

## ABSTRACT

Transitioning from *romance* to *mélodie*: An Analysis of Hector Berlioz's *La captive*

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In the eighteenth century, French art song was dominated by the *romance*, which was simple in its construction and set strophic poems that dealt with love and gallantry. After the *Lieder* of Franz Schubert (1797-1828) were introduced into France, a desire for a more developed and expressive French art song was stirred. Hector Berlioz (1803-1869) was one of the first composers to call these new songs *mélodies*. However, labeling vocal works from this period as exclusively *romance* or *mélodie* is difficult, because the two styles have similar characteristics. This thesis explores Berlioz's transformation from the *romance* to the *mélodie* through four revisions of the song, *La captive*. His setting of *La captive* is then compared to settings of the same poem by his contemporaries—as well as other songs by Berlioz—in order to demonstrate Berlioz's evolutionary compositional style.

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TRANSITIONING FROM *ROMANCE* TO *MÉLODIE*:  
AN ANALYSIS OF HECTOR BERLIOZ'S *LA CAPTIVE*

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## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

#### *From the romance to the mélodie*

In the eighteenth century, the early style of French song took on the name *romance*. Originally, this style meant a setting of a strophic poem that dealt with an old story of love and gallantry. Although the types of poems varied and developed, the “naturalness, simplicity, and naivety” of the *romance* remained essential characteristics.<sup>1</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau gave the following definition in his *Dictionnaire de Musique* in 1767:

“Air to which a short poem is sung of the same name, divided into verses, its subject usually some love tale which is often tragic. As the romance is required to be written in a simple, moving style and with a certain mediaeval [sic] inspiration, the air should respond to the character of the words; there should be no ornaments, nothing mannered, but a sweet, natural rural melody, producing its own effect, regardless of how it is sung.”<sup>2</sup>

Although this type of French song was limited, it gave France a “type of song of unquestioned artistic value, in which music and poetry filled roles of equal importance.”<sup>3</sup>

Although the *romance* was in demand for performance, its oversimplification called its artistic view into question.<sup>4</sup> After the *Lieder* of Franz Schubert (1797-1828) were introduced into France, a desire for a more developed and expressive French art

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1. Jack Sage, et al, "Romance." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/23725> (accessed October 18, 2011).

2. Edward Lockspeiser, “The French Song in the 19th Century.” *The Musical Quarterly*, 26, no. 2 (April 1940): pp. 192-199. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/738847> (accessed October 18, 2011).

3. Frits Noske, *French Song from Berlioz to Duparc: The Origin and Development of the Mélodie*, 2nd ed, trans. by Rita Benton (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1970), 5.

4. *Ibid.*, 11.

song was stirred. This led to the *mélodie*, which Frits Noske describes as a vocal composition with a “style and atmosphere [that] falls midway between the French *romance* and the German *Lied*.”<sup>5</sup> In 1835, French composer Hector Berlioz (1803-1869) was one of the first composers to call his short pieces *mélodies*. Because the two genres, *romance* and *mélodie*, are very close in their characteristics, the “two cannot be considered in isolation.”<sup>6</sup>

Labeling Berlioz’s vocal works within a certain genre is difficult because the two styles—*romance* and *mélodie*—are hard to differentiate. In his article, “In the shadows of *Les Nuits d’été*,” Peter Bloom uses the word *genre* over the two terms because the “distinctions between the commonly employed terms ‘romance’ and ‘mélodie’ simply do not hold firm.” He then explains how the two terms have been used without “pedantic distinction”—even by Berlioz—in reference to over forty contributions in this category.<sup>7</sup> Berlioz and his contemporary Hippolyte Monpou are credited for being the “first composers to inject greater originality into the *romance*.”<sup>8</sup> As the *mélodie* continued to rise, other composers such as Henri Reber also began showing a transition to this genre in their works, showing a clear influence by Schubert.

This thesis explores Berlioz’s transformation from the *romance* to the *mélodie* through four revisions of the song, *La captive*. The various revisions are then compared

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5. *Ibid.*, 22-23.

6. David Tunley and Frits Noske, “Mélodie,” *Grove Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/42953> (accessed October 18, 2011).

7. Peter Bloom, “In the shadows of *Les Nuits d’été*,” in *Berlioz Studies*, ed. Peter Bloom, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992,) 81.

8. David Tunley and Frits Noske, “Mélodie,” *Grove Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/42953> (accessed October 18, 2011).

to settings by Berlioz's contemporaries—Hippolyte Monpou, Henri Reber, and Charles Widor—in order to demonstrate Berlioz's evolutionary compositional style and expression. Finally, this thesis provides further examples of songs by Berlioz that undergo similar transformations to *La captive*. This analysis of his works and comparison to his contemporaries supports the claims by historians that “Berlioz is a solitary figure not because he stands outside of this tradition but because he stands at its head.”<sup>9</sup>

### *Unconventional and Expressive*

Well known and highly praised for his innovative orchestral work, *Symphonie Fantastique*, Hector Berlioz was also revolutionary in his smaller compositions, which included about fifty songs. Although these lesser works are not performed as often—except for the popular song cycle *Les nuits d'été*—Berlioz displays a level of mastery in these songs, from the text setting to unconventional harmonic passages