakespeare became their guide to “liberate French art from the shackles of Classicism.”<sup>72</sup> As David Cairns describes their enthusiasm as follows:

Shakespeare confirmed and gave sovereign authority to their conviction that, the subject of art being life and the limits of art those of existence itself, drama and poetry could not be confined to prescribed patterns but must be free to follow their own impulse and in each instance find the form proper to them. To the

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 236.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> *Memoirs*, 81.

<sup>68</sup> Cairns, 236.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 242.

<sup>71</sup> Bloom, 43.

<sup>72</sup> Cairns, 242.



Romantics, chafing under the prohibitions of academic art, he came as a saviour, bringing the new wine of a long-awaited revelation.<sup>73</sup>

The audience included artists such as Hugo, Dumas, Delacroix, Vigny, and Nerval; they all exulted in the dramatic contrasts of Shakespeare.<sup>74</sup> Everything about the Shakespeare plays moved and excited the Romantic artists: “the vast range of feeling and mood, the total flexibility of poetic style, the truthfulness to life and the uninhibitedness with which it was expressed, the mixing of genres which French theory held to be eternally separate ... and the liberating freedom of form.”<sup>75</sup>

Berlioz was profoundly affected by his experience of Shakespeare. In his *Memoirs* he writes:

Shakespeare, coming upon me unawares, struck me like a thunderbolt. The lightning flash of that sublime discovery opened before me at a stroke the whole heaven of art, illuminating it to its remotest depths. I recognized the meaning of dramatic grandeur, beauty, truth. At the same time I saw the utter absurdity ... and the pitiful narrowness of our own worn-out academic, cloistered traditions of poetry.<sup>76</sup>

He, like the other Romantics, identified above all with Hamlet, with his doubts and desires.<sup>77</sup>

Berlioz saw Shakespeare as “the interpreter of my life.”<sup>78</sup>

But the revelation of Shakespeare is inextricably connected for Berlioz with his first impression of Harriet Smithson, whose beauty and grace enchanted him. He first saw her in the role of “Ophelia” in the September 11<sup>th</sup> production of *Hamlet* in 1827. Afterwards he was drawn back to see her as “Juliet” on the 15<sup>th</sup> and “Desdemona” on the 18<sup>th</sup>.<sup>79</sup> He wrote that “The impression made on my heart and mind by her extraordinary talent, nay her dramatic genius,

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 243.

<sup>74</sup> Bloom, 43.

<sup>75</sup> Cairns, 243-244.

<sup>76</sup> *Memoirs*, 70-71.

<sup>77</sup> Cairns, 243.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 243.

<sup>79</sup> Bloom, 43.

was equaled only by the havoc wrought in me by the poet she so nobly interpreted.”<sup>80</sup> Harriet Smithson, who had never been considered a leading lady in England, soon became an even greater phenomenon in France than the Shakespearean plays which introduced her.<sup>81</sup> She was universally admired for “the clarity and musicality of her diction ... the variety and originality of her mime, ... [and] the sense of total identification with the character.”<sup>82</sup> But for Berlioz, Miss Smithson became an obsession. He experienced the pangs of unrequited love, from his initial encounter with her acting in September 1827 until early spring in 1830; his longing for her prevented him from concentrating on composition.<sup>83</sup> He would roam the streets of Paris, unable to sleep or work, oppressed by “a feeling of intense, overpowering sadness.”<sup>84</sup> In his mind “the actress personified the poet whose divine interpreter she was: worship of the artist and worship of the art, as he acknowledged, were deeply interfused, each intensifying the other.”<sup>85</sup> Berlioz himself called this episode and its consequences “the supreme drama of my life.”<sup>86</sup>

### **Prix de Rome**

From 1827 through 1830, during this period of emotional and artistic upheaval, Berlioz competed in the annual *Prix de Rome*. He realized, even before entering the Conservatoire, that in order to become a successful composer, in order to have any of his compositions performed at the Opéra or Opéra Comique, he would need to win this competition if only for the prestige. The *Prix de Rome* was hosted by the Académie des Beaux-Arts, not the Conservatoire, and had only included a musical category since 1803. Although in the eyes of the establishment, winning this prize was the only way to become a professional composer, few of the winners became notable

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<sup>80</sup> *Memoirs*, 70.

<sup>81</sup> Cairns, 248. *Memoirs*, 73.

<sup>82</sup> Cairns, 249.

<sup>83</sup> Bloom, 44. *Memoirs*, 637.

<sup>84</sup> *Memoirs*, 71.

<sup>85</sup> Cairns, 251.

<sup>86</sup> *Memoirs*, 70.

composers (those few include Ambroise Thomas, Charles Gounod, Georges Bizet, Jules Massenet, and Claude Debussy), and many who failed to win became as distinguished as those who succeeded (some of those include César Franck, Édouard Lalo, Emmanuel Chabrier, Camille Saint-Saëns, and Maurice Ravel).<sup>87</sup>

Berlioz was quite cynical about the rules of the *Prix de Rome* and satirized them in his *Memoirs*, but Julian Rushton maintains that “as a test of skill and imagination in dramatic composition [the rules were] fair enough, and were taken seriously by [Berlioz’s] less rebellious rivals.”<sup>88</sup> The preliminary test of the *Prix de Rome*, the *concours d’essai* (“essay contest”), consisted of composing a fugue on a given subject, which was judged by the musicians of the Academy (who were also teachers at the Conservatoire and thus prejudiced toward their own students).<sup>89</sup> Those who passed this initial phase would then compose a cantata for voice and orchestra on a given text, “usually one of classical subject-matter and formality.”<sup>90</sup> Berlioz ridiculed the texts by pointing out that they usually began with a flamboyant description of the dawn:

‘E’en now the rosy-fingered dawn appears’  
or ‘E’en now doth Nature greet returning day’  
or ‘E’en now with luster soft th’ horizon glows’  
or ‘E’en now blond Phoebus’ shining car draws near’  
or ‘E’en now in purple pomp the mountains decked’ ...<sup>91</sup>

The composition of dramatic vocal music was deemed the most appropriate test because opera composition was considered the only occupation for a professional composer in France.<sup>92</sup>

It is difficult to see how the academic exercise of writing a four-part fugue constituted an

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<sup>87</sup> Bloom, 25, 31.

<sup>88</sup> Rushton, 14, 17.

<sup>89</sup> Bloom, 31.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>91</sup> *Memoirs*, 87.

<sup>92</sup> Bloom, 32.

accurate test of the contestants' ability to compose dramatic music; this was part of Berlioz's objection to the rules of the *Prix de Rome*.<sup>93</sup> Also, by the 1820s the form of the cantata was considered "moribund and worn-out."<sup>94</sup> The texts of these cantatas were made up of a series of three arias with recitative, "the first aria being a cantabile and the last displaying the energy born of desperation (the protagonist is about to die, or rush into battle)."<sup>95</sup> Writing a cantata was supposed to test the composer's "mastery of the orchestra" as well as their ability to write a vocal part "designed for an experienced opera singer."<sup>96</sup>

The students who passed the preliminary fugue were shut up in separate *loges* while they composed their cantatas. The *loge* was a "tiny attic room, equipped with bed, table, chair, piano and commode, which would be their home and prison cell for the next three weeks."<sup>97</sup> They were released from their *loge* in the evenings by Pingard (the porter and former sailor whom Berlioz befriended), and allowed to socialize with visitors, only to be locked up again a few hours later.<sup>98</sup> After three weeks, the members of the music section of the Academy met and heard the cantatas with a hastily arranged piano accompaniment. They would vote and decide on the first and second prize cantatas. However, this was not the final decision. One week after this, the entire Academy met including all the other artists: architects, painters, and sculptors.<sup>99</sup> They also heard all the cantatas with piano accompaniment, the music section gave them their preliminary judgment or *jugement préparatif*, and the whole Academy voted for the

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<sup>93</sup> Cairns, 217.

<sup>94</sup> Foreword to *Hector Berlioz – New Edition of the Complete Works*, "Prix de Rome Works" v.6, David Gilbert, ed. (Barenreiter: New York, 1998), ix.

<sup>95</sup> Rushton, 17.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>97</sup> Cairns, 216.

<sup>98</sup> *Memoirs*, 91.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 90.

winners.<sup>100</sup> Berlioz always disagreed with this system; he never saw any reason why artists from “totally different disciplines and possibly quite ignorant of music” should be allowed so much power in deciding the winner of a musical competition.<sup>101</sup> The winner of the *Prix de Rome* was paid to spend two years in Rome, one year in Germany, and two years in Paris, studying and composing.<sup>102</sup>

Berlioz was not yet a student at the Conservatoire when he made his first attempt in 1826.<sup>103</sup> It is possible that after he failed to pass the preliminary test, he “may have felt a genuine need for further technical instruction,” and that was why he enrolled at the Conservatoire and in Reicha’s counterpoint class, as stated above.<sup>104</sup> The class evidently worked, for in 1827 Berlioz’s fugue was accepted; he told his sister Nancy in a letter that “his fugue had been the only one out of the four submitted to get the ‘answer’ right.”<sup>105</sup> Unfortunately, that was the only thing he got right on this attempt at the prize: he misunderstood the unspoken rules of the contest and behaved “like an established dramatist with full authority over the text and the right to adapt it to his own conception.”<sup>106</sup> He failed to realize that the Academy did not want a “real dramatic cantata,” but for the “aspirant composer to suppress his instincts,” and render the action in “conventional language.”<sup>107</sup> In addition, the bold colors and textures Berlioz created in his orchestration evaporated when the cantata was performed with only piano accompaniment for the judges.<sup>108</sup> Unlike his fellow students who could play the piano and used it as an instrument in their compositional process, Berlioz “conceived directly in orchestral

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<sup>100</sup> Cairns, 220.

<sup>101</sup> Cairns, 285.

<sup>102</sup> Bloom, 32.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>105</sup> Cairns, 215-216.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 218.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 219.

terms” and he composed “with a rhythmic verve and metrical freedom” which the official accompanist could not play.<sup>109</sup> The performance of the cantata fell apart in the initial stage of the judging and the members of the music section declared it “unplayable.”<sup>110</sup> Though he attempted to have a more careful piano arrangement made, and coached the tenor and the pianist on their parts before the joint meeting of the Academy, the case was hopeless and his cantata was withdrawn from consideration.<sup>111</sup> Berlioz vowed to write his next cantata for a “little bourgeois orchestra in two or three parts.”<sup>112</sup>

At this point, Berlioz thought his chances at winning the prize would be improved if he already had a public following, so he decided to organize a public concert of all his own works. According to his *Memoirs*, these concerts were also intended to catch the attention of Miss Harriet Smithson. The first of these was on May 26, 1828 in the concert hall of the Conservatoire, and sponsored by Vicomte de la Rochefoucauld. This concert included Berlioz’s “just-completed *Waverley* Overture ..., the *Scène héroïque* ... excerpts from the *Messe solennelle*, and selections from *Les Francs-Juges*.”<sup>113</sup> Berlioz had hoped (and prepared) to present *La Mort d’Orphée*, the cantata which had been pronounced “unplayable” by the *Prix de Rome* judges, but despite “a storm of bravos” at the rehearsal, the tenor was too ill to perform the piece.<sup>114</sup> Unfortunately, the profits from the concert failed to cover the expenses; and though the media was generally positive, this did not affect the *Prix de Rome* judges’ decisions for the next two competitions.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Cairns, 219.

<sup>110</sup> *Memoirs*, 50.

<sup>111</sup> Cairns, 220-221.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 221.

<sup>113</sup> Bloom, 27.

<sup>114</sup> *Memoirs*, 77-78.

<sup>115</sup> Bloom, 25-27. *Memoirs*, 74.

In 1828, Berlioz once again competed for the *Prix de Rome*. This time the subject of the cantata text was the story of Herminie (or Erminia), an episode from the epic poem *Gerusalemme Liberata* by Torquato Tasso. This particular story had been chosen as the subject of the cantata three times before this in the previous twenty-five years.<sup>116</sup> Berlioz attempted to suppress his instincts when composing *Herminie*, and “deliberately kept his fancy on a leash in the hope of avoiding offence.”<sup>117</sup> This tactic did not go unrewarded; he earned second place for *Herminie*, along with a “laureate crown publicly presented [and] a gold medal of modest value.”<sup>118</sup> The other benefits of this prize included a free pass into the Paris theaters, no more exams at the Conservatoire, no required military service, and “the unofficial guarantee of a first prize in the following year.”<sup>119</sup>

There is another side to the story of this second place prize. Pingard, the porter whom Berlioz had befriended, was also the Academy’s usher. He informed his friend of the events at the judging sessions.<sup>120</sup> According to Pingard, the Academy members would “bargain over their votes, they even sell ‘em.”<sup>121</sup> He overheard one of the musicians tell one of the non-musicians “Don’t vote for him ... all he cares about is Beethoven ... the young man is mad – Beethoven has disturbed his brain.”<sup>122</sup> Apparently, one of the musicians stood up to defend Berlioz during the voting session, trying to point out “some very ingenious orchestration,” but another member’s response was that they should “make an example of him.”<sup>123</sup> An argument ensued among the musicians, and three of the other artists walked out, saying that they weren’t

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<sup>116</sup> *Memoirs*, 92.

<sup>117</sup> Cairns, 294.

<sup>118</sup> *Memoirs*, 86.

<sup>119</sup> Bloom, 32.

<sup>120</sup> *Memoirs*, 91-95.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 94.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*

going to vote, and according to Pingard Berlioz missed first place by only two votes.<sup>124</sup> It is curious that Berlioz objected to the painters, sculptors, and other artists having the final word on this musical competition, when they were the reason he was awarded second place for *Herminie*: the members of the music section had voted to give second place to Julien Nargeot, a different pupil of Lesueur.<sup>125</sup>

The following year, the cantata text was based upon the death of Cleopatra. Berlioz, still in the fervor of his enthusiasm for Shakespeare, was ecstatic: “here was an idea worth expressing in music,” he wrote.<sup>126</sup> Secure in the “unofficial guarantee” of the first prize, he allowed himself free reign to express the intensities of the text, “reluctant to observe stylistic conventions.”<sup>127</sup> Unfortunately, *La Mort de Cléopâtre* was so full of “unorthodox harmonies and unconventional melodies” that the judges were outraged.<sup>128</sup> They decided that giving no one first prize would be better than to give “official encouragement to a young composer who ‘betrayed such dangerous tendencies.’”<sup>129</sup> Berlioz was told by many of his friends and colleagues that he should write something “horribly conventional” in order to secure the prize.<sup>130</sup>

In July of 1830 Berlioz entered the *Prix de Rome* for the fifth and final time. This time his cantata, *Sardanapale*, was awarded First Grand Prize. Berlioz, though pleased to have finally won, felt he had written a mediocre piece in order to do so. Unfortunately, Berlioz’s parents and his teacher Lesueur were unable to attend the awards ceremony, but the very act of winning the prize “demonstrated to his still doubtful family that his career was legitimate, his talent genuine,

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<sup>124</sup> *Memoirs*, 96, 93.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 639.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

<sup>127</sup> Rushton, 17.

<sup>128</sup> Bloom, 33.

<sup>129</sup> *Memoirs*, 100.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 100-101, 641.



his prospects excellent.”<sup>131</sup> *Sardanapale* was the only one of the four Prix de Rome cantatas which was performed during Berlioz’s lifetime; he scheduled it on the concert which premiered his *Symphonie fantastique*. But that was not the end of the other cantatas; all four of them were “put into a musical savings account from which the composer made regular withdrawals over the next several decades.”<sup>132</sup> In Chapter Three, I will examine how *Herminie* lived on in Berlioz’s *Neuf Mélodies irlandaises*, and more importantly, in the *Symphonie fantastique*.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> Bloom, 36, 37.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 33-37.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE TEXT OF *HERMINIE*

When studying any piece of vocal music, one must first examine the text and its source before beginning any substantive investigation of the music itself. The text for the 1828 *Prix de Rome* cantata was *Herminie* as written by Pierre-Angé Vieillard de Boismartin. This text was based on the tale of Erminia,<sup>134</sup> exiled princess of Antioch (and her unrequited love for the Christian crusader Tancred) from the epic poem *Gerusalemme liberata* (*Jerusalem Delivered*) by Torquato Tasso. This text was chosen by the musical members of the Academy and dictated to the contestants; the contestants themselves had no choice in the matter. This was not the first time this subject matter was used for the *Prix de Rome*; prior to its choice in 1828, the tale of Erminia had been chosen as the subject of the cantata text in 1813, 1819, and 1826.<sup>135</sup>

#### **Torquato Tasso, Author of the Source Material**

Torquato Tasso was an Italian courtier whose poems and plays achieved both immediate and lasting popularity. His works were admired by writers and musicians, and the story of his life inspired works of art and literature until three hundred years after his death.<sup>136</sup> Torquato was born in March of 1544 in Sorrento to Bernardo Tasso. Bernardo was also a nobleman and court poet, but he was exiled from Naples due to political trouble when Torquato was only a boy.<sup>137</sup> Torquato suffered from financial concerns for most of his life due to his separation from his

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<sup>134</sup> Erminia is the character's name in Italian and the English translation; Herminie is the French version of her name. In this paper, I will refer to the character in the original Tasso as Erminia and the character as she appears in Vieillard's cantata text (and Berlioz's cantata) as Herminie.

<sup>135</sup> Foreword to *Hector Berlioz – New Edition of the Complete Works*, "Prix de Rome Works" v.6, David Gilbert, ed. (Barenreiter: New York, 1998), xii.

<sup>136</sup> Barbara R. Hanning, "Tasso, Torquato," *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/27537> (accessed Jan 13, 2009).

<sup>137</sup> Hanning, "Tasso, Torquato," *Grove Music Online*.

mother as a boy and the loss of his father's land.<sup>138</sup> Tasso lived his life dependent upon the patronage of nobles, though his emotional instability made this a precarious situation. He studied in Padua where he published his first romance, *Rinaldo*, and several love lyrics. There were several episodes during his years in Padua which are now thought to be "early manifestations of an unstable temperament."<sup>139</sup> He spent over a decade between 1565 and 1578 in Ferrara, first with the Cardinal Luigi d'Este and later with Duke Alfonso II. It was at the Este court that he began his epic poem *Gerusalemme liberata*, which was to become his most celebrated work. His pastoral play *Aminta* was performed in 1573; some consider it "the most famous work of its kind."<sup>140</sup> But his increasing paranoia made life at court untenable: after a short incarceration for attacking a servant, Tasso spent a year wandering from patron to patron throughout Italy. He returned to Ferrara in February of 1579, but was arrested within a month and sent to Sant'Anna where he was confined for insanity until 1586. There he continued to write, despite suffering from depression and hallucinations. When Tasso was released, he took a position at the court of Duke Vincenzo I of Mantua, where he finished his tragedy *Il Re Torrismondo*. *Gerusalemme liberata* had been published without Tasso's permission during his confinement. It was criticized for failing to follow the concept of Aristotelian unities as well as for having "flawed architecture" because the "passages of sustained greatness occur chiefly in the amorous episodes."<sup>141</sup> He spent his final years in Naples and Rome, revising *Gerusalemme*

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> "Torquato Tasso," International Dictionary of Theatre, Vol 2: Playwrights (St. James Press, 1993). Reproduced in Biography Resource Center (Farmington Hills, Mich: Gale, 2008) <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/BioRC> (accessed Sept 27, 2008).

<sup>141</sup> "Torquato Tasso," Encyclopedia of World Biography, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 17 Vols, (Gale Research, 1998). Reproduced in Biography Resource Center (Farmington Hills, Mich.: Gale, 2008) <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/BioRC> (accessed Sept 27, 2008).

*liberata*, and eventually published it as *Gerusalemme conquistata*. He thought this version would appease his critics, but most scholars agree it is inferior in many ways to the original.<sup>142</sup>

Aside from his plays and epic poems, Torquato Tasso wrote madrigals which brought the genre “to a point of unsurpassed technical perfection.”<sup>143</sup> These were set by all the important madrigalists and monodists of the late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> century, including Monteverdi, Wert, and Alessandro Striggio.<sup>144</sup> His pastoral play *Aminta* was set to music during his lifetime, and portions of *Gerusalemme liberata* inspired operas and other genres into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. But Tasso’s poetry was not the only thing that inspired fellow artists. Many writers and composers were inspired by the events of Tasso’s life itself. Among the most famous works inspired by Tasso’s life are Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s play entitled *Torquato Tasso* and Lord Byron’s poem “The Lament of Tasso.” Goethe’s play was inspired by the apocryphal story that Tasso was imprisoned, not for madness, but because he had dared to fall in love with the Duke d’Este’s sister, Leonora. Byron’s poem covers the time Tasso spent in Sant’Anna. Musical works inspired by Tasso’s life include Gaetano Donizetti’s opera *Torquato Tasso* (1833), a *Melodramma semiserio* in three acts on a libretto by Jacopo Ferretti<sup>145</sup> (based on Goethe’s play), and Franz Liszt’s symphonic poem “Tasso: Lamento e trionfo” (1854), an early version of which was performed as an overture to Goethe’s play in 1849.<sup>146</sup> This work is in two parts, the first of which represents Tasso suffering in the asylum, and the second celebrates the acclaim he and his poetry received in the years after his release.

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<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> Hanning, “Tasso, Torquato,” *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

<sup>145</sup> William Ashbrook, “Torquato Tasso,” *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, ed. Stanley Sadie, *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online* <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/O005109> (accessed Jan 13, 2009).

<sup>146</sup> “Tasso: Lamento e trionfo,” *The Oxford Companion to Music*, ed. Alison Latham, *Oxford Music Online* <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e6670> (accessed Jan 13, 2009).

## ***Gerusalemme Liberata*, the Source Material**

The main narrative of this epic is the account of Godfrey's Crusaders and their attempt to liberate Jerusalem. Their efforts are thwarted "partly through human weakness and error, partly through hellish machinations," but in the end they succeed "through heavenly intervention."<sup>147</sup>

The central action of the poem is as follows:

God inspires the Crusaders to elect as their captain Godfrey, who promptly marches to besiege Jerusalem (Cantos 1-3). Satan dispatches his fallen angels to thwart the Christians, through overt and covert actions (Cantos 4-9). God then forbids further overt action by the devils, but permits them to haunt an Enchanted Wood, the only possible source of materials for Godfrey's siege machines. Thereupon God sends Dame Fortune to guide two Crusaders who bring back Rinaldo from Armida's prison of love in the Fortunate Isles (Cantos 10-16). The returned Rinaldo destroys the enchantments, Godfrey builds his machines and the final assault liberates Jerusalem (Cantos 17-20).<sup>148</sup>

In addition to this central plot there are three love stories, each addressing "the sexual passion that distracts men and women from their proper course of action."<sup>149</sup> One of these stories involves Tancred, a Christian knight, who is in love with Clorinda, a female, Saracen warrior.<sup>150</sup> Tancred encounters Clorinda in one of the earliest skirmishes of the siege and recognizes her as the woman he saw once long ago and with whom fell desperately in love. He is unable to meet her in battle because of these feelings, so he retreats. Later Clorinda is told that she was born a Christian but brought up by the pagans. She continues to fight against the Christians, burning their siege engines at midnight, but she is locked out of the city. At this point she and Tancred battle again, and Tancred delivers a fatal blow. Clorinda asks Tancred to baptize her as she's dying, and Tancred himself almost dies of grief. Later, Clorinda comes to him in a dream and

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<sup>147</sup> Torquato Tasso, *Jerusalem Delivered*, trans. and ed. Ralph Nash (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1987), 2.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Tancred is the English version of the Italian Tancredi, which in French is rendered as Tancredi.

consoles him. Tangential to this story is the tale of Erminia and her unrequited love for Tancred, the Christian knight who conquered her kingdom but spared her life. The cantata is based upon an episode from this story which will be discussed in greater detail below.

The most popular (and most convoluted) story of sexual passion is that of Rinaldo and Armida. It has furnished the plot of more operas than any other portion of this poem. Armida is a pagan sorceress who enters the Christian encampment to ask Godfrey for help; the whole camp is entranced by her. Rinaldo is a Christian soldier, honorable and heroic, who is forced to flee the Christian camp after dueling and killing a fellow knight who had slandered him. Armida is escorted from the camp by all the men who fell in love with her. These soldiers become her prisoners, but Rinaldo rescues them, only to fall in love with her himself. After a brief dalliance on her magic island, Rinaldo rejects Armida, and she in turn offers her hand to any man who would kill him. In the final battle, he avoids her and she tries to kill him. Her arrow misses him, she flees, and he follows her. In the end they are reconciled: he offers to be her champion and she declares herself his handmaid.

Although the tale of Erminia was very popular throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, few examples of musical settings are known today. One of the earlier examples is *Erminia sul Giordano* (Erminia by the Jordan, 1633), a pastoral drama in 3 acts by Michelangelo Rossi with a libretto by Giulio Rospigliosi.<sup>151</sup> The plot of this opera bears a close resemblance to the source, although it begins shortly after the episode described in the cantata *Herminie*. Erminia, dressed as a knight, flees Jerusalem to live with a group of shepherds by the River Jordan. A shepherdess falls in love with Erminia (in disguise); she herself loves Tancredi, who searches for

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<sup>151</sup> Margaret Murata, "Erminia sul Giordano," In *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, ed. by Stanley Sadie. *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/O901417> (accessed Jan 17, 2009).

Clorinda, and the sorceress Armida seeks to ensnare Tancredi for herself. A later musical setting of Erminia's story composed by Jacques Halévy is one of the earlier *Prix de Rome* cantatas.

Halévy was a student of Cherubini, and won the contest with this cantata in 1819.<sup>152</sup>

Many more musical settings are named for the Christian knight Tancred, whom Erminia loved. One of the earliest was a setting which used Tasso's poetry instead of a libretto based upon the story: Monteverdi set verses 52-68 of Canto 12 as a dramatic madrigal entitled "Il Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda."<sup>153</sup> It was performed, partially staged with narration, in Venice in 1624, and later published in Monteverdi's *Madrigali guerrieri e amorosi* of 1638.<sup>154</sup> André Campra composed *Tanocrède*, a *Tragédie en musique* in a prologue and five acts on a libretto by Antoine Danchet in 1702.<sup>155</sup> This plot adds the character of Ismenor, a Saracen magician, who is in love with Herminie. Other modifications include the Saracen warrior Argante being in love with Clorinda, Clorinda returning Tanocrède's affection, but surrendering to duty and dressing up in Argante's armor to fight Tanocrède and dying in his arms. Possibly the most recognized setting of this story is Rossini's *Tancredi* from 1813, a *Melodramma eroico* in two acts on a libretto written by Gaetano Rossi.<sup>156</sup> However, this setting bears the least resemblance to the original; it is actually based on Voltaire's play *Tanocrède* which moves the

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<sup>152</sup> "Halévy, Jacques," In *The Oxford Dictionary of Music* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. rev., ed. by Michael Kennedy. *Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t237/e4640> (accessed Jan 17, 2009.)

<sup>153</sup> "Il Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda," In *The Oxford Dictionary of Music*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. rev., ed. by Michael Kennedy, *Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t237/e2298>, (accessed Jan 17, 2009.)

<sup>154</sup> "Combattimento di Tancredi, e Clorinda," In *The Oxford Companion to Music*, ed by Alison Latham, *Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e1505>, (accessed Jan 17, 2009.)

<sup>155</sup> James R. Anthony, "Tanocrède," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, ed by Stanly Sadie. *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/O009632> (accessed Jan 13, 2009).

<sup>156</sup> Richard Osborne, "Tancredi," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, ed by Stanly Sadie. *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/O005711> (accessed Jan 17, 2009).

story from Jerusalem to Syracuse and replaces the Christian/Saracen conflict with a back-story similar to the Montague/Capulet feud.

By far, the most popular story from *Gerusalemme liberata* is that of Armida; it was used as a libretto subject from the 17<sup>th</sup> century to the early 20<sup>th</sup> in close to 100 operas and ballets. The same story has appeared under various titles including *Armida*, *Rinaldo*, *Armida e Rinaldo*, *Armida abbandonata*, and *Armida al campo d'Egitto*. Settings include *Armide*, a libretto by Philippe Quinault which was set by Lully (1686), C. H. Graun (1751), Traetta (1761), Astarita (1773), and finally by Gluck (1777). Other composers who wrote operas based upon this story include Handel (*Rinaldo*, 1711), Salieri (*Armida*, 1771), Cherubini (*Armida*, 1782), Haydn (1784), and Rossini (1817). Dvořák's *Armida* of 1904 combines the story of Armida and Rinaldo with details from Clorinda and Tancredi's story: Rinaldo kills Armida on the final battlefield and baptizes her on her deathbed.<sup>157</sup>

### **Erminia's Story**

"Erminia, the fair" makes her first appearance in *Gerusalemme liberata* in Canto 3, standing on a tower of the palace with Aladine, King of Judea, and observing the Christian army below.<sup>158</sup> As a former captive of the Christians, Erminia can point out and name the particular knights of the Christian army for the king. She was a princess of Antioch which was captured long ago by the Christians; her father was killed and she is now under Aladine's protection. Tancred stands out among the knights as a "warrior elect among the elite,"<sup>159</sup> and the king asks

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<sup>157</sup> Tim Carter, "Armida," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, ed by Stanley Sadie. *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/O900189> (accessed Jan 17, 2009).

<sup>158</sup> Torquato Tasso, *Jerusalem delivered*, Canto 3:12; p. 53.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:17; p. 54.



Erminia about him. Erminia sighs and tears come to her eyes, but she tries to hide her distress “beneath the mask of hatred.”<sup>160</sup> She describes how he slew her people:

“I ought to recognize him amid a thousand; for often have I seen him fill the fields and the deep ditches with the blood of my people. Ah, how cruel he is in wounding! the wound that he makes no medicine avails, nor magic art. ... He is Prince Tancred: oh would that he were some day my prisoner! and sure I would not want him dead. I would want him alive, that sweet revenge might render me some comfort for my fierce desire.”<sup>161</sup>

Her speech is taken at face value by the sympathetic king, who is completely unaware that she is deeply in love with her former captor.

Erminia’s next appearance in *Gerusalemme liberata* is in Canto Six. This episode is the basis of the cantata text. Tancred has engaged in one-to-one combat with Argantes, the Saracen champion. They are both seriously wounded, and call a halt to the battle at the end of the day. They agree to continue their combat in six days. All the Christians and Saracens have been awed by the ferocity of the fight, but Erminia, who watched from a tower of the palace, was tormented by it.

The text of the poem diverges at this point to expound upon Erminia’s early history: she was the daughter of King Cassano of Antioch, whom Tancred overthrew. Tancred treated her with uncommon courtesy: “she sustained no injury while in his power, and was honored as a queen in the midst of her noble country’s ruin. ... he preserved her, he gave her the gift of liberty; and all her gold and jewels he left to her, and whatever of value she owned.”<sup>162</sup> Because of this treatment, she fell in love with Tancred and “remained the prey of Love, who never bound tie more firm than that with which he bound her.”<sup>163</sup> She didn’t want to leave Tancred, “but

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<sup>160</sup> Ibid., 3:19; p. 54.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., 3:19-20; p. 54-55

<sup>162</sup> Ibid., 6:56-57; p. 126.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 6:57; 127.

sovereign Honor ... constrained her to make her departure.”<sup>164</sup> So she and her mother made their way to Jerusalem, where her mother died. But even the sorrow of losing her last remaining family member was unable to “root out from her heart her amorous desire, nor to quench the spark of such burning.”<sup>165</sup>

The poor girl loves and burns; and in such state so little hope is left her that she cherishes in her breast the hidden fire of memory far more than of hope. And insofar as it is shut away in the more secret place, by so much does her flame have greater strength. At last to reawaken her hope Tancred is come to the host around Jerusalem.<sup>166</sup>

She spends all day at the top of a tower, watching the Christian company, and “full of anguish and foreboding” for Tancred’s safety, feeling “in her soul the steel and the shock” of every blow he receives.<sup>167</sup> And now, knowing the battle will recommence in a few days, she is tormented. She imagines Tancred is gravely wounded, and “false rumors” that “exaggerate matters unknown and far-removed”<sup>168</sup> lead her to think he is on the point of death. She learned healing arts and herb-lore from her mother. Now, she has to tend Argantes and work to heal his wounds, but instead she wishes “by her own hand to restore health” to Tancred.<sup>169</sup>

So begins the great debate of Love and Honor within Erminia. Her wanderings and experience of war have made “her feminine mind ... daring beyond its nature.”<sup>170</sup> While “bold Love rids her soft breast of every fear,”<sup>171</sup> it is concern for her honor and reputation which makes her hesitate. Honor addresses her in the poem:

“I ... preserved your mind and body chaste; and would you wish, now free, to lose the precious virginity that in prison you have guarded? ... Do you then so

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<sup>164</sup> Ibid., 6:58; 127.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid., 6:59; 127.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid., 6:60; 127.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., 6:63; p. 128.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., 6:66; 128.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., 6:67; 129.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., 6:69; 129.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid., 6:70; 129.

little esteem the title of being chaste, and the reputation of honesty, that you would go among the enemy nation a nocturnal lover, to seek out infamy?”<sup>172</sup>

But Love, “the false counselor” bids her “go now where your desire is alluring you.”<sup>173</sup> Love chides her for hesitating, saying: “do you not know how he grieves at your sorrow, how he pities your tears ... You are the cruel one ... the worthy Tancred lies languishing: and you sit here in the care of the other one’s life!”<sup>174</sup> Love then tempts her with visions of how happy it would make her to nurse him back to health, how she would then be part of his “noble and famous deeds,” and how she would then receive “his lawful embraces and blessed nuptials.”<sup>175</sup> Love convinces Erminia to flee the palace; the only question is how to accomplish this while the palace is under siege.

At this point, the text describes Erminia’s relationship with Clorinda, the “warrior-maiden.”<sup>176</sup> They spend hours together and often share the same bed at night: “no thought other than those of love would the one maiden keep hidden from the other.”<sup>177</sup> In short, they are best friends. One day, still trying to devise a scheme to leave the palace, Erminia sees Clorinda’s armor hanging up. This leads her to think about how lucky her friend is and how much she envies her: “The long gown does not slow her steps ... but she girds herself in armor,” Clorinda comes and goes as she pleases, “and neither fear nor shame restrains her.”<sup>178</sup> Envy engenders a plan: Erminia steals Clorinda’s armor and, with the help of a squire and handmaid, dresses in the armor, mounts a horse, and rides out of the palace, unchallenged by any of the guards.

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<sup>172</sup> Ibid., 6:70-71; 129-130.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid., 6:73, 74; 130.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid., 6:74; 130.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid., 6:77; p. 130.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid., 6:79; 131.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid., 6:79; 131.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid., 6:82; 131-132.

Once outside the walls, she realizes that entering the Christian camp will be much harder than escaping the palace. She sends her squire ahead with a message to Tancred that “a lady is coming to him who is bringing him healing and asks for peace.”<sup>179</sup> Believing the message comes from Clorinda, Tancred sends the squire back to bring her to him as secretly as possible. But Erminia grows impatient for the squire’s return: she leaves her hiding place and is seen by a Christian patrol which pursues her, thinking she is Clorinda. Tancred also follows her, but both he and the patrol lose her trail in the forest. Erminia rides hard until she is at the end of her strength. She comes to the River Jordan and encounters peaceful shepherds there who befriend and protect her.

Erminia does not appear in the poem again until Canto 19 when, as one of Armida’s ladies-in-waiting, she recognizes Vafrine, Tancred’s squire, who is there to spy on Armida’s plans against the Christians. Erminia and Vafrine leave Armida’s camp together, and Erminia confesses to him that she is in love with Tancred. As they near the Christian camp, they discover Tancred close to death near the dead body of Argantes. Erminia is at last able to help heal Tancred, and with Vafrine’s help, she brings Tancred into Jerusalem and finds lodging for him where she can stay nearby. Tancred rises from his sickbed to rally the Christians in the final battle, and they defeat the Saracens and liberate Jerusalem. But Erminia’s ultimate fate is left unresolved in the end.<sup>180</sup>

### **Pierre-Ange Vieillard, Librettist**

Pierre-Ange Vieillard de Boismartin was born in Rouen in 1778. Early in his life, he established himself in Paris, where he eventually earned his reputation as a dramatist. One of his earliest works was a collaborative parody entitled *Orviétan*, that played at *l’Ambigu-Comique* in

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<sup>179</sup> Ibid., 6:99; 135.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., 2.

1799. Chief among his dramatic works are *Les masques* which played at *La Gaieté* in 1800, *Chapelle et Bauchaumont* which ran at the *Montansier* theater in 1806, and *Les rêveurs éveillés* which showed in 1813 at the *Vaudeville*. Vieillard's career spans the Empire and the Restoration. In 1806, he got a job working for the Treasury. He became a royal critic in 1820, then director of *Le Journal des maires* (Newspaper of the mayors) from 1822 to 1824. In 1826 he became a conservator of the Library of the Arsenal; then he was promoted to its administrator in 1851. In 1853 he moved to the Library of the Senate. Vieillard, whose name literally means "old man," also enjoyed popularity as a writer of opera libretti and cantata texts. Among his libretti, the most famous are *Le Premier homme du monde* which played at *l'Opéra Comique* in 1800, and *Blanche et Guiseard*, in three acts (1824). His poems were selected as cantata texts for *l'Académie des beaux-arts' Prix de Rome* eight times from 1813 to 1845. He died in Paris in 1862.<sup>181</sup>

### Text of the Cantata<sup>182</sup>

#### Recitative 1

Quel trouble te poursuit, malheureuse Herminie?	Such trouble pursues you, unhappy Herminia?
Tancrède est l'ennemi de mon Dieu, de ma loi;	Tancredi is the enemy of my God, of my law;
Du trône paternel ses exploits m'ont bannie;	His feats have banished me from my father's throne.
Il a porté le ravage et l'effroi Dans les cités de la triste Syrie.	He has ravaged and brought terror Into the cities of sad Syria.
Par lui j'ai tout perdu ... tout, jusqu'à mon repos,	Due to him, I have lost everything, everything, even my sleep,
Jusqu'à ma haine, hélas!	Even unto hate, alas!

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<sup>181</sup> Foreward to *Hector Berlioz – New Edition of the Complete Works*, xii. Joseph Sablé, "Collection O'Neill-Karch: Biographies," *Centre d'études du 19e siècle français Joseph Sablé*, University of Toronto. <http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/french/sable/recherche/catalogues/oneill/biographies.htm> (accessed Sept 27, 2008).

<sup>182</sup> This is the text as Vieillard wrote it for the competition according to the "Forward" to *Hector Berlioz – New Edition of the Complete Works*, "Prix de Rome Works" v. 6. The English translation is by John Tyler Tuttle from the liner notes of *Berlioz: Nuits d'Été; Herminie*, Philippe Herreweghe, France: Harmonia Mundi 1995. A word-by-word translation and IPA transcription of the text as Berlioz set it may be found in Appendix A of this paper. Further discussion of Berlioz's text setting and changes may be found in Chapter Three.

<p>pour l'auteur de mes maux.          Oui, Tancredi, à tes lois en amante asservie,          Je chéris le poids de mes fers,          Je chéris les tourments          que pour toi j'ai soufferts.</p>	<p>for the author of my ills.          Yes, Tancredi, as a lover enslaved to your laws,          I cherished the weight of my shackles;          I cherished the torments which I have          suffered for you.</p>
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### Aria 1 -- Cantabile

<p>Ah! Si de la tendresse où mon cœur          s'abandonne.          Je devais obtenir le prix dans ton amour,          Dieux! avec quel transport je bénirais le jour          Où je l'aurais conquis en perdant          ma couronne!</p>	<p>Ah! If by the tenderness to which my heart          abandons itself          I should obtain the prize of your love,          Gods! with what joy I would bless the day          That I conquered him by losing my crown!</p>
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<p>Mais je t'adore, hélas! sans retour,          sans espoir.          Chaque instant de mes feux          accroît la violence.          Mon cœur brûle!          et ma bouche est réduite au silence,          Et mes yeux ne peuvent plus te voir...</p>	<p>But alas! I adore you unrequited,          without hope.          Every instant, the violence of my burning grows.            My heart is on fire,          and my mouth is reduced to silence,          And my eyes can no longer see you ...</p>
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### Recitative 2

<p>Que dis-je? ... Où s'égarent mes vœux?            De l'excès du malheur quand          je suis menacée,          Je me livre aux erreurs          d'une flamme insensée.          Bientôt dans un combat affreux,          De Tancredi et d'Argant la haine se signale.          Déjà, dans une lutte à tous les deux fatale,          Tancredi triomphant a d'un sang généreux          Marqué ses exploits glorieux.          Si, n'écoutant que l'ardeur qui l'anime,          De sa force abattue il prévient le retour,          D'un héroïque effort il tombera victime...          Mortel effroi pour mon amour!</p>	<p>What am I saying? where are my wishes          wandering?          By the excess of misfortune when I am          threatened,          I deliver myself to the [errors]<sup>183</sup>          of a mad flame.          Soon in a horrible combat,          The hatred of Tancredi and Argante stands out.          Already, in a struggle fatal to them both,          Triumphant Tancredi has, with flowing blood,          Marked his glorious exploits.          If, by listening only to the ardor which inspires him,          He foresees the return of his exhausted strength,          He will become a victim of an heroic effort ...          Mortal dread for my love!</p>
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### Aria 2 – Cavatina

<p>Arrête! Cher Tancredi, arrête ...          Frémis du péril où tu cours!          Le coup qui menace la tête,          En tombant, trancherait mes jours.</p>	<p>Stop! Dear Tancredi, stop ...          I shudder at the peril you risk!          The blow which threatens your life          Would also cut short my days.</p>
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<sup>183</sup> This was a misprint in the Tyler Tuttle's translation. The word "amours" (loves) was inserted in place of the word "erreurs" (errors).

### Recitative 3

J'exhale en vain vers lui ma plainte fugitive, But vainly I voice my fleeting plaint [to him]<sup>184</sup>,  
Je l'implore, il ne m'entend pas. I beg him, he does not hear me.

Que Clorinde est heureuse!	How happy is Clorinda!
Au milieu des combats,	In the midst of these struggles,
De son sexe abjurant la faiblesse craintive;	Despite the timorous weakness of her sex;
Le courage guide ses pas.	Courage guides her step.
Que je lui porte envie!	How envious I am of her!
A ces murs suspendue,	Before my eyes,
Son armure frappe ma vue.	Her armor hangs on these walls.
Si j'osais m'en couvrir! ...	If I dared put it on! ...
Si, trompant tous les yeux	If, deceiving all eyes,
Sous cette armure aux périls consacrée,	Within this armor consecrated to peril,
Je fuyais d'Aladin le palais odieux,	I were to flee from Aladin's hateful palace,
Et du camp des chrétiens	And attempt to enter the Christian camp!
allais tenter l'entrée!	
Mais, que dis-je? Que dis-je?	But, what am I saying? What am I saying?
Mon faible bras	Could my weak arm
Pourrait-il soutenir sa redoutable lance?	Even hold up her fearful spear?
Tancrède va mourir peut-être, et je balance!	Tancredi is perhaps about to die, and I hesitate!
C'est trop tarder,	I have waited long enough.
je cours l'arracher au trépas.	I will run and snatch him from death!

### Aria 3 – Air de mouvement

Venez, venez, terribles armes,	Come, come, fearsome weapons,
Fiers attributs de la valeur!	Proud attributes of valor!
Cessez d'exciter les alarmes!	Cease from sounding the alarms!
Protégez l'amour, le malheur!	Protect love, misfortune!
Dieu des chrétiens, toi que j'ignore,	God of the Christians, Thou whom I know not,
Toi que j'outrageais autrefois,	Thou whom I gravely offended in the past,
Aujourd'hui mon respect t'implore.	Today my respect implores Thee.
Daigne écouter ma faible voix!	Deign to hear my weak voice!
Guide ta tremblante ennemie	Guide the trembling enemy
Près de ton vengeur généreux!	Close to thy generous avenger!
Tu deviens le dieu d'Herminie,	Thou shalt become Herminia's god,
Si tu rends Tancrède à mes vœux.	If thou return Tancredi to my wishes.

### Commentary on the Cantata Text and Comparison to Tasso's Original

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<sup>184</sup> Berlioz omitted the words "vers lui," so the translation [to him] is not included in John Tyler Tuttle's translation as cited above.

There will always be certain differences between a text meant to be set to music and its original source, whether that source is a play, novel, or poem. These differences are often necessitated merely by medium. In the cantata, Herminie is a solo voice in monologue, although she rhetorically addresses Tancredi and Clorinda's armor, as well as talking to herself. This must, out of necessity, be different from the poem in which Erminia's situation and emotions are described by a narrator. In the poem, Erminia is chided and tempted by Honor and Love within herself; but this cantata is for a solo not a trio, so there are no lines given to personifications of Honor or Love singing to Herminie. In the poem, Erminia talks to herself when envying Clorinda and while coming up with her escape plan, but primarily, the voice in the poem is that of the narrator.

The next, most obvious difference is that of time span. In the poem, Erminia's internal struggle, her decision to leave, and her final discovery and theft of Clorinda's armor take place over several days. The length of the cantata dictates the length of Herminie's internal struggle. The cantata, in approximately twenty minutes, presents the situation, the arguments for and against action, and the moment of Herminie's decision to act.

When examining a text based upon a story that would have been very familiar during this time-period, one should question how well Vieillard knew the Tasso original. One very odd detail is that he calls Clorinde "lui" (him) in the line "*Que je lui porte envie*" (translated above as "How envious I am of her). But the context indicates he is aware Clorinde is a female character when he writes "*de son sexe abjurant la faiblesse craintive*" (despite the timorous weakness of her sex). In addition, the section by section comparison below demonstrates he possessed a fair knowledge of the main ideas and themes of the source, though possibly from a secondary source or translation.



In the opening recitative, Herminie succinctly sums up the situation as described in Canto 3: Tancredi is her enemy, he overthrew her kingdom, and she loves him in spite of this. The idea of loss which is introduced in the line “Due to him, I have lost everything, everything!” can be compared to a section from Canto 19:92, in which Erminia is explaining to Vafrine how she fell in love with Tancredi: “On the night fatal to me and to my homeland that lay conquered, I lost more than appeared. ... My kingdom is small loss: along with my noble royal state I lost my own self too. Never to be recovered then I lost my mind (poor fool), my heart, and all my senses.”<sup>185</sup> The idea of her losing sleep in the next line of the cantata text can be traced to a line in Canto 6:65: “Every moment with horrible imaginings her fancy disturbs her and frightens her; and sleep is terrible, far more than death – such strange spectres her dreams present to her.”<sup>186</sup> The idea of enslavement and cherishing her shackles can be traced to this passage from 6:58: “So, if her body regained its liberty, her soul was forever bound into slavery. It weighed on her heavily to abandon her dear master and her beloved prison: but sovereign Honor ... constrained her to make her departure.”<sup>187</sup>

The first stanza of the first aria seems to summarize part of Love’s temptation in the poem. Love insinuates that by healing Tancred, Erminia might win his affection and marriage in the following passage:

“... if your compassionate healing hand were to approach his valorous breast: for then your lord, made well by you, would revive the color lost from his countenance, and you would admire in him, as if it were your gift, his handsomeness, that now is quenched.  
 “Then you too would have your part in his praises, and in the noble and famous deeds he achieved, when he would have made you happy with his lawful embraces and blessed nuptials.”<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> Tasso, *Jerusalem Delivered*, 19:92; p. 428.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, 6:65; 128.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, 6:58; 127.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, 6:76-77; 130.

The second stanza of the first aria introduces the idea of her love “without hope,” which parallels this passage from Canto 6:60: “she cherishes in her breast the hidden fire of memory far more than of hope.”<sup>189</sup> Next comes the idea of Herminie’s love being a flame in the lines “the violence of my burning grows / My heart is on fire.” This is a recurring theme in Tasso’s original. It can be found in Canto 6:60 (“the poor girl loves and burns ... insofar as it is shut away in the more secret place, by so much does her flame have greater strength,”)<sup>190</sup> as well as in Canto 19:94 in which she explains to Vafrine that her love for Tancred is “a flame and a wound,”<sup>191</sup> just to name a few examples.

The second recitative begins with the words “What am I saying?” This is part of Herminie’s ongoing debate within herself, which runs somewhat parallel to the debate between Love and Honor within Erminia in the poem. Herminie allows her imagination free reign in the aria, but she chides herself in the following recitative for yielding to “the loves of a mad flame.” Then she describes the situation of the battle to come and the recently concluded battle between Tancredi and Argantes. In the poem, this situation is presented in Canto 6:63 by the line “she knew ... that the bitter struggle must be renewed,”<sup>192</sup> and Erminia’s emotional response to this situation is described in Canto 6:66: “Nor is it only the fear of future harm that plies her heart ... but concern for the wounds that he already has had is reason that her soul cannot be quiet.”<sup>193</sup>

Herminie’s fears for Tancredi’s safety lead to the second aria in which she “rhetorically begs [him] to avoid further risks,”<sup>194</sup> adding that “the blow which threatens your life would also

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<sup>189</sup> Ibid., 6:60; 127.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid., 6:60; 127.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid., 19:94; 428.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid., 6:63; 128.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid., 6:66; 128.

<sup>194</sup> David Charlton, “Brief Observations on Berlioz’s *Herminie*,” *The Hector Berlioz Website*, <http://www.hberlioz.com/others/DCharlton.htm> (accessed August 4, 2008), section II.

cut short my days.” This passage comes from a very similar idea in the poem: “every time the pagan moved his sword she felt in her soul the steel and the shock.”<sup>195</sup>

The third recitative text begins with Herminie’s despair at the futility of her entreaties. The first two lines of this recitative were set by Berlioz as a contrasting internal section in the second aria, returning to the first two lines of Herminie’s entreaty to Tancredi to round out the ABA<sup>1</sup> form. This will be discussed further in Chapter Three.

Since Berlioz altered the structure at this point, the third recitative now begins with Herminie’s description of Clorinde: “How happy is Clorinda! In the midst of these struggles, despite the timorous weakness of her sex; Courage guides her step. How envious I am of her!” This can be traced to a slightly more detailed description in Canto 6:82: “O how blessed is that maiden most mighty! how much I envy her! and I do not envy her the boast or the womanish praise of being beautiful. The long gown does not slow her steps ... but she girds herself in armor, and if she wants to sally-forth, she goes, and neither fear nor shame restrains her.”<sup>196</sup> Herminie then sees Clorinde’s armor on the wall, and the armor gives her the idea of escape. In the poem, Erminia sees Clorinda’s armor which leads to her expression of envy; envy leads her to wish to trade places which engenders the idea of leaving disguised under the armor. In Canto 6:81 “she sees hung up on high Clorinda’s armor and her surcoat”<sup>197</sup> and this leads to the expression of envy quoted above from Canto 6:82. It is not until Canto 6:86 that the idea of wearing Clorinda’s armor leads to the realization that she might escape the palace in disguise in Canto 6:87:

“But alas I long for things impossible, and vainly wrap myself in foolish fancies; I shall stay here, fearful and sorrowful, as only one of the common womanish

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<sup>195</sup> Tasso, 6:63, 128.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid., 6:82; 131-132.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid., 6:81; 131.

crowd. Ah, I shall not! my heart, have faith and be daring! Why not I too this one time take up arms? why should I not for a short space have strength to bear them, though I be soft and weak?  
“I only want to make with these weapons a cunning ruse; I want to feign myself Clorinda; and under cover of her image, I am sure of departing.”<sup>198</sup>

In the recitative, the idea of this disguise is almost immediately followed by doubt: “could my weak arm even hold up her fearful spear?” The poem also expresses the idea that Erminia is weaker than Clorinda and unequal to the burden of her armor: “Ah! why did not nature and heaven make likewise strong in me my limbs and my heart,” and “With hardest steel she oppresses and offends her delicate neck and golden hair; and her tender hand takes up the shield – a burden too heavy and insupportable.”<sup>199</sup> However, this weakness does not become a reason to doubt the plan of escape. The next line of this recitative expresses Herminie’s frustration at her inability to decide to act: “Tancrède is perhaps about to die, and I hesitate!” This line most closely parallels a passage from Canto 6:74: “the worthy Tancred lies languishing: and you sit here in the care of the other one’s life!”<sup>200</sup> This recitative ends with Herminie’s decision to act: “I will run and snatch him from death!” In the poem, Erminia’s moment of decision occurs just as suddenly in Canto 6:86: “I shall stay here, fearful and sorrowful ... Ah, I shall not! my heart, have faith and be daring!”<sup>201</sup> But, in keeping with the length of an epic poem, Erminia takes longer to convince herself, listing again all the reasons why stealing the armor and leaving in disguise is the only course of action that would succeed. Not until 6:89 does the text state, “So she resolves: and goaded and spurred by the furies of Love, she waits no longer ...”<sup>202</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> Ibid., 6:86-87; 132.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid., 6:83, 6:92; 132, 133.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid., 6:74; 130.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid., 6:86; 132.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid., 6:89; 133.

In the cantata, the first stanza of the third aria addresses Clorinde's armor and weapons, presumably as Herminie is stealing them. Herminie asks the weapons and armor to protect her; this is not an idea that is present in the original poem. The idea most analogous to this in the poem is the following passage which occurs before she steals the armor: she says "Now may Fortune and Love (who inspires it in me) favor my innocent deception."<sup>203</sup> The second stanza in the third aria is a prayer to the Christian God in which she bargains with Him, offering her faith in return for helping her go to Tancredi. This idea does not appear in the original poem and is "perfectly false to Tasso," according to David Charlton.<sup>204</sup> The idea in Tasso's original most analogous to this prayer is during Love's temptation: Erminia imagines marrying Tancredi and returning to Italy with him, "where is the seat of ... the true faith."<sup>205</sup> Later, when she is waiting outside the Christian camp for her squire to return with Tancred's message, she looks toward the camp and says "O lovely to mine eyes, ye Latin tents! A breeze rises from you that refreshes me, and encourages me yet that I draw near. So may the heavens destine for my storm-tossed and sorrowful life some virtuous haven, as I seek it only in you, and it seems to me that I can find peace only in the midst of arms."<sup>206</sup> David Charlton hypothesizes that Vieillard ended his text with the prayer because he "hoped to create an acceptable and plausible resolution, given the absence of any death at this point in the epic."<sup>207</sup> However, he feels the "static nature of the imagined final scene is at wholesale variance with Tasso: he made it to be Erminia's greatest moment of resolve, and indeed her long-delayed conversion of passion into action."<sup>208</sup> Berlioz

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<sup>203</sup> Ibid., 6:88; 133.

<sup>204</sup> Charlton, "Brief Observations on Berlioz's *Herminie*," *Hector Berlioz Website*, section II.

<sup>205</sup> Tasso, *Jerusalem Delivered*, 6:78; 131.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid., 6:104; 136.

<sup>207</sup> Charlton, "Brief Observations on Berlioz's *Herminie*," *Hector Berlioz Website*, section II.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid.

chose to set the prayer as a contrasting B section in an ABA<sup>1</sup> form, thus returning to the more active text to end his cantata.<sup>209</sup>

The differences and similarities between the source and the text lead us to examine the differences and similarities between the characters of Erminia and Herminie. Obviously, their motivation is very similar: both Erminia and Herminie are driven by love for Tancred and fear for his life. On the other hand, the inner struggle each undergoes while reaching the decision to act is quite different: Erminia debates with Love and Honor while Herminie bargains with God.

Both Erminia and Herminie envy Clorinda, though for slightly different reasons: Erminia envies her freedom and strength (“the long gown does not slow her steps,” and “if she wants to sally forth she goes, and neither fear nor shame restrains her”<sup>210</sup>); Herminie envies her courage (“Despite the timorous weakness of her sex; courage guides her step”). The differences in their reasons for envy, while seemingly inconsequential, point to a difference in overall character: Erminia feels trapped by her circumstances and position; Herminie feels trapped by her own fear.

Erminia and Herminie’s disparate reasons for hesitating also indicate a fundamental difference in their characters. Erminia is stopped by concern about her virginity, her honor and reputation; she is also stymied by the practical problem of how to escape the palace. Herminie is not immobilized by concern for her honor and reputation, but by her own common sense. This common sense is evidenced by the fact that she calls her love for Tancredi a “mad flame,” and that she stops herself twice with the phrase “What am I saying?” This phrase begins the second recitative after she dreams that she could win Tancredi’s love; it also appears in the middle of the third recitative after she has imagined disguising herself in Clorinde’s armor and escaping to the Christian camp. But above all, Herminie is stopped by fear. This fear is implied by her

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<sup>209</sup> The form and textual changes for this aria will be discussed at greater length in Chapter Three.

<sup>210</sup> Tasso, *Jerusalem Delivered*, 6:82; 131-132.

emotional reactions to the situation, her common sense, and most obviously in her envy of Clorinde's courage: she would not envy Clorinde for possessing something she herself possessed. Herminie's fear is the biggest difference between her character and that of Erminia.

Tasso's text states that Erminia is not afraid:

Nor would she have any fear at all of going among the enemy, for she had been a wanderer and often had looked upon wars and slaughters and had led an uncertain and exhausting life, so that through experience her feminine mind is made daring beyond its nature; and she is not lightly disturbed and made fearful by any of the less serious shapes of terror.

But, more than any other reason, bold Love rids her soft breast of every fear...<sup>211</sup>

In this last line we find the reconciliation of these two characters: in her love for Tancredi, Herminie finds an antidote for her fear. Because of her love and concern for him, she is able to leap beyond her common sense and risk all for the chance to save him.

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<sup>211</sup> Ibid., 6:69-70; 129.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE MUSIC OF *HERMINIE*

After establishing the historical perspective and literary background of this cantata, it is now time to examine the music itself. The scope of this paper does not allow for as thorough an analysis as this piece might merit, so (after a brief discussion of the orchestra) I will confine my observations to those aspects which would be most helpful and interesting to perspective performers: the form, the text setting, Berlioz's self-borrowing, and the role of the main theme.

As stated in previous chapters, Berlioz was attempting to please his judges with this piece: he especially wished to provide an orchestration which would suffer little loss in a piano reduction. The piece is written with standard instrumentation, like his competitors: strings, pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets, trumpets, four bassoons, three trombones, and timpani.<sup>212</sup> Berlioz handles these "conventional forces ... with skill and touches of eloquence,"<sup>213</sup> and the strengths of this cantata include "rhythmic impetus and sense of movement in the second and third arias, recitatives enlivened by a few bold contrasts and some vivid word-setting," which are obvious even in the piano reduction.<sup>214</sup>

#### **Form**

The basic form of the *Prix de Rome* cantatas was prescribed by the contest rules and the assigned text. The form is as follows: "three solo-arias with recitatives, with orchestral accompaniment and possibly also a chorus, to a prescribed text. It is left to the composer to introduce the orchestra significantly, and, if necessary, to alter the tripartite succession in one

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<sup>212</sup> Foreword to *Hector Berlioz – New Edition of the Complete Works*, "Prix de Rome Works" v.6, David Gilbert, ed. (Barenreiter: New York, 1998), xii.

<sup>213</sup> David Cairns, *Berlioz 1803-1832: The Making of an Artist*, Rev. ed. (London: Penguin, 1999), 286.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*, 286-287.



way or another.”<sup>215</sup> As stated in Chapter One, Berlioz’s failure to secure a prize in his first attempt drove him to curb his rebellious tendencies in *Herminie*. He followed the prescribed form as well as his “urge to rhetorical truth”<sup>216</sup> would allow. The basic form of Berlioz’s *Herminie* begins with an orchestral introduction; this is followed by the three contrasting arias with preceding recitatives, and the cantata concludes with a long orchestral postlude.

The sole purpose of *Herminie*’s orchestral introduction is to establish the main theme which recurs in two recitatives and the central contrasting section of the second aria. Unlike Berlioz’s introductions to his other *Prix de Rome* cantatas, the instrumental introduction to *Herminie* does not set the scene in medieval Jerusalem or the time of day.<sup>217</sup> Two full statements of the main theme in G major occupy the first half of the introduction. The first violins present the first statement of this theme (bars 3-11) with string accompaniment and wind interjections.



MUSICAL EXAMPLE 3.1: Orchestra introduction, bars 3-11<sup>218</sup>

Flutes and bassoons join the first violins on the second statement (bars 20-28) and the full orchestra accompanies. A development section begins in bar 29 with first violins alternating a

<sup>215</sup> A. E. F. Dickinson, “Berlioz’ Rome Prize Works,” in *The Music Review* 25 no. 3 (1964): 165-166.

<sup>216</sup> Julian Rushton, *The Music of Berlioz*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 24

<sup>217</sup> David Charlton, “Brief Observations on Berlioz’s *Herminie*,” The Hector Berlioz Website, <http://www.hberlioz.com/others/DCharlton.htm> (accessed August 4, 2008), section V.

<sup>218</sup> All musical examples are reproduced using Musette from *Hector Berlioz – New Edition of the Complete Works*, “Prix de Rome Works” v.6, David Gilbert, ed., (Barenreiter: New York, 1998). A letter of permission is in Appendix D.

three bar motive (derived from the beginning of the main theme) with bassoons and a solo cello, overlapping at two bar intervals. In bar 42 the first and second violins alternate a two bar motive overlapping every other bar, with the last statement of the motive being made by a solo viola and first bassoon. The last few measures slow down the harmonic rhythm and round out the cadence before the first recitative begins.

The first aria, “Ah! si de la tendresse,” is an *adagio* in C and comes immediately after the opening recitative.<sup>219</sup> As Julian Rushton observes, “Berlioz adopted many of the appropriate clichés, particularly in *Herminie*, in which he tried hard to behave. The cantabile often starts over a tonic pedal – the whole of *Herminie* begins this way.”<sup>220</sup>

A.E.F. Dickinson states that this aria is “in two semi-symmetrical stages, the first leading to the dominant, and the *da capo* to a short *animando*.”<sup>221</sup> I believe it is easier to understand the form as ternary form with the B section beginning in bar 25 on the words “Mais je t’adore, hélas...” (But, I adore him, alas ...). The two “semi-symmetrical” sections of Dickinson’s analysis would be 58 bars long and 32 bars long, respectively. In my three part version, section A and B are 24 bars each, and section A' is 32 bars. Section A' begins in bar 49 (after a truncated version of the initial 7 bar introduction) and restates A, text and music, with added winds. The vocal line remains the same as the original until bar 60, in which an extension of the original material begins, leading to a codetta marked *animez* (bars 66 to 81).

The second recitative ends with a sudden change in mood and harmony. Another of the “appropriate clichés” which Berlioz embraced in *Herminie* was that “... a fast aria may begin on dominant harmony, with an upward chromatic surge, crescendo, the voice entering on the crest

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<sup>219</sup> Since the recitatives are through composed and merely act as parts of the overall form they will not be discussed in this section. See “Text Setting” and “Use of Tancredi Theme” below for discussion of the recitatives.

<sup>220</sup> Rushton, *The Music of Berlioz*, 17.

<sup>221</sup> Dickinson, 170.

of a wave.”<sup>222</sup> In this case, the dominant harmony was the minor 9<sup>th</sup>, which he had used in the previous cantata, *La Mort d’Orphée*. In *Herminie* the dominant minor 9<sup>th</sup> is “more conventionally scored, and immediately resolved.”<sup>223</sup> This second aria, “Arrête! Arrête, cher Tancrède,” is in D minor with “long arcs of melody” against a “panting accompaniment with its accented dotted rhythm out of phase between first violins and lower strings.”<sup>224</sup> I believe this aria is in ternary form like the first aria; in this case, the B section is the *meno mosso* in F which uses the main theme from the introduction. In this ternary form, the length of the sections would be slightly more balanced: section A is approximately 70 bars, section B is 58, and A' is 50. Section A uses the entire text of the aria twice in succession. Section B borrows the first two lines from the following recitative<sup>225</sup>, which are set to the main theme and then to “sequential rising phrases” which form the “‘consequent’ of the opening phrases.”<sup>226</sup> This section completely breaks the mood of section A, not only with different text and music, but also with a different accompaniment texture. Section B ends quietly and simply, only to have the full orchestra come crashing in with the dominant minor 9<sup>th</sup> and chromatic surge back to the opening material of A with added winds. In fact, A' doesn’t differ from A (apart from the added winds and a faster metronome marking: ♩ = 152 vs. ♩ = 130) until bar 143 (13 bars after it begins). Slightly altered and abbreviated from A, section A' crescendos to a climax in bars 178-179. The voice reaches a high bb<sup>2</sup> with very sparse accompaniment in bar 178, followed by a single *ff* chord for the entire orchestra (including cymbals) in bar 179, after which the impetus of this

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<sup>222</sup> Rushton, 17.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>224</sup> Cairns, 287.

<sup>225</sup> Please see “Text Setting” below for more on this change.

<sup>226</sup> Charlton, section V.

section comes to a complete halt. The final line of the aria is sung *demie voix*, unaccompanied, after which two *pp* chords close the final cadence. [See Ex. 3.2]

MUSICAL EXAMPLE 3.2: Aria 2, bars 178-181

The third aria, “Venez, venez terribles armes,” can also be reduced to a ternary form with “the controversial prayer”<sup>227</sup> as the B section. It has a much more complex structure than the preceding two. The aria begins in E major. The A section of this ternary form is 118 bars long and repeats the first four lines of the text three times with different music. The B section, also known as the *Prière* or the Prayer, is a short *largo* in G major in which Herminie prays to the Christian God to help her win Tancrède. As Dickinson points out, “It was this rejection of the expected aria *de bravura*, for the sudden address to the Christian god, which brought the cantata down in the ears of the musical members of the board.”<sup>228</sup> The Prayer is 45 bars long. Berlioz’s opinion of it is clearly stated in his *Memoirs*:

I had the effrontery to suppose that although the aria was marked *agitato* these four lines ought to be treated as a prayer, since the trembling Queen of Antioch would hardly be expected to implore the God of the Christians with melodramatic

<sup>227</sup> Rushton, 24.

<sup>228</sup> Dickinson, 170.

cries to the accompaniment of a raging orchestra. So I made it a prayer; and without doubt if there was anything good in my score, it was that andante.<sup>229</sup>

When the *Tempo Primo* returns (marked slightly faster), the first four lines of text are repeated to musical ideas from the initial A section, but the order of those ideas is altered, and new musical ideas are added in. Then in bar 194, new text is introduced (actually borrowed from the preceding recitative)<sup>230</sup> and the words of the prayer are repeated to new music. The A' section including the new material lasts 113 bars. Then Berlioz ends the cantata with an orchestral postlude of 54 bars which will be discussed later.

In order to better demonstrate the textual and musical repetitions, I have created the following chart in which capital letters represent lines of text and lower case letters with numbers represent the musical ideas.

TABLE 3.1: Text and Music Repetitions in Aria 3

Section A (bars 1-118)											
Bar	12	20	24	31	41	47	54	72	80	87	95
Text	A	B	C	A	A	B	C	A	B	C	C
Music	a1	b1	c1	a2	a3	b2	c2	a1	b3	c2'	c3

Section A' (bars 164-193)			
Bars	164	181	185
Text	A	B	C
Music	starts like a2 ends like a1	b1	c4 new idea

A = “Venez, venez terribles armes! Venez fiers attributs de la valeur”

B = “Cessez, cessez d’exiter les alarmes”

C = “Protegez l’amour! Protegez le maleur!”

<sup>229</sup> Hector Berlioz, *The Memoirs of Hector Berlioz*, trans. David Cairns (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002), 93.

<sup>230</sup> See more about this text borrowing in “Text Setting” below.

The return of the opening idea and text (Aa1) in bar 72 occurs after a brief orchestral passage which recalls the 12 bar introduction to this aria, giving the effect of a *ritornello*. Both the introduction and its recall are for full orchestra, while the accompaniment to the voice is mostly strings, with wind and percussion interjections. But this *ritornello* is cut short by the prayer. Bar 164 also gives the impression of a *ritornello*, with its return to the original tempo and words with familiar music, but since it begins with a2 instead of a1 this feeling is incomplete. After bar 193, Berlioz introduces the text from the preceding recitative. From this point to the end of the aria the only repeated text is that of the prayer, and Berlioz sets it to totally new music. The last words of the prayer reach up to a high b<sup>2231</sup> in “a final climax of desperate determination”<sup>232</sup> which “indubitably [leads] towards [Herminie’s] desperate actions.”<sup>233</sup>

Julian Rushton observes that Berlioz “closed all his cantatas with an instrumental representation of the end of the drama. In this he was undeniably eccentric ...”<sup>234</sup> Aside from the prayer in the third aria, the most “subversive”<sup>235</sup> element of this cantata is the orchestral postlude in which flutes, clarinets and horns recall the melody of the Prayer “above the rapid beat of strings and bassoons, in a long diminuendo which suggests Erminia galloping away on her desperate errand of mercy – one of the first of the receding vistas which are such a feature of [Berlioz’s] music.”<sup>236</sup> This gradual decrescendo in the coda, produced partly by instruments dropping out until the final measures are played pianissimo by the celli, was unusual because it “replaced the expected final cadence for full orchestra.”<sup>237</sup> There is a passage from a letter

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<sup>231</sup> This document uses the Helmholtz system of octave designation in which c<sup>1</sup> represents middle C.

<sup>232</sup> Dickinson, 170.

<sup>233</sup> Charlton, section II.

<sup>234</sup> Rushton, 17.

<sup>235</sup> Cairns, 286.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid., 287.

<sup>237</sup> Ibid., 286.

Berlioz wrote to his father just prior to entering the 1828 competition which “suggests why he will avoid, seemingly at any cost, normal final cadences of resolution.”<sup>238</sup> He wrote:

In general I avoid like the plague those commonplaces which all composers (except Weber and Beethoven) put in at the end of their movements; it’s a sort of confidence trick that announces: ‘Get ready to applaud, we’re near the end’; nothing is more pitiable to me than those banal, conventional phrases which make all music sound the same.<sup>239</sup>

Another innovation in the orchestral postlude is Berlioz’s use of a technique he came to call “rhythmic modulation.” In this instance, he rewrote the melody from the Prayer (originally a *largo*), augmenting the rhythmic durations so that it would approximate its original speed in the faster *Allegro impetuoso vivace* tempo of the postlude.<sup>240</sup>

Many scholars have differing opinions of this postlude. Dickinson asserts that “the reverberation of the *largo* tune in a postlude [is] an imaginative assurance of the seriousness of Herminia’s vow to the Christian god.”<sup>241</sup> Julian Rushton’s observation is similar: the repeat of the prayer in the long diminuendo seems “as if Herminie’s prayer to the Christian god echoed in her head as she went forth.”<sup>242</sup> David Charlton, on the other hand, finds it “curiously ineffective.”<sup>243</sup> He goes on to observe that the “vigorous dotted rhythm [derived from] the third aria” is “too generalised” and in effect “the original figure is ‘liquidated’ (in Schoenberg’s term) rather than retained.”<sup>244</sup> He also presents a question which the performer must resolve for herself: “why are Erminia’s thoughts still on the prayer, instead of more focused on physical realities, including the object of the adventure?” My answer to this question is that this is part of

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<sup>238</sup> Charlton, section III.

<sup>239</sup> *Correspondance générale*, ed. Pierre Citron *et al.*, (Paris, 1972-2002) vol. I, p. 192, (29 May 1828). As cited in David Charlton, “Brief Observations on Berlioz’s Herminie,” The Hector Berlioz Website, <http://www.hberlioz.com/others/DCharlton.htm> (accessed August 4, 2008), section III.

<sup>240</sup> Charlton, section III.

<sup>241</sup> Dickinson, 181.

<sup>242</sup> Rushton, 24.

<sup>243</sup> Charlton, section III.

<sup>244</sup> *Ibid.*

the difference between Tasso's "Erminia" and Vieillard and Berlioz's "Herminie." Tasso's Erminia never made any prayer or vow to the Christian god.<sup>245</sup> I consider that from this point onward Herminie, who did make that vow, would find more strength for the task ahead if she were to focus on that vow and the expectation of God's help in bringing her to Tancredi, rather than if she allowed herself to return to thoughts of the dangers she is about to face or the imagined state of her beloved.

### **Text Setting**

Berlioz was criticized for the liberties he took with the text of *La Mort d'Orphée* in the *Prix de Rome* competition of 1827. It appears he was determined not to give the judges similar grievances in *Herminie*. However, the "necessary good behaviour entailed in setting all the text did not compromise his urge to rhetorical truth."<sup>246</sup> In addition, *Herminie* represents a step forward from *Orphée* in "the wealth of polished responses to the text itself" with many passages attaining "a feeling of complete and controlled Berliozian maturity."<sup>247</sup> This section will first examine the alterations which Berlioz made to the text, several of which have been alluded to previously. A discussion of how he set specific words and phrases to evoke their emotional subtext will follow.

There are several textual alterations which did not significantly vary the meaning of Boismartin's text: Berlioz set "Arrête! cher Tancredi, arrête" as "Arrête! Arrête cher Tancredi!" in Aria 2; in Aria 3 he inserted an extra "Venez, venez" before "Fiers attributs de la valeur" and usually added another "Protégez" before "le malheur." There are a few other alterations which made slightly more difference in meaning. In Aria 2 Berlioz changed the supplied text "Frémis

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<sup>245</sup> See Chapter Two for further discussion of these differences.

<sup>246</sup> Rushton, 24.

<sup>247</sup> Charlton, section IV.



du peril où tu cours!” to “Je frémis du peril où tu cours!” (I shudder at the peril you risk),<sup>248</sup> in effect, emphasizing that Herminie is trembling, not Tancrède.<sup>249</sup> He also altered “la tête” to “ta tête,” making it more personal and immediate.

The most significant alteration to Boismartin’s text is in the second aria. Berlioz took two lines intended to begin the third recitative and set them as a contrasting B section to make the second aria ternary. The lines are “J’exhale en vain vers lui ma plainte fugitive. Je l’implore, il ne m’entend pas.” (But vainly I voice my fleeting plaint [to him]. I beg him, he does not hear me.) Berlioz “omitted ‘vers lui’, once again focusing on the emotions of the heroine.”<sup>250</sup> The third recitative now begins with what was intended to be the third line of the recitative text “Que Clorinde est heureuse!” (How happy is Clorinde!) Another significant textual alteration is in the third aria. The text “Venez, venez,” returns after the *Largo* section, but once the four lines of the A section text have been repeated, Berlioz set lines borrowed from the preceding recitative, slightly altered:

Oui! Sous cette armure aux périls consacrée, Du camp des chrétiens <i>je vais</i> tenter l’entrée.	Yes! Beneath this armor consecrated to peril, <i>I am</i> going to enter the Christian camps!
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Berlioz changed “allais tenter l’entrée” (I will attempt to enter the Christian camp) to “je vais tenter l’entrée,” in effect “turning Boismartin’s semantic ‘what if’ into his own ‘I shall.’”<sup>251</sup>

The most important aspect of any vocal work is the composer’s response to the text and how that response can be seen in the music itself. Berlioz had a “gift for characterization, rather

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<sup>248</sup> All English translations in this section are from the translation by John Tyler Tuttle from the liner notes of *Berlioz: Nuits d’Été; Herminie*, Philippe Herreweghe, France: Harmonia Mundi 1995. Appendix A contains a word-by-word translation.

<sup>249</sup> Rushton, 84.

<sup>250</sup> Rushton, 84.

<sup>251</sup> Charlton, section II.

than for selecting appropriate signifiers for each situation.”<sup>252</sup> He was able to mirror the feelings of the characters in aspects of the music.<sup>253</sup> This section will examine in detail several instances of these abilities.

While the orchestral introduction does nothing to set the scene (but merely introduces the most important musical theme) the opening line of the first recitative immediately sets the contrast between the cheerful prelude and the turmoil of our heroine. The first interval in the opening line “Quel trouble te poursuit” (Such trouble pursues you; bar 55) is a tri-tone; the  $b\flat$ <sup>1</sup> on the following word, “malheureuse” (unhappy) changes the tonality to g minor from the G major of the introduction. A fragment of the theme from the Introduction is then heard in low strings: the theme, or what it represents, is the trouble pursuing her. “Malheureuse Herminie” is set much higher than most of the recitative, an outcry of her misery, followed by another fragment of the theme.

MUSICAL EXAMPLE 3.3: Recitative 1, bars 55-60

<sup>252</sup> Rushton, 285.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid.,

In bars 62-63 the words “Du trône paternel ses exploits m’ont bannie” (His feats have banished me from my father’s throne) is set in a phrase which covers over an octave, illustrating her banishment from her father’s throne.



MUSICAL EXAMPLE 3.4: Recitative 1, bars 62-63

Berlioz underlines the text “Jusqu’à ma haine” (Even unto hate) “by harmonic progression.”<sup>254</sup>

Bars 68-72 move from a G Dom7 acting as the dominant going to c minor.



MUSICAL EXAMPLE 3.5: Recitative 1, bars 68-72

Berlioz indicates a tempo change in bar 87, *Lent*, slowing the long drawn out wail of “Je cheris les tourments” (I cherished the torments), evoking Herminie’s sadness and helplessness against a love which torments her.

In the first aria, a beautiful melodic opening provides expressive text setting for Herminie’s tender feelings. In bar 17, on the exclamation “Dieu!” (God!), Berlioz more specifically characterizes the text. “Dieu!” is set on the highest note so far (f<sup>2</sup>), followed by an octave leap down. In bar 21, the text “ou je l’aurais conquis” (That I conquered him) is set to a dotted rhythm on a rising line, giving it a victorious, martial feeling. [See ex. 3.6]

<sup>254</sup> Dickinson, 181.



MUSICAL EXAMPLE 3.6: Aria 1, bar 21

The most interesting sequence starts on the pickup to bar 30 on the text “Chaque instant de mes feux la violence” (Every instant, the violence of my burning grows). This text is set to a chromatic sequence of perfect fifths over rising parallel first inversion chords. Rushton states that these “massive parallelisms are really thickened unisons, and it is not surprising that a composer who liked to expose melodies without accompaniment should resort to them at climaxes.”<sup>255</sup> The sequence reaches its climax on the words “mon coeur brûle” (my heart burns), continuing the chromatic ascent until it reaches the highest pitch ( $ab^2$ ) and the loudest dynamic (*ff*) in the aria, with the full orchestra joining the strings in bar 35. The following words in bars 37-40 “et ma bouche est reduite au silence” (and my mouth is reduced to silence) are fully realized by the sudden contrast: *pp* an octave lower on a descending line, with only strings underneath, playing disconnected eighth notes on off beats.



MUSICAL EXAMPLE 3.7: Aria 2, bars 30-40

<sup>255</sup> Julian Rushton, *The Musical Language of Berlioz*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 110.

The second recitative is as expressive as the first. Several phrases stand out above the rest. In bar 86-87, the line “je me livre aux erreurs d’une flamme insensée” (I deliver myself to the loves of a mad flame) is broken by an octave leap down between “erreurs” and “d’une flamme,” evoking Herminie’s attitude toward this “mad flame” of love to which she is enslaved.



MUSICAL EXAMPLE 3.8: Recitative 2, bars 86-87

In bar 89, “la haine” (the hatred) “stands out” by a leap of a M6 up to  $f^2$ . “D’un héroïque effort il tombera victime” (He will become the victim of an heroic effort) is another striking example of sudden contrasts: in bars 96-97 Berlioz utilizes the winds and timpani playing *ff* dotted rhythms, conveying a martial quality on “d’un héroïque effort” (marked *avec désespoir* “with despair”), contrasting with “il tombera victime” which the voice sings in a lower range, with only low strings which die out during the line. The trembling in the strings and the disjointed vocal line effectively illustrate Herminie’s fear for Tancredi on the last line “Mortel effroi pour mon amour” (Mortal dread for my love!) [See ex. 3.9, pg.60]

Julian Rushton declares that “the dominant minor 9<sup>th</sup> is Berlioz’s harshest chord, and he was willing to attack it without preparation.”<sup>256</sup> Berlioz begins the second aria in *Herminie* with a minor 9<sup>th</sup> “in violent disagreement of mood and tonality with what went before,”<sup>257</sup> but in perfect agreement with Herminie’s desperation. The second aria contains some of Berlioz’s

<sup>256</sup> Rushton, *The Musical Language of Berlioz*, 29.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid.

most vivid text setting. In bars 27-29 the words “en tombant” (while falling)<sup>258</sup> are repeated on a series of octave leaps down. [See ex. 3.10]

D'un hé-ro - ïc ef - fort il tombe - ra vic - - ti - - me. Mor -

*ff* Full orchestra *p* Strings alone

-tel effroi pour mon a - - mour!

*p*

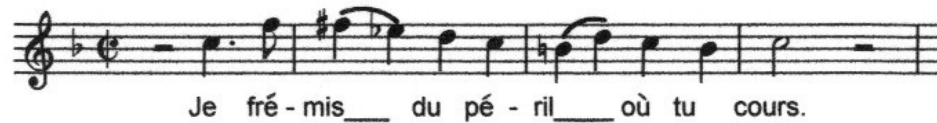
MUSICAL EXAMPLE 3.9: Recitative 2, bars 96-100

En tom - bant, en \_\_\_ tom - bant ...

MUSICAL EXAMPLE 3.10: Aria 2, bars 27-29

<sup>258</sup> John Tyler Tuttle does not provide a specific translation of this phrase, so this one English version comes from the word-by-word translation in Appendix A.

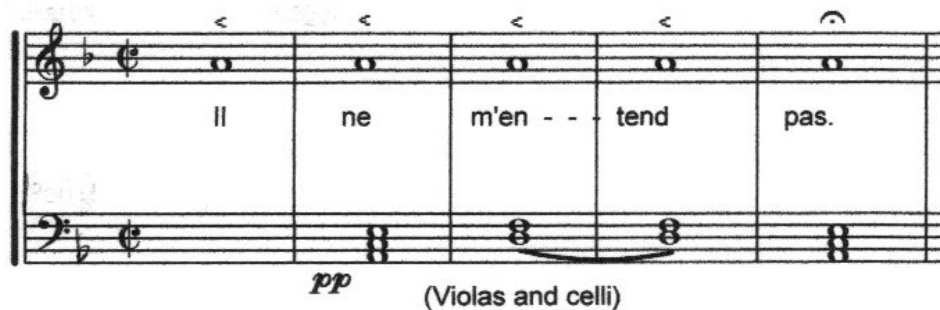
The sinuous vocal line on the words “je frémis du peril ou tu cours” (bars 44-47), in my opinion, evokes Herminie’s desperation.



MUSICAL EXAMPLE 3.11: Aria 2, bars 44-47

The melodic middle section on the words “J’exhale en vain” which utilizes the main theme from the introduction will be discussed in the section below entitled “Use of the Tancredi Theme.”

However, the end of this B section is striking in its simplicity: in bars 123-127 the voice intones “Il ne m’entend pas” (he does not hear me) in stark whole notes on a<sup>1</sup>, while the viola and cello accompany with a simple chordal progression of i iv i, also in whole notes.



MUSICAL EXAMPLE 3.12: Aria 2, bars 123-127

The A' section opens with the crashing dominant minor 9<sup>th</sup>, in a contrast as powerfully stunning as the beginning of the aria. The aria reaches its climax on the word “trancherait” (would cut short) with the voice reaching bb<sup>2</sup> in bar 178 followed by the single *ff* chord for full orchestra.

The following *cesura* illustrates the meaning more vividly than any other occurrence of this text in the piece. The last two words, “mes jours” (my days), sung *pp* and *a cappella* with the

instruction *demi voix* is described by Rushton as an example of “dangerous *verismo*” in which the voice “chokes with emotion at its cadence.”<sup>259</sup>

tran -- che -- rait mes jours. (demi voix) *pp*

*pp* 14 *ff* *pp*

Strings Tutti Strings and winds

MUSICAL EXAMPLE 3.13: Aria 2, bars 178-181

In the beginning of the third recitative, Herminie describes Clorinde, her strength, and her courage, with driving, rhythmic lines, accompanied by dotted rhythms in the strings giving it a martial quality. In contrast to this, the line “que je lui porte envie” (how I envy her) is set to a descending vocal line with small intervals, sung *p*, and followed by sighing motives in the strings.

Que je lui porte en -- vi -- e! *p*

Strings *p*

MUSICAL EXAMPLE 3.14: Recitative 3, bars 189-192

<sup>259</sup> Rushton, *The Music of Berlioz*, 17.



At bar 193 there is a sudden flourish in the strings; this depicts the moment when Herminie notices Clorinde's armor since it occurs just before the line "A ces murs suspendue, son armure frappe ma vue" (Before my eyes, her armor hangs on these walls). Under the lines "si j'osais m'en couvrir ... si trompant tous les yeux" (if I dared put it on! ... if, deceiving all eyes), the tremolo in the strings may seem a cliché gesture to depict her excitement as she devises a plan of escape, "but not the grinding dissonance at each entry of the striking bass motive (bars 196-8), nor the glorious major ninth on 'Chrétiens.'"<sup>260</sup> Horn fifths in the strings followed by a single sustained note in the horns in bar 201 seems to bring Herminie back to reality. Berlioz wrote one of the most expressive lines in this cantata to the words "mon faible bras, pourrait-il soutenir sa redoutable lance?" (Could my weak arm even hold up her fearful spear?).



MUSICAL EXAMPLE 3.15: Recitative 3, bars 203-205

The sudden contrast between the excitement about her plan and this chromatic line, redolent with doubt and disappointment, sung unaccompanied, makes it all the more poignant. The main theme from the introduction is evoked at this point by the flutes and violas, the end of it marked *en mourant*. It seems to drive Herminie to the realization "Tancredi va mourir peut-être, et je balance!" (Tancredi is perhaps about to die, and I hesitate!) On one of the highest notes in these recitatives, Herminie resolves "je cours l'arracher au trépas!" (I will run and snatch him from death!) [See ex. 3.16]

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<sup>260</sup> Ibid.



MUSICAL EXAMPLE 3.16: Recitative 3, bars -212

For a piece which was never meant for performance after the Prix de Rome competition, *Herminie* has the distinction of “the highest density of metronome markings of any work by Berlioz.”<sup>261</sup> This is particularly noticeable in the third recitative which includes nine metronome indications plus several additional directions “concerning mood, style (measured or free, ‘récit.’), and tempo.”<sup>262</sup> Although, considering the number of times *Herminie*’s mood fluctuates during this recitative, these directions are surely warranted.

The third aria is distinctly lacking in specific text painting. Instead, Berlioz sets a general mood and uses the tempo marking *Allegro impetuoso vivace*, which leads Hugh Macdonald to make the following observation: for Berlioz “strong terms are confined to the early works. The impetuosity of youth is confirmed by finding ‘Allegro impetuoso’ only in the *Scène héroïque* and *Herminie*.”<sup>263</sup> In addition, the dotted and triplet accompaniment figures and the strength evoked by the vocal line (marked *avec feu* – with fire) furnish a general martial atmosphere. The one example of highlighting the text would be the way Berlioz set the word “valeur” (valor) in bar 19, punctuated by *ff* chords for full orchestra. [See ex. 3:17]

<sup>261</sup> Foreword to *New Edition of the Complete Works of Hector Berlioz*, vol. 6, *Prix de Rome Works*, xii.

<sup>262</sup> Rushton, *The Music of Berlioz*, 17.

<sup>263</sup> Hugh Macdonald, “Berlioz and the Metronome,” in *Berlioz Studies*, ed. Peter Bloom (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 25.



MUSICAL EXAMPLE 3.17: Aria 3, bars 18-19

He also made a distinction between the first three lines and the fourth (“Protégez l’amour, protégez le malheur” Protect love, protect misfortune!), accompanying the latter with slurred strings and sustained winds, in contrast to the dotted rhythms which accompany the former.

### Use of the “Tancrède” Theme

As noted above, Berlioz used the main theme of the orchestral introduction in several different movements of this cantata (most notably in the cantabile B section in the second aria), but fragments of it also appear in the first and third recitatives. The connection between the different appearances of this theme is “an image of Tancredi,” or rather “an image of Herminia’s feeling for him.”<sup>264</sup> This leads most scholars to dub this theme the “Tancrède” theme. As we will see below, Berlioz reused this theme as the famous *idée fixe* of his *Symphonie fantastique*, so David Charlton calls it the “Tancrède / *idée fixe*” theme. Charlton asserts that “... the use of a recurring theme ... was of itself nothing new in *Herminie*. However, the poetic uses of the Tancrède / *idée fixe* theme [and] their varied functions are dramatically diverse, and rather encourage the speculation that the composer was using his time-limited energies to weave in a pre-composed theme in more sophisticated fashion.”<sup>265</sup>

<sup>264</sup> Rushton, *The Music of Berlioz*, 84.

<sup>265</sup> Charlton, section V.

In the introduction, although the theme is in G major, and trips along pleasantly, it is “fixed in counterpoint against agitation-motifs in lower strings; the latter must relate to human movement or heart-beat while the Tancrède / *idée fixe* theme expresses inner restlessness.”<sup>266</sup>

The theme’s connection with Tancrède and Herminie’s feelings for him is established in the first recitative when it interacts with Herminie’s text as follows: “‘Quel trouble te poursuit, malheureuse [a bass variant of the theme’s first bar now enters in unison], malheureuse Herminie?’ [the variant is then repeated, in developed variation] ‘Tancrède est l’ennemi’. So the theme ‘pursuing’ Erminia is soon identified with Tancred’s image.”<sup>267</sup>

MUSICAL EXAMPLE 3.18: Recitative 1, bars 55-60

Another variant is also heard “between the words ‘auteur de mes maux’ and ‘(avec tristesse) Oui, Tancrède, à tes lois en amante asservie’ ... Herminia is obsessed with Tancredi, whom she ought to hate.”<sup>268</sup> Charlton sees this development as “chromaticised metaphor of obsession ... even

<sup>266</sup> Ibid.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid.

<sup>268</sup> Rushton, *The Music of Berlioz*, 84.

‘enslavement’ through love.’<sup>269</sup> The theme in this recitative thus represents Herminia’s obsession with her secret, forbidden, all-consuming, and unrequited passion for Tancredi.

The next appearance of the Tancredi theme is in the *cantabile* section of the second aria (bars 75-101). In this instance, the flutes and violins alternate with Herminie on the text “J’exhale en vain ma plainte fugitive” (I exhale in vain my fugitive complaint).

Solo flute and clarinet

J'ex - ha - -le en vain ma plain-te fu - - gi - ti - ve.

(Flute and clarinet)

Je \_\_\_\_\_ l'im - plo - - - - re, il

ne m'en - - - tend pas.

MUSICAL EXAMPLE 3.19: Aria 2, bars 75-101

David Charlton makes the following observations about the theme and its dramatic function here:

Erminia’s music, texted, represents her ‘evanescent plaint’; so the familiar music now performs a new function, ... the singer actualizes music which in the opening section was, by operatic convention, ‘unheard’ to her as music, but heard by us. ... This must be why, when she sings ‘J’exhale en vain’ etc., she first listens to the violins, then imitates them; it is as though she first hears an inner voice – the voice of nature, as the eighteenth century called it – then reproduces the sounds. By the same token, the inability of the voice line to cover all the violin notes seems psychologically right; and, in any case, the sheer power of Tancred’s image is by now more than she can easily withstand.’<sup>270</sup>

<sup>269</sup> Charlton, section V.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid.

When we combine this with what the text is actually saying, the theme takes on the weight, not only of Herminie's feelings of hopelessness and despair, but also her frustration with those feelings and Tancredi's distance and unresponsiveness.

The last appearance of the Tancredi theme comes in the last recitative. Herminie has seen Clorinde's armor and come up with her plan to escape, but deflates when she realizes her physical weakness would make this plan next to impossible. The opening motive of the Tancredi theme is played by solo flute, marked *en mourant* (while dying), with minimal support by *pianissimo* violins. This theme, or rather the image of Tancredi it represents (Herminie's fears for his "imminent death from injuries received in the first duel with Argantes"<sup>271</sup>) spurs Herminie into her desperate actions. Charlton explains the theme's function here "as a transformed reminiscence: an actively supposed memory, still perhaps 'pursuing' her, but in a newly varied guise; and because she is really on the point of making a decision, we might also claim that she calls up the image, as much as it calls to her."<sup>272</sup> Rushton observes that "the melody embodies her complaint, but also the yearning that spurs her to action."<sup>273</sup> The thought of Tancredi suffering, a thought she cannot bear, overrides Herminie's self-concerns; this thought sends her on her errand of mercy, in spite of her fear, her weakness, her countrymen, and the danger to herself.

Many scholars have debated whether or not the Tancredi theme predates the 1828 *Prix de Rome* competition. David Cairns writes:

My feeling is that [the theme] already existed, associated with Harriet Smithson and his unrequited passion for her ... he used it to express the lover's exalted yearning for a beloved who is both unresponsive and physically distant. The importance of the melody is emphasized by its first two phrases being stated at the

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<sup>271</sup> Ibid.

<sup>272</sup> Ibid.

<sup>273</sup> Rushton, *The Music of Berlioz*, 84.

outset of the work, in the orchestral introduction; for the whole premise of the poem is the hopelessness of Erminia's love for Tancred and the suffering and havoc it has wrought in her life.<sup>274</sup>

The strongest argument for the theory that this was a melody Berlioz had conceived before he received the text for this competition is the fact that he had to borrow and alter a line of recitative to make use of it. "If Berlioz had composed the theme for 'J'exhale en vain' *en loge* he would, arguably, have found one that worked better for the voice, and that incorporated the missing words 'vers lui', ... especially since that couplet had to be borrowed from the text of the following recitative."<sup>275</sup>

### **Self Borrowings**

Many musical ideas from the works Berlioz composed for the four *Prix de Rome* competitions make reappearances in later works. The two examples of self borrowing from *Herminie* are the Tancredi theme which is reincarnated as the *idée fixe* in the *Symphonie fantastique*, and the *Prière* from the third aria which becomes the rondo refrain in the "Chant sacré" from his *Neuf Mélodies irlandaises*.

The *Symphonie fantastique* is arguably one of Berlioz's most well-known works, and it is justly famous for the use and transformation of the *idée fixe* which recurs in different guises in all five movements. The program of the *Symphonie fantastique* is "plainly linked to Berlioz's impossible passion for Harriet Smithson, by whom the youthful composer was smitten on 11 September 1827, when he saw her on the stage of the Odéon Theater in the role of Ophelia."<sup>276</sup> As stated above, the Tancredi theme from *Herminie*, "with a little alteration to make a stronger

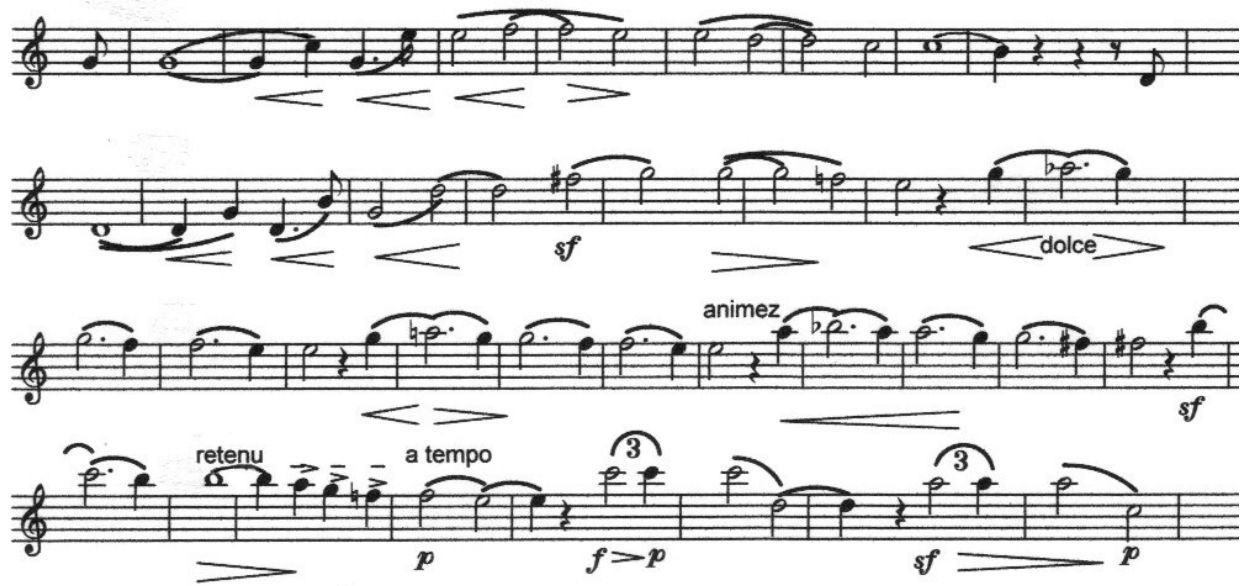
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<sup>274</sup> Cairns, 288.

<sup>275</sup> Charlton, section V.

<sup>276</sup> Peter Bloom, *The Life of Berlioz*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 43.

cadence,”<sup>277</sup> became the *idée fixe*. Example 3.20 shows the *idée fixe* in its first appearance in the first movement of the *Symphonie fantastique*, bars 72-106.



MUSICAL EXAMPLE 3.20: *Symphonie fantastique* I, bars 72-106<sup>278</sup>

Example 3.21 shows the Tancrède theme as it first appears in the orchestral introduction to *Herminie*, bars 3-11.



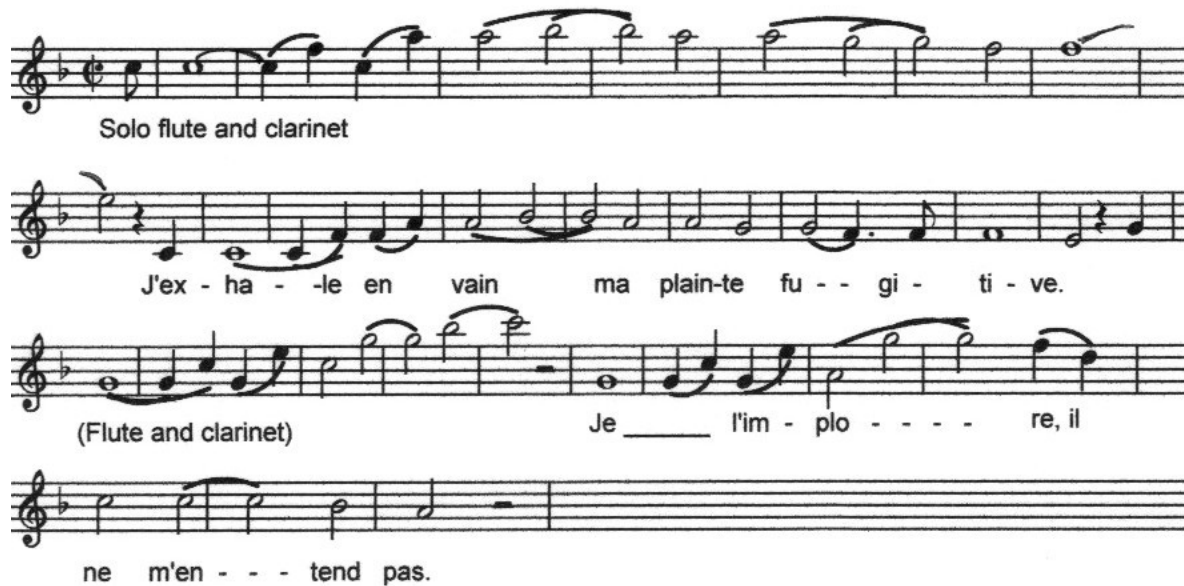
MUSICAL EXAMPLE 3.21: Orchestra introduction, bars 3-11

<sup>277</sup> Rushton, *The Music of Berlioz*, 28.

<sup>278</sup> Hector Berlioz – *New Edition of the Complete Works*, “*Symphonie fantastique*” v.16, ed. Nicholas Temperley, (Barenreiter: New York, 1972).



David Charlton notes that “the end of the *idée fixe* of 1830 is not present.”<sup>279</sup> However, when the theme appears in the second aria [ex. 3.22], the sequence which forms the consequent phrase of the *idée fixe* is present [ex. 3.23].



Solo flute and clarinet

J'ex - ha - -le en vain ma plain-te fu - - gi - ti - ve.

(Flute and clarinet) Je \_\_\_\_ l'im - plo - - - - re, il

ne m'en - - - tend pas.

MUSICAL EXAMPLE 3.22: Aria 2, bars 82-90



J'ex - ha - - - le en vain Ma plain-te fu - gi - ti - - ve.

J'ex - ha - - - le en vain Ma plain - - te fu - gi - ti - ve.

Je l'im - plor - - - re, je l'im - plor - - - - re.

MUSICAL EXAMPLE 3.23: Aria 2, bars 102-122

One should observe that the leaps in bars 119 and 121 of the aria correspond with the leaps in bars 104 and 106 of the symphony, except in the aria they are octave leaps and in the symphony

<sup>279</sup> Charlton, section V.

they are a minor 7<sup>th</sup> and a major 6<sup>th</sup> respectively. This is the most obvious difference in these two appearances of this musical theme.

Why would Berlioz reuse this theme in the symphony with a program that was clearly autobiographical? Perhaps, he felt some kind of kinship to Herminie: several scholars have speculated that he saw her situation as “analogous to his own, with the genders reversed: he the sidelined aspirant and she [Harriet Smithson] the heroine of the hour.”<sup>280</sup> Rushton observes that “in both works the adored person has paid no attention to a timid lover.”<sup>281</sup> There is also a commonality in the way he used the theme to represent an image of the central character’s feelings for the beloved in both *Herminie* and the symphony. As Rushton points out “In the *Symphonie fantastique* programme, Berlioz makes it clear that the *idée fixe* does not represent the beloved, but the protagonist’s perception of her, because it invariably comes to his mind with her image. Its character (‘passioné, mais noble et timide’) is the character with which his imagination endows her.”<sup>282</sup> So this musical theme which recurs and transforms in one of his earliest works becomes the guiding theme of his most famous and autobiographical symphony. For this reason alone, *Herminie* deserves attention and study.

It is no surprise that the other section Berlioz “borrowed” was the prayer from the third aria. He himself wrote “if there was anything good in my score, it was that andante.”<sup>283</sup> Still very much affected by his passion for Harriet Smithson, Berlioz set several poems by the Irishman Thomas Moore in a free translation by Thomas Gounet. *Neuf Mélodies irlandaises* (1830) “includes four strophic songs and four useful concert-fillers for vocal ensemble, all in

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<sup>280</sup> Charlton, section IV.

<sup>281</sup> Rushton, *The Music of Berlioz*, 84.

<sup>282</sup> Ibid.

<sup>283</sup> Berlioz, *Memoirs*, 93.

rondo form.”<sup>284</sup> The sixth of these is the “Chant sacré” for six-part chorus and piano. Berlioz used the first 13 bars of Herminie’s *Priere* as the refrain in this rondo, divided by recitative. The text of this song begins “Dieu tout-puissant, Dieu de l’aurore” (God Almighty, God of the Dawn). He altered the second refrain “with lingering vocal imitation and spicy cadential chords of the subdominant minor and flattened submediant (b6-5), resulting in a rather appalling piece of religiosity.”<sup>285</sup> In 1843, he arranged it for chorus with orchestra, and finally for a wind ensemble consisting of two clarinets, two bugles, a trumpet and a saxophone; thus it marks the “first concert appearance of the saxophone.”<sup>286</sup> This piece, entitled *Hymne pour six instruments à vent récemment perfectionnés et inventes par Adolphe Sax* was performed on February 3, 1844, but is now lost.”<sup>287</sup>

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<sup>284</sup> Rushton, *The Music of Berlioz*, 26.

<sup>285</sup> Dickinson, 172.

<sup>286</sup> Ibid.

<sup>287</sup> Foreword to *New Edition of the Complete Works of Hector Berlioz*, vol. 6, *Prix de Rome Works*, xii.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PERFORMER'S GUIDE

At last we come to the information which is perhaps of greatest interest to the perspective performer: a discussion of the various challenges which that performer might face while preparing this piece. This chapter contains helpful information about different publications and recordings, various technical challenges, and stylistic options, indicating how different recording artists have performed this piece. The information in the preceding chapters will be invaluable to a conscientious performer, most particularly Chapter Two's discussion of the source material and Herminie's character, and the importance of the various appearances of the Tancredi theme in Chapter Three. The unique position *Herminie* holds as the Berlioz composition with the greatest concentration of tempo markings, and how accurately these markings are followed in various recordings is also discussed in this chapter. My own opinion will be shared regarding whether or not this soprano cantata may be or should be performed by mezzo sopranos, such as myself. Finally, I will explore Herminie's emotional journey as represented in this cantata.

#### **Publications and Recordings**

None of Berlioz's *Prix de Rome* cantatas were published before the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Their first appearance in print is in the collection of his complete works, published by Breitkopf and Härtel between 1900 and 1907. The *Prix de Rome* cantatas appear in volume 15 of the collection *Hector Berlioz Werke*, edited by Charles Malherbe and Felix Weingartner. The newest edition of *Herminie* and the other cantatas can be found in volume 6, *Prix de Rome Works of the New Edition of the Complete Works* [of Berlioz], published by Bärenreiter. This volume was edited by David Gilbert and published in 1998. As stated on the Berlioz Website,

the *New Berlioz Edition* “is intended to supersede the older and less accurate edition.”<sup>288</sup> In support of this claim, I have compiled the following chart notating the variations found in the original Breitkopf and Härtel edition when compared to the new Bärenreiter edition.

Table 4.1 – Differences between Breitkopf & Härtel and Bärenreiter editions

	Breitkopf & Härtel <sup>289</sup>	Bärenreiter <sup>290</sup>
Recit 2 bar 90		
Recit 3 bar 186		
Recit 3 bar 188		
Recit 3 bar 202		
Aria 3 bar 26		
Aria 3 bar 142		

Bärenreiter also published piano/vocal scores of the cantatas, which were derived from the full score in their complete works collection. There are a few misprints in the Bärenreiter piano/vocal score of *Herminie* which can be observed when compared to the full score. In the second recitative, bar 98 on the word “victime,” (victim) the final syllable should be an 8<sup>th</sup> note on f<sup>1</sup>, not g<sup>1</sup>. In the third recitative, bar 184, on the words “Que Clorinde est heureuse” (How

<sup>288</sup> Michel Austin and Monir Tayeb, *The Hector Berlioz Website*. “Berlioz: Musical and Literary Works,” available from <http://www.hberlioz.com/Works/BerliozMLWorks.html#Breitkopf>. (accessed on July 18, 2009).

<sup>289</sup> *Hector Berlioz Werke*, edited by Charles Malherbe and Felix Weingartner, vol 15 “Gesänge mit Orchesterbegleitung,” (Leipzig: Breitkopf and Härtel, [19--?]).

<sup>290</sup> *Hector Berlioz, New Edition of the Complete Works*, edited by David Gilbert, vol 6, *Prix de Rome Works*, (New York: Bärenreiter, 1998).

happy is Clorinda) the first three syllables are on  $b\flat^1$  in the full score and on  $f^1$  in the piano vocal score. In bar 31 of the *Prière*, the word should be “faible” (feeble) not “faibel.”

I have been unable to find any reference to the first performance of *Herminie* (other than the performance for the *Prix de Rome* judges with an improvised piano accompaniment). It is almost certain, however, that no performance with orchestra took place in Berlioz’s lifetime. The recording made by Janet Baker and Sir Colin Davis in 1979 is, in all probability, the first recording of *Herminie*. In his 1970 review of Janet Baker’s recording of Berlioz’s works which included *La Mort de Cléopâtre*, Hugh Macdonald commented, “It is a pity that *La Mort d’Orphée* and *Herminie*, the 1827 and 1828 entries [for the *Prix de Rome*] though neither of them so striking as *Cléopâtre*, have yet to be recorded.”<sup>291</sup> Then in his review, printed in 1981, of Janet Baker’s recording of *Herminie*, Macdonald states “*Herminie* has perhaps never been performed before.”<sup>292</sup> If Macdonald is correct, this is not only the first recording, but also the first orchestral performance of the cantata.

The availability of recordings today is perhaps of greater interest to the potential performer. The recordings that I studied for this chapter were made by Janet Baker with Sir Colin Davis conducting (recorded March 1979, available in several reissues on CD),<sup>293</sup> Mireille Delunsch with Philippe Herreweghe (recorded October 1994),<sup>294</sup> Michèle Lagrange with Jean-

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<sup>291</sup> Hugh Macdonald, review of *Janet Baker Sings Berlioz* with Janet Baker, Alexander Gibson, and the LSO, HMV ASD 2516, *The Musical Times* 111, no. 1524 (Feb., 1970). Available from JSTOR, item 956757. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/956757> (accessed September 27, 2008).

<sup>292</sup> Macdonald, Hugh, review of *Cléopâtre; Herminie by Berlioz*, with Janet Baker, Sir Colin Davis, Philips 9500 683, *The Musical Times* 122, 1655 (Jan 1981) p 33. (accessed September 27, 2008).

<sup>293</sup> Janet Baker, *Dame Janet Baker Philips and Decca Recordings, 1961-1979*, with Janet Baker, Sir Colin Davis, and London Symphony Orchestra, Decca 000150802. 2003, compact disc box set.

<sup>294</sup> Hector Berlioz, *Nuits d’été; Herminie*, with Philippe Herreweghe, Mireille Delunsch, Brigitte Balleys and Champs Elysees Orchestra, HMC901522, 1995, compact disc.

Claude Casadesus (released 2003),<sup>295</sup> and Aurélia Legay with Marc Minkowski (recorded December 2002).<sup>296</sup> There is a full discography in Appendix B including full citations and annotations of these and other recordings. It is important to note that, of the four recordings mentioned above, only Legay’s recording was made using the Bärenreiter edition published in 1998; the other three recordings contain the differences enumerated in Table 4.1.

## Technical Challenges

Nothing in this paper (except perhaps the translation and IPA transcription) will be more helpful to the prospective performer than a discussion of the technical challenges of this piece. As one of Berlioz’s earliest compositions, *Herminie* contains several instances of awkward text setting. The first example is the very first line of the first recitative (bar 55). The text “Quel trouble te poursuit” (what trouble pursues you) is set so that the mute e on the second syllable of “trouble” falls on a relatively strong beat.



MUSICAL EXAMPLE 4.1: Recitative 1, bars 55

This syllable would be silent in spoken French, but in sung French at this time it was pronounced [blə]. However, of all the singers I listened to, only Janet Baker alters the rhythm by lengthening “trou-” so that the syllables “-ble te pour-” become a triplet figure. The other performers adhere closer to the written rhythm, without emphasizing the unaccented syllable.

<sup>295</sup> Hector Berlioz, *Cantatas du Prix de Rome*, with Jean-Claude Casadesus, Beatrice Uria-Monzon, Michele Lagrange, and Orchestre National de Lille, HMC 901542, 1996, compact disc.

<sup>296</sup> Hector Berlioz, *Symphonie fantastique – Herminie*, with Marc Minkowski, Aurelia Legay, Les Musiciens du Louvre, and Mahler Chamber Orchestra, Deutsche Grammophon 474209, 2004, compact disc.

Another awkward phrase is in the third recitative. In bar 186, Berlioz sets the phrase “De son sexe abjurant” (abjuring [the fearful weakness] of her sex) so that “de” and “ab-” are on beats 2 and 3; however, my instinct is to put “sexe” on a stronger beat.



MUSICAL EXAMPLE 4.2: Recitative 3, bar 186

Singers whose native tongue is more accented than French have difficulty reconciling the conflict of singing the relatively unaccented language to rhythms organized by strong and weak beats which impose a feeling of metric accents. In this phrase, the best way to approach it is to head for the most important syllable as Berlioz set it: the “ti” of “craintive” (fearful) is a quarter note on the downbeat of the next measure – it is clearly the goal of this phrase.

One of the most troublesome passages because of the speed of the text setting occurs in the third recitative, bar 198. The text is “je fuyais d’Aladin le palais odieux” (I fled the hateful palace of Aladin) set to the following rhythm:



Several singers altered this phrase. Lagrange adds a fermata before “je,” while Baker adds beats to the bar and changes the rhythm to the following:



Personally, I like the rhythm as written, despite the tempo marking in bar 197 *plus en plus rapide*. I feel the written rhythm imparts a sense of Herminie’s growing excitement and nervousness as she realizes she might escape the palace and rush to save the man whom she loves. A similar passage where the rapidity of the setting could be an issue is earlier in the



second recitative, bar 95, on the text “de sa force abattue il prévient le retour” (of his downcast strength, he foresees the return) which is set to the following rhythm:



For both of these phrases, I practiced speaking them slowly, then more quickly, and repeated them at tempo until they became natural and easy.

Prominent features of this work are recurring large leaps; Berlioz wrote many octave leaps and several leaps greater than an octave. In the first aria, bars 16-17, one phrase ends on a  $d^1$ , but the second phrase begins on  $f^2$  on “Dieu!” only to drop back down the octave to  $f^1$ .



MUSICAL EXAMPLE 4.3: Aria 1, bars 16-17

In the *Prière* of the third aria, bars 128-129, there is a similar passage from  $b$  to  $e^2$  between the end of the phrase “mon respect t’implore” (my respect implores you) and the beginning of “daigne écouter ma faible voix” (deign to listen to my feeble voice).



MUSICAL EXAMPLE 4.4: Aria 3, bars 128-129

While this is not an actual leap but takes place over a rest, it still takes some practice to change registers smoothly over the octave and a half, particularly in the *Prière* which is extremely quiet and exposed. Berlioz also complicates these large leaps by incorporating them into sequences. In the second aria, bars 27-30, there is a sequence of octave leaps which rise chromatically on the repeated words “en tombant” (while falling). [See ex. 4.5]



MUSICAL EXAMPLE 4.5: Aria 2, bars 27-30

A similar sequence occurs in bars 59-64, only slightly longer. While these octaves perfectly describe the text, they can be tricky to navigate and warrant extra attention.

While *Herminie* is not an overly chromatic work (Berlioz *was* trying to behave himself) certain passages may present a challenge. In the first aria, bars 29-37, the text “chaque instant de mes feux accroît la violence” (Each instant of my flaming increases the violence) is set to a chromatically rising sequence, further complicated by the leap of a 5<sup>th</sup> in the motive. This passage ends with the text “mon coeur brûle” (my heart burns) rising by half-step to  $ab^2$  followed by a descending octave leap.



MUSICAL EXAMPLE 4.6: Aria 1, bars 29-37

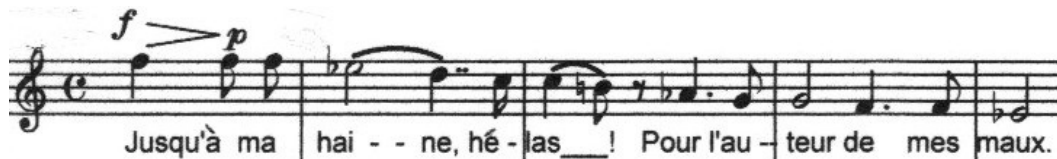
I found this sequence particularly difficult to keep in tune – it is very easy to overreach the rising 5<sup>th</sup> in the excitement of a passage marked *animez peu à peu le mouvement*. I practiced it without the 5ths when I realized this tendency; and later added them back in. Another slightly tricky passage occurs in the second aria, bars 45-46 (and also 155-156) on the text “je frémis du peril où tu cours” (I tremble from the danger where you run). This text is set to a sinuous line complicated by accidentals which create intricate half-steps and augmented 2nds around  $f^2$  in the

second *passaggio*. I practiced this passage down an octave until the intervals came naturally, then returned it to the higher octave as written.



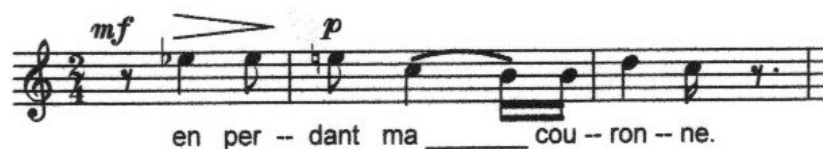
MUSICAL EXAMPLE 4.7: Aria 2, bars 45-46

Some performers may have difficulty with the dynamic requirements, especially softer dynamics in the higher tessitura. In the first recitative, bar 68, on the text “jusqu’à ma haine” (even my hatred), Berlioz indicates a *diminuendo* from *forte* to *piano* on  $f^2$ .



MUSICAL EXAMPLE 4.8: Recitative 1, bar 68

Singers with larger voices may find this particularly difficult. I prefer to think of it as a change of color rather than dynamic level. This is aided by the word *doux* (sweetly) over the *piano* marking. In the first aria, bar 72, on text “en perdant ma couronne” (by losing my crown) Berlioz indicates a diminuendo from *forte* on  $eb^2$  to *piano* on  $e^2$ .



MUSICAL EXAMPLE 4.9: Aria 1, bar 72

At the end of the second aria, bars 180-181, the text “mes jours” (my days) on  $e^2$  and  $d^2$  is marked *pianissimo* and *demi voix*. [See ex. 4.10]



MUSICAL EXAMPLE 4.10: Aria 2, bars 180-181

This indication is extremely difficult after the climax on  $b\flat^2$  a few bars before. Of all the artists I listened to, Aurélia Legay had the best realization of this extreme effect. However, since this effect is meant to depict Herminie's emotional breakdown, the performer should not be too concerned with making a beautiful sound on these last words. The last major dynamic level which may present a problem is in the third aria, bar 186, on the text "protégez l'amour" (protect love). This line goes from a  $b^1$  up to  $f\sharp^2$  at a *piano* dynamic level.



MUSICAL EXAMPLE 4.11: Aria 3, bar 186

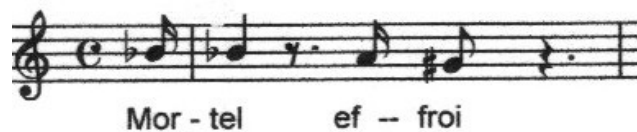
I imagine most of these dynamic changes as color changes in order to keep my voice open and free.

In putting together any performance, the singer and accompanist face several artistic decisions. One of the most important decisions in any piece that involves this kind of recitative in which the voice and piano alternate is whether or not to overlap. In some places, one may decide one wants more time, in some cases it is more appropriate to have the piano overlap the voice in order to keep forward momentum. Each performer must decide on her own or with her accompanist. An invaluable aid to this decision process is listening to the available recordings to observe what different artists do and decide what one prefers.

*Herminie*, while it is mostly straightforward, contains a few sections where the ensemble between vocalist and accompanist could be slightly problematic. The entrance of the singer in

bar 26 of the first aria is slightly awkward because the figure in the accompaniment begins off the beat, but the singer must come in on the beat. The first entrance in the second aria (as well as its recapitulation in bar 130) will also take a little practice, mostly because of the fast tempo.

In addition, I would like to mention some subtleties which the unwary performer may miss. In the first aria, entrance of A<sup>1</sup> in bar 48 is earlier than expected; the vocal entrance comes right after the descending sixteenth notes, not two bars later as it does in the very first entrance. In the second recitative, on the text “mortel effroi” (mortal fright) in bar 99, one must pay particular attention to the distinction between the quarter note on “-tel” and eighth note on “-froi.”



MUSICAL EXAMPLE 4.12: Recitative 2, bar 99

This subtle difference creates a very expressive effect. In the A' section of the second aria, the text “en tombant trancherait mes jours” (while falling would cut off my days) in bars 143-146 is set slightly differently from how it is in the A section, bars 19-22. Notice that in the first instance the first interval is a minor 6<sup>th</sup> from g<sup>1</sup> to e<sup>b2</sup> [ex. 4.13a], while the second occurrence of this passage involves only a rising 5<sup>th</sup> from g<sup>1</sup> to d<sup>2</sup> [ex. 4.13b].



MUSICAL EXAMPLE 4.13a: Aria 2, bars 19-22



MUSICAL EXAMPLE 4.13b: Aria 2, bars 143-146

The word “cessez” (cease) in the third aria alternates between an eighth note and a quarter note pick-up in bars 46 & 50 and also 79 & 83. Also watch for the alternation between a<sup>1</sup> and a#<sup>1</sup> in bars 83-85 on “cessez d’exciter les alarmes” (cease to excite the alarms.)



MUSICAL EXAMPLE 4.14: Aria 3, bars 83-85

Possibly, the most helpful advice a potential performer might be looking for is where to breathe in the long lines of this piece. There are so many places where different artists took breaths not indicated by commas or rests that I created a table in Appendix C in which I chronicled those breaths, which artists took them (as well as which ones I find most helpful), and any changes in pronunciation this might cause. They are listed in the order in which they appear in the piece. The reader should refer to that appendix for further information on this subject.

### Stylistic Options

After a performer has mastered the technical aspects of any piece, their next task is to make their performance of it individual and unique. The following stylistic options, though derived from other performers, will help the potential performer of this piece to do just that.

Although Berlioz is known as a composer of the Romantic era, during the period in which he composed *Herminie*, his greatest influences were Gluck and Beethoven, and his teachers were all decidedly Classical in their orientation. Therefore, it would be stylistically and, thereby, artistically correct to add some typically Classical ornamentation to the recitative sections, and Janet Baker does just that. In the first recitative, she ornaments “de ma loi” (of my law) with a passing tone on “loi” (bar 61), and she ornaments “triste Syrie” (sad Syria) by staying on the c♭ on “-ri-” (bar 65). In the second recitative, most of the performers altered the

word “insensée” (mad) (bar 87) changing the quarter note on “sé” to  $e\flat^1$ , instead of  $d^1$ , creating a passing tone. In the third recitative, Baker ornaments “craintive” (fearful) with a  $b\flat^1$  escape tone on “-ti-” (bar 187); she also adds an escape tone of  $d^2$  on the “vu-” of “ma vue” (my sight) (bar 195). A few subtle ornaments are possible in the arias as well. Baker and Michele Lagrange add a slight glissando on the octave leap from  $e^2$  to  $e^1$ , bar 121 of the second aria on the words “je l’implore” (I implore him). Several artists add a slight glissando on the final syllable of the word “écouter” (to listen) in the *Prière*, both in bar 130 and 161.

In comparison with the other recordings, Janet Baker utilizes more rhythmic freedom and a greater variety of vocal colors in her performance, particularly in the recitatives. Some of the most obvious liberties occur in the first recitative: Baker adds a *fermata* on the  $f^2$  of “malheureuse” (unhappy) in bar 58, she stresses and takes a breath after “Dieu” in the line “de mon Dieu, de ma loi” (of my God, of my law) in bar 61, and she lengthens “m’ont” in the phrase “ses exploits m’ont bannie” (his exploits have banished me) in bar 63. These are just to name a few examples. One of my favorite examples is the color and tempo she utilizes in the third recitative, bar 195, on the words “si j’osais m’en couvrir” (If I dared to cover myself) – not only does it convey that the idea of using the armor to escape has just occurred to her, but the color and tempo of the line vividly communicate the trepidation and wonder which this idea engenders. Aurélia Legay was by far the most precise rhythmically of all the performers I listened to. I suggest comparing several recordings to see which approach appeals best to the performer.

Although Janet Baker took the most liberties with the rhythms, each of the artists made slight alterations. Mireille Delunsch takes a slight pause in the first aria, bar 37, before the words “et ma bouche est réduite au silence” (and my mouth is reduced to silence); she takes this phrase

slower than the other recordings. Aurélia Legay inserts a fermata in the first aria, bar 48, after the “Ah!” at the beginning of the A' section. All the recordings begin the *animez* on the last beat of bar 66 in the first aria, even though it is marked on the last beat of 65. In the second aria, there is a general consensus that the phrase “plainte fugitive” (fugitive complaint) in bars 116-117 should have a slight *ritardando*.<sup>297</sup> This parallels the *ritardando* in the *idée fixe* from the *Symphonie fantastique*. Michele Lagrange adds a *tenuto* on “frap-” of “son armure frappe ma vue” (her armor strikes my sight) in the third recitative, bar 194. The last rhythmic liberty taken is the end of the third recitative, bar 211, on the words “je cours l’arracher au trépas” (I run to snatch him from death). The written rhythm is as follows:



The two artists who made the most obvious alterations to this rhythm were Mireille Delunsch who sang the following rhythm:



and Janet Baker who sang it thus:

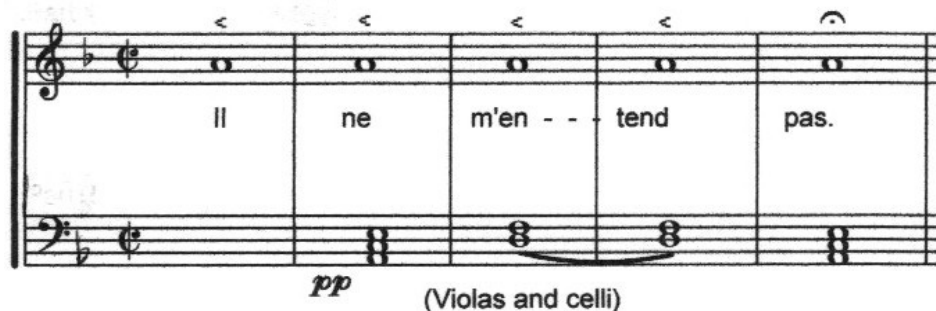


I just have two last suggestions for stylistic interpretation. One is actually written by Berlioz himself. At the end of the B section in the second aria, the words “il ne m’entend pas” (he does not hear me) in bars 123-127 are written on five whole notes on a<sup>1</sup> with accent marks over the first four. [See ex. 4.15]

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<sup>297</sup> The reader is referred to musical example 3.20 on page 72.





MUSICAL EXAMPLE 4.15: Aria 2, bars 123-127

In their recordings, Michele Lagrange and Aurélia Legay beautifully realize these accent marks, creating the emphasis with the speed and intensity of their vibrato. Done well, it is a beautiful and moving effect. Janet Baker's performance of this line is almost straight tone; it also conveys the hopelessness and impotence Herminie feels in this moment. The last alteration I wish to point out is, fittingly enough, the final line of the piece. On this climactic line, bars 272-275 of the third aria, all the artists I listened to sang the “-crè-” of “Tancrède” through three whole notes ( $g\sharp^2$  and 2 bars of  $b^2$ ), only arriving on the final syllable on the  $d\sharp^2$  dotted half note.



MUSICAL EXAMPLE 4.16: Aria 3, bars 272-275

Let the performer be aware of the elision in this phrase between “Tancrède” and “à” which would make the syllable on  $d\sharp^2$  [da]. However, if she should decide to stay on the optional  $g\sharp^2$  which moves to an  $f\sharp^2$  on the third whole note, I believe the syllable [da] should begin on that  $f\sharp^2$  and end on the  $d\sharp^2$ .

## Metronome Markings

The metronome was invented approximately ten years prior to Berlioz's composition of *Herminie*, and Beethoven was one of the first composers of note to use metronome markings in his major works. Is it any wonder that *Herminie*, the first major work Berlioz composed after hearing Beethoven's symphonies, is riddled with metronome markings? Hugh Macdonald observes in his article entitled "Berlioz and the Metronome" that Berlioz "felt no need for MMs [metronome markings]"<sup>298</sup> as long as he was the only one to conduct his own music. He used "traditional, generally Italian, tempo indications"<sup>299</sup> in his manuscript scores. One exception to this is *Herminie*, "whose autograph is carefully provided with MMs at every speed change including a very rare case of an MM without any supporting verbal direction."<sup>300</sup> Macdonald finds it incredible that "a work that was never published or performed should have MMs at all."<sup>301</sup> Not only was that unusual, but *Herminie* has "the highest density of metronome markings of any work by Berlioz;"<sup>302</sup> this density is especially high in the 25 bars of the third recitative which have nine different metronome markings. Macdonald observes that some of these metronome markings "inevitably conflict with verbal instructions and with common musical sense. Some movements seem unreasonably fast or slow, some are simply impossible."<sup>303</sup>

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<sup>298</sup> Hugh Macdonald, "Berlioz and the Metronome," in *Berlioz Studies*, ed. Peter Bloom, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 19.

<sup>299</sup> Ibid.

<sup>300</sup> Ibid.

<sup>301</sup> Ibid.

<sup>302</sup> "Foreword," *Hector Berlioz – New Edition of the Complete Works*, vol. 6, "Prix de Rome Works", David Gilbert, ed., (New York: Barenreiter, 1998), xii.

<sup>303</sup> Macdonald, "Berlioz and the Metronome."

Below is a chart of tempi<sup>304</sup> taken by four conductors of recent recordings, compared to the tempo markings Berlioz indicated. I chose to examine the major tempo changes within each of the arias. The one tempo marking in a recitative is the statement of the Tancrède theme in the third recitative, which represents Herminie imagining Tancrède dying. This image spurs Herminie toward her desperate course of action (and the final aria), and represents a pivotal moment in the cantata.

TABLE 4.2: Comparisons of Tempi

	As Marked	Davis <sup>305</sup>	Casadesus <sup>306</sup>	Herreweghe <sup>307</sup>	Minkowski <sup>308</sup>
Orchestra Introduction	♩ = 72	♩ = 70	♩ = 70	♩ = 72	♩ = 66
Aria 1	♩ = 80	♩ = 70	♩ = 102	♩ = 80 +	♩ = 74
Aria 2 bar 1	♩ = 138	♩ = 116	♩ = 132	♩ = 124 +	♩ = 140
Aria 2 bar 35	♩ = 144	♩ = 120	♩ = 130 +	♩ = 124	♩ = 142
Aria 2 bar 75	♩ = 120	♩ = 112	♩ = 120	♩ = 102 +	♩ = 104
Aria 2 bar 128	♩ = 152 *	♩ = 126	♩ = 132 +	♩ = 128	♩ = 148
Recit 3 bar 205	♩ = 60	♩ = 42 +	♩ = 60	♩ = 58	♩ = 58
Aria 3 bar 1	♩ = 138 *	♩ = 116	♩ = 126	♩ = 116 +	♩ = 122
Aria 3 bar 68	♩ = 144 *	♩ = 120 +	♩ = 130	♩ = 116	♩ = 124
Aria 3 <i>Priere</i>	♩ = 60	♩ = 56	♩ = 52	♩ = 52	♩ = 52
Aria 3 bar 164	♩ = 152 *	♩ = 120	♩ = 140	♩ = 124 +	♩ = 122

The tempi marked by the symbol [\*] are the tempi which Hugh Macdonald considers “unattainably fast.”<sup>309</sup> Those marked with [+] are the ones I prefer. While the tempi listed are approximations, the general tendency is to take this piece slower than the metronome markings

<sup>304</sup> These figures are approximations.

<sup>305</sup> *Dame Janet Baker Philips and Decca Recordings, 1961-1979*, compact disc box set.

<sup>306</sup> *Cantatas du Prix de Rome*, compact disc.

<sup>307</sup> *Nuits d'été; Herminie*, compact disc.

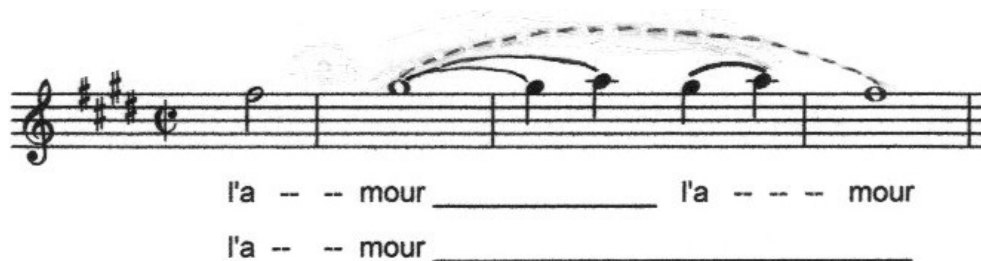
<sup>308</sup> *Symphonie fantastique – Herminie*, compact disc.

<sup>309</sup> Hugh Macdonald, “Berlioz and the Metronome,” 23.

indicated by Berlioz, particularly the faster ones. I recommend taking the fast tempi slower than marked, especially in performance with piano.

### **Soprano or Mezzo Soprano**

Some people might question why I, as a mezzo soprano, chose to research and perform a cantata written for a soprano as my doctoral dissertation. While initially listening to and looking through this piece, I observed that the range [which extends down to a and up to b<sup>2</sup>] would be reasonably attainable for a high mezzo. The fact that Janet Baker, the first artist to record this piece, is a mezzo encouraged me to pursue it. The only difficulty I have experienced is with the tessitura and many repetitions of the final aria, and the places I enumerated above, in which a softer dynamic is indicated on a higher note or notes. However, the stamina necessary to sustain the higher tessitura and dynamic demands is no greater than that needed for many of the great operatic roles traditionally sung by a mezzo soprano, like “Charlotte” or “Dorabella.” A soprano, on the other hand, might have difficulty with the lower notes in last movement (notes which makes this piece manageable for mezzo). I am thinking specifically of bars 126-128 in the *Prière*, when the words “mon respect t’implore” (my respect implores you) descend to c and b, as well as the b in bar 249 on the word “enemie.” Several of the recording artists made alterations to alleviate their troubles with tessitura. In the third aria, Aurélia Legay, a soprano, sings the word “armes” up an octave in bars 35-36 (she sings g<sup>2</sup> and e<sup>2</sup> instead of g<sup>1</sup> and e<sup>1</sup>), and again in 169-170 (she sings g<sup>2</sup> and f<sup>2</sup> instead of g<sup>1</sup> and f<sup>1</sup>.) These are not the low notes that I anticipated a soprano would have a problem with (and she was the only soprano to make this change). Janet Baker, the only mezzo soprano to have recorded *Herminie*, slurs all the notes in bars 98-100 of the third aria changing “l’amour, l’amour” into simply “l’amour.” [See ex. 4.17]



MUSICAL EXAMPLE 4.17: Aria 3, bars 98-100

She treats the repeat of this phrase in bars 106-108 the same way. I completely agree with this slight alteration, since the words are set on  $g\sharp^2$ ,  $a^2$ , and  $f\sharp^2$ , and no meaning of the text is lost by omitting the repeat.

### Emotional Journey

The most important thing of which to be aware while performing *Herminie* is the Tancredè theme. The overriding influence in Herminie's life at this moment is her love for Tancredè and her fear that he is going to die. The Tancredè theme embodies both this love and fear at different times during the cantata. It is important, not only for the singer to be aware of the different entrances and meanings of the Tancredè theme, but also for the accompanist, who plays the theme, to know what that music stands for in Herminie's imagination, particularly in the recitatives. In the first recitative, the theme pursues her like an obsession; in the second aria, it becomes an expression of her hopelessness; in the third recitative, the theme played *en mourant* (dying away) is the image of Tancredè languishing or even dying while Herminie is mired in her indecision. These are all powerful images, and the clearer they are in the performers' minds, the more potent they will be to the audience.

Moreover, the singer must always be aware of the changing focus of Herminie's motives: what is guiding her in each moment, love for Tancredè, or fear for herself, or her vow to God? This is particularly important in the repetitions of text in the arias. Each repetition has a different focus, for which the performer must find a different color. It is helpful to focus on a different

word of the phrase each time one sings it. In the second aria, the phrase “Arrête! Arrête! Cher Tancredi! Je frémis du péril où tu cours!” (Stop! Stop! Dear Tancred! I tremble from the danger where you run!) is repeated many times. Sometimes, the focus can be her trembling, other times his peril. Herminie’s plea to Tancredi is rhetorical, but it can be colored with desperation, hope, hopelessness, fear, courage – the more slight variations in the underlying thought one can find, the more interesting the performance will be. In the third aria, the phrase “Venez, venez, terribles armes! Venez, venez, fiers attributs de la valeur!” (Come, come, terrible weapons! Come, come, proud attributes of valor!) also has many repetitions. Emphasizing different words in this phrase will help lead to different facets of meaning. If “terribles” is the most important word, fear and trepidation, or even resignation to the path she has chosen might be the consequence. If “valeur” becomes the guiding principal during one repetition, then her innate courage might come to the surface, bringing hope and confidence.

In particular, the transitions between arias and recitatives can be tricky spots to navigate emotionally. What is the word or idea that propels Herminie into each aria? How does she feel at the end of those arias that brings her to the next recitative? I find the transition between the second aria and third recitative especially compelling. Herminie breaks down almost completely at the end of the second aria. The third recitative begins “Que Clorinde est heureuse!” (How happy is Clorinda!) What thought takes her from contemplating her own death (if Tancredi were to die) to envying Clorinde? Was there a conversation between these two best friends that comes to her mind, or just Clorinde’s attitude towards life in general? I like to think there might have been a time when Clorinde noticed Herminie holding back tears and tried to cheer her up, and that Herminie’s tears now remind her of Clorinde. I imagine that Herminie remembers Clorinde’s attitude and it brings a wry or rueful smile to her face as she begins this recitative.

With all these ternary arias, the transitions between sections within the arias also merit some consideration; the transition to the *Prière* in the third aria especially, because the sentiments expressed in it are not present in the source material. In a way, Herminie is “praying” to Clorinde’s armor when she says “Protégez l’amour, protégez le malheur!” (Protect love, protect the misfortunate one!) Perhaps the *Prière* comes from her realization that her prayer to the armor is futile, and she needs to seek a Higher Power. Perhaps the mere mention of protection leads her to realize that she is going to risk real danger, not the fancies of her imagination, and in her fear and desperation, she reaches out to God. Whatever the cause, there is a moment of realization which leads to this change, and the performer must project this to her audience. In addition, the ternary form brings back some of the initial material of the aria. In the tradition of all *da capo* arias, the emotions behind the repeat of the A section are colored by the experience of the B section.

This discussion of planning emotional transitions and shading textual repetitions could be true for any dramatic vocal work of comparable substance. One episode which is unique to *Herminie* is the Coda with the *Prière* motive after the third aria.<sup>310</sup> The duration of this coda is a long time to stand on stage with nothing to sing, and in an un-staged performance, the singer cannot don armor and exit, looking for her horse. So one must fill the time, still in character, exploring what Herminie is experiencing emotionally (rather than physically) at this moment. How dependent is your Herminie on her vow to God? Is this vow the only thing seeing her through the struggle to get to Tancredi? How sincere is she in her commitment? Does her determination falter during the postlude? I suggest that the performer listen to this postlude many times before her performance, asking these questions, and putting herself in Herminie’s place.

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<sup>310</sup> It is unusual, but not unique. It calls to my mind the postlude in Schumann’s *Frauenliebe und Leben*.

## CONCLUSION

I would like to conclude with a few comments about why I chose to research and perform *Herminie*, and what I discovered about it in the process. I have been fascinated by the concept of secular cantatas since I performed *Arianna a Naxos* by Joseph Haydn about ten years ago. The idea of an operatic scena which can be performed on a recital with no set or staging, but containing all the dramatic integrity of opera, greatly appealed to me. As an English major, I have always loved the way words reveal facets of a fictional character; as a musician and singer, I revel in the way music combines with those words to further illuminate that character's inner workings. When I discovered that Hector Berlioz, one of my favorite composers, had written secular cantatas early in his career, I was understandably drawn to them. I listened to both *Herminie* and *Cléopâtre*, but I fell in love with the beautiful melodies and rich harmonies of *Herminie*.

In the course of this project, I discovered that, although he was trying to restrain his Romantic tendencies, the essence of Berlioz's genius for dramatic music is present in *Herminie*. His advanced use of the recurring theme, including the transformation of that theme into its various dramatic functions, sets this early work apart. The main theme's connection with such an important later work (the *Symphonie fantastique*) makes *Herminie* a piece worth studying and performing. In addition, despite the length of this paper, I feel that a more in depth investigation could be made into how Beethoven and Shakespeare influenced Berlioz and his composition of this work. I continue to be intrigued by the events, individuals, and artistic elements that influence the development of great composers.

I have found *Herminie* to be not only a work of beauty, but a work of depth as well. I was initially intrigued by the character of Herminie: her internal struggle and the strength she



discovers in the end. The changes Berlioz made to Boismartin's text create a more interesting journey for the performer. I enjoyed the challenge of discovering Herminie's unspoken thoughts which lead from one emotion to another in this piece. The delicacy with which Berlioz interpreted Herminie's changes of thought and mood, in both recitatives and arias, creates a fully realized, three-dimensional character, who is only awaiting sensitive artists to breathe life into her.

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## APPENDIX A

### TRANSLATION AND IPA TRANSCRIPTION OF *HERMINIE*

Words by Pierre-Ange Vieillard

Translation and IPA transcription by Rosella Ewing

#### Recitative 1

[kɛl tru blœ tœ pur sqi ma l(ø) rø zœ ma l(ø) rø zɛr mi niœ]

Quel trouble te poursuit, malheureuse, malheureuse\_Herminie?<sup>311</sup>

What trouble pursues you, unhappy Herminie?

[tã krɛ dɛ lɛ nœ mi dœ mɔ̃ djø dœ ma lwa]

Tancrède\_est l'ennemi de mon Dieu, de ma loi;

Tancred is the enemy of my God, of my law;

[dy tro nœ pa tɛr nɛl sɛ zɛksplwa mɔ̃ ba ni œ]

Du trône paternel ses\_exploits m'ont bannie;

From my father's throne his exploits have banished me;

[il a pɔrte lœ ra va zɛ le frwa dã l(e) si te dœ la tristœ sirio]

Il a porté le ravage\_et l'effroi dans les cités de la triste Syrie.

He brought devastation and fear to the cities of sad Syria.

[par lɥi zɛ tu pɛr dy tu zys ka mɔ̃ rœ po]

Par lui j'ai tout perdu, tout! jusqu'à mon repos,

By him I have lost all, all! Even my rest,

[zy ska la ɛ nœ e las pur lo tœr dœ mɛ mo]

Jusqu'à la haine, hélas! pour l'auteur de mes maux.

Even the hatred, alas! for the author of my pain.

[wi tã krɛ dœ a tɛ lwa ã na mɔ̃ ta sɛr vio]

Oui, Tancrède, à tes lois | en\_amante\_asservie,<sup>312</sup>

Yes, Tancred, a subservient lover to your laws,

[zœ fɛ ri lœ pwa dœ mɛ fɛr]

Je chéris le poids de mes fers,

I cherished the weight of my irons;

[zœ fɛ ri lɛ tur mɔ̃ kœ pu twa zɛ su fɛr]

Je chéris les tourments que pour toi j'ai soufferts.

I cherished the torments that for you I have suffered.

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<sup>311</sup> Two words connected by \_ indicates liaison or elision.

<sup>312</sup> The symbol | between two words indicates liaison is forbidden.

### Aria 1

[a si dœ la tã dre su mō kœr sa bã dɔ nœ]  
Ah! Si de la tendresse\_où mon cœur s'abandonne  
Ah! If from tenderness where my heart becomes slovenly

[ʒœ dœvɛ zɔptœnir lœ pri dã tō na mur]  
Je devais\_obtenir le prix dans ton\_amour,  
I have to obtain the prize in your love,

[djø a vɛ kɛl trã spœr ʒœ be ni rɛ lœ ʒur]  
Dieux! avec quel transport je bénirais le jour  
Gods! with what transport I would bless the day

[u ʒœ lɔ rɛ kō ki | ã pɛr dã ma ku rɔ nœ]  
Où je l'aurais conquis en perdant ma couronne!  
When I would have conquered him by losing my crown!

[mɛ ʒœ ta dœr e las sã rœ tur sã zɛ spwar]  
Mais je t'adore, hélas! sans retour, sans\_espoir.  
But I adore you, alas! without return, without hope.

[ʃa kɛ stã dœ mɛ fœ | a krwa la vi o lã sœ]  
Chaque\_instant de mes feux accroît la violence.  
Each instant of my flaming increases the violence.

[mō kœr bry lœ e ma bu ʃɛ rɛ dʒi to si lã sœ]  
Mon cœur brûle! et ma bouche\_est réduite\_au silence,  
My heart burns! and my mouth is reduced to silence,

[e mɛ zjœ nœ pœ vœ ply tœ vwar]  
Et mes\_yeux ne peuvent plus te voir...  
And my eyes cannot any more see you ...

Ah! Si de la tendresse, ...

[djø a vɛ kɛl trã spœr ʒœ be ni rɛ l(ø) rø ʒur]  
Dieux! avec quel transport je bénirais l'heureux jour ...<sup>313</sup>  
Gods! with what transport I would bless the happy day

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<sup>313</sup> Underlined words were added or changed by Berlioz and were not present in Boismartin's original text.

## Recitative 2

[kœ di ʒœ u se ga rœ mɛ vø]

Que dis-je? où s'égareront mes vœux?

What am I saying? where have I lost my vows?

[dœ lɛ ksɛ dy ma lœr kã ʒœ sɥi mœ na se œ]

De l'excès du malheur quand je suis menacée,

Of the excess of misfortune when I am threatened,

[ʒœ mœ liv rɔ zɛ rœr dy nœ fla mɛ sã se œ]

Je me livre aux erreurs d'une flamme insensée.

I surrender myself to the errors of an insensible flame.

[bjɛ to dã zœ kô ba | a frø]

Bientôt dans un combat affreux,

Soon in a fearful fight,

[dœ tã kre de dar gã la ɛ nœ sœ si ɲa lœ]

De Tancrede et d'Argant la haine se signale.

The hate of Tancred and Argante distinguishes itself.

[de ʒa dã zy nœ ly ta tu lɛ dœ fa ta lœ]

Déjà, dans une lutte à tous les deux fatale,

Already, in a fight fatal to them both,

[tã kre dœ tri õ fã | a dœ sã ʒe ne rø]

Tancrede triumpant a d'un sang généreux

Triumphant Tancred has with generous blood

[mar ke sɛ zɛks plwa glɔ rjø]

Marqué ses exploits glorieux.

Marked his glorious exploits.

[si ne ku tã kœ lar dœr ki la ni mœ]

Si, n'écoulant que l'ardeur qui l'anime,

If, only listening to the ardor which animates him,

[dœ sa fɔr sa ba ty il pre vjɛ lœ rœ tur]

De sa force abattue il prévient le retour,

Of his strength downcast he foresees the return

[dœ ne ro i ke fɔr il tœ be ra vik ti mœ]

D'un héroïque effort il tombera victime...

Of an heroic effort he will fall victim ...

[mɔr tɛ le frwa pur mœ na mur]

Mortel effroi pour mon amour!

Mortal fright for my love!

## Aria 2

[a rɛt ɑ̃ rɛ tœ ʃɛr tɑ̃ krɛ dœ] [ʒœ frɛ mi dy pe ri lu ty kur]  
Arrête! Arrête! Cher Tancredi, Je frémis du péril où tu cours!  
Stop! Stop! Dear Tancred, I tremble from the danger where you run!

[lœ ku ki mœ na sœ ta tɛ tœ] [ɑ̃ tɔ̃ bɑ̃ trɑ̃ ʃœ rɛ mɛ jur]  
Le coup qui menace ta tête, En tombant trancherait mes jours.  
The blow which threatens your head, While falling would cut off my days.

[ʒɛg za lɑ̃ vɛ̃ ma plɛ̃ tœ fy ʒi ti vœ]  
J'exhale en vain ma plainte fugitive.  
I exhale in vain my fugitive complaint.

[ʒœ lɛ̃ plɔ̃ rœ il nœ mɑ̃ tɑ̃ pa]  
Je l'implore, il ne m'entend pas.  
I implore him, he does not hear me.

## Recitative 3

[kœ klɔ̃ rɛ̃ dɛ t(ø) rø zœ o mi ljø dɛ kɔ̃ ba]  
Que Clorinde est heureuse! Au milieu des combats,  
How happy is Clorinda! In the middle of the fight,

[dœ sɔ̃ sɛks ab ʒy rɑ̃ la fɛ blɛ sœ krɛ̃ ti vœ] [lœ ku ra ʒœ gi dœ sɛ pa]  
De son sexe abjurant la faiblesse craintive; Le courage guide ses pas.  
Abjuring the fearful weakness of her sex; Courage guides her steps.

[kœ ʒœ lɔ̃ pɔ̃r tɑ̃ viœ]  
Que je lui porte envie!  
How I envy her!

[a sɛ myr sy spɑ̃ duə sɔ̃ nar my rœ fra pœ ma vyə]  
A ces murs suspendue, son armure frappe ma vue.  
To these walls suspended, her armor strikes my sight.

[si ʒo zɛ mɑ̃ ku vrir si trɔ̃ pɑ̃ tu lɛ zjø]  
Si j'osais m'en couvrir!... Si, trompant tous les yeux,  
If I dared to cover myself! If, misleading all eyes,

[su sɛ tar my ro pe ril kɔ̃ sa kreə]  
Sous cette armure aux périls consacrée,  
Under this armor to peril consecrated,

[ʒœ fɥijɛ da la dɛ̃ lœ pa lɛ o djø]  
Je fuyais d'Aladin le palais odieux,  
I fled the hateful palace of Aladin,



[e dy kã d(e) kre tʃẽ a lɛ tã te lã treœ]  
Et du camp des chrétiens allais tenter l'entrée!  
And to the camp of the Christians I should attempt entry!

[mɛ kœ di ʒœ kœ di ʒœ mō fɛ blœ bra]  
Mais, que dis-je? Que dis-je? Mon faible bras  
But, what am I saying? My weak arm

[pu rɛ til su tœ nir sa rœ du ta blœ lã sœ]  
Pourrait-il soutenir sa redoutable lance?  
Could it support her fearsome lance?

[tã kre dœ va mu rir pœ tɛ trœ e jœ ba lã sœ]  
Tancredi va mourir peut-être, et je balance!  
Tancred is going to die perhaps, and I hesitate!

[sɛ tro tar de ʒœ kur la ra fɛr o tre pa]  
C'est trop tarder, je cours l'arracher au trépas.  
It is too late, I run to snatch him from death.

### **Aria 3**

[vœ ne vœ ne tɛ ri blœ zar mœ]  
Venez, venez, terribles armes!  
Come, come, terrible weapons!

[vœ ne vœ ne fɛr za tri by dœ la va lœr]  
Venez, venez, fiers attributs de la valeur!  
Come, come, proud attributes of valor!

[sɛ se se se dɛ ksi tɛ lɛ za lar mœ]  
Cessez, cessez d'exciter les alarmes!  
Cease, cease to excite the alarms!

[pro tɛ ʒɛ la mur pro tɛ ʒɛ lœ ma lœr]  
Protégez l'amour, protégez le malheur!  
Protect the love, protect the misfortune!

### **Prayer**

[djø d(e) kre tʃẽ twa kœ ji nɔ rœ twa kœ ʒu tra ʒɛ o trœ fwa]  
Dieu des chrétiens, toi que j'ignore, toi que j'outrageais autrefois,  
God of the Christians, you of whom I'm ignorant, you, that I outraged of old,

[o ʒur dʒi mō rɛ spɛ tẽ plɔ rœ dɛ jɛ ku tɛ ma fɛ blœ vwa]  
Aujourd'hui mon respect t'implore. Daigne écouter ma faible voix!  
Today my respect implores you. Deign to listen to my feeble voice!

[gi dœ ta trã blã tɛ nœ mi œ prɛ dœ tɔ̃ vã ʒœr ʒe ne rø]  
Guide ta tremblante\_ennemie près de ton vengeur généreux!  
Guide your trembling enemy close to your generous avenger!

[ty dœ vjẽ le djø dɛr mi niœ si ty rã tã krɛ da mɛ vø]  
Tu deviens le dieu d'Herminie, si tu rends Tancrède\_à mes vœux.  
You will become the God of Herminie, if you surrender Tancred to my wishes.

Dieu des chrétiens, toi que j'ignore, ...

Venez, venez, terribles armes, ...

[wi wi su sɛ tar my ro pe ril kɔ̃ sa kreœ]  
Oui ! Oui ! Sous cette\_armure\_aux périls consacrée,  
Yes! Yes! Under this armor to dangers consecrated,

[dy kã d(e) kre tjẽ ʒœ ve tã te lã tre œ]  
Du camp des chrétiens je vais tenter l'entrée.  
To the camp of the Christians I will attempt entry.

## APPENDIX B

### DISCOGRAPHY

#### Entries Sorted by Date of Recording

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Berlioz, Hector. *La Mort de Cleopatre/Herminie/Beatrice et Bénédict/Le Roi Lear*. With Jean-Philippe Rouchon, Rosalind Plowright, and London Philharmonia Orchestra. © 1994 by Asv Living Era. Asv 895. Compact disc.

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Reissued in 2003 as *Cantatas* by Naxos (Naxos 855 5810).

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## APPENDIX C

### TABLE OF OPTIONAL BREATHS

**Key to abbreviations:**

R = Recitative

A = Aria

JB = Janet Baker

ML = Michele Lagrange

AL = Aurélia Legay = AL

MD = Mireille Delunsch

Mvt	Bar	Text	Breaths
R1	87	“cheris les tourments”	AL breathes after “cheris”
A1	22	“conquis en perdant”	JB & MD breathe after “conquis”
A1	30	“chaque instant, chaque instant”	ML carries over after 1 <sup>st</sup> , others breathe
A1	32	“de mes feux accroît”	JB breathes after “feux”, MD carries through
A1	55	“obtenir le prix”	MD & AL take breath before “le” JB doesn’t
A1	59	“quel transport je bénirais”	all take breath after “transport” and all ♯ following
A1	62	“jour où je”	AL & ML breathe before “où,” MD breathes after “où,” JB carries through
A1	64	“conquis en perdant”	all breathe after “conquis” here & in bar 71 JB carries over after 2 <sup>nd</sup> , others breathe
A1	77	“bénirais ce jour”	MD, ML & AL breathe before “ce” JB carries over
R2	89	“d’ Argant la haine”	MD breathes before “la” others carry over
A2	28	“en tombant, en tombant”	all breathe after 1 <sup>st</sup> “tombant”
A2	98	“l’implore, il ne”	MD, ML & AL breathe before “il” JB carries over MD puts “re” on 2 <sup>nd</sup> g <sup>2</sup> half note
A2	167	“ta tête, en tombant”	AL & ML breathe after “tête,” JB carries through
A3	97 & 105	“protégez l’amour”	possible breath before “l’amour”
A3	214- 216	“chrétiens, toi que j’ignore, toi que ...”	ML breathes before each “toi”, JB carries through
A3	242- 243	“Tancrède à mes vœux”	JB carries over between “Tancrède” & “à” Others breathe after “Tancrède”

## APPENDIX D

### LETTER OF PERMISSION

AW: Question about copyright permission

From: **Malecki@baerenreiter.com**

Sent: Tue 5/19/09 8:09 AM

To: rlewing\_mezzo@hotmail.com

Dear Ms. Ewing,

Thank you very much for your inquiry of 15 May 2009.

Of course we can give you permission free of charge to use several measures of the Berlioz cantate "Hermine" and one passage of the "Symphonie Fantastique" in your doctoral dissertation.

This Permission is valid only for your dissertation.

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If you need this permission as a formal letter please give us your full address, so that we can send it by mail.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes,

b. o. Katharina Malecki

AW: AW: Question about copyright permission

From: **Malecki@baerenreiter.com**

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Sent: Fri 10/09/09 6:44 AM

To: rlewing\_mezzo@hotmail.com

Dear Ms. Ewing,

Thank you very much for your email.

A letter of permission is not necessary, this email-form is sufficient.

Best wishes,

b. o. Katharina Malecki

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i. A. Katharina Malecki • Rechtsabteilung - Honorare und Lizenzen  
Bärenreiter-Verlag Karl Vötterle GmbH & Co. KG

Heinrich-Schütz-Allee 35 - 37 • D-34131 Kassel

Tel.: ++49 (0) 561 3105 159 • <mailto:malecki@baerenreiter.com>

Fax: ++49 (0) 561 3105 245 • [www.baerenreiter.com](http://www.baerenreiter.com)

PC-Fax: ++49 (0) 561 31806 38

Geschäftsführer: Prof.h.c.Barbara Scheuch-Vötterle, Leonhard Scheuch

Firma und Registergericht Kassel HR A 6553

Komplementärin: Vötterle-Vermögensverwaltungs-GmbH Kassel HR B 3965

## VITA

Rosella Ewing was born in Jacksonville, Florida, to the Reverend Ward and Jenny Ewing. The youngest of their three children, Miss Ewing spent her childhood and youth in Louisville, Kentucky, and Buffalo, New York. Miss Ewing attended The University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee, from which she received a Bachelor of Arts with a double major in English and music. Miss Ewing graduated *Magna cum Laude*, with honors in music, and was inducted into Phi Beta Kappa in 1997. Miss Ewing continued her education at Westminster Choir College of Rider University in Princeton, New Jersey. There she studied voice with Lindsay Christiansen and vocal pedagogy with Marvin Keenze and Scott McCoy. Westminster was also where Miss Ewing made her operatic debut in the title role of Handel's *Xerxes* in 1998, and performed the role of "Sesto" in Mozart's *La clemenza di Tito* the following year. She also began her relationship with Berlioz when she performed his cycle *Les Nuits d'Été* on her Master's recital. Miss Ewing received her Master of Music degree with a major in Vocal Performance and Pedagogy from Westminster in 1999, after being inducted into Pi Kappa Lambda. She taught private voice lessons at the Westminster Conservatory and The Lawrenceville School for a year, after which she was accepted as a Resident Artist by Tri-Cities Opera in Binghamton, New York. In three years with Tri-Cities, Rosella performed many operatic roles including "Meg Page" in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, "The Mother" in *Hansel and Gretel* and *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, and "Dorabella" in *Così fan tutte*. Other apprentice artist programs Miss Ewing has participated in include Des Moines Metro Opera, Chautauqua Opera, and the Santa Fe Opera. Opera roles Miss Ewing has performed while working on her Doctor of Musical Arts at Louisiana State University include "Meg" in Mark Adamo's *Little Women*, "Mother Marie" in Poulenc's *Dialogue des Carmélites*, and "Charlotte"

in Massenet's *Werther*. She has also sung roles with New Orleans Opera and at the Rose Theater for Lincoln Center. While finishing this document, Miss Ewing began her college teaching career with adjunct positions at Lee University in Cleveland, Tennessee, and Covenant College in Lookout Mountain, Georgia.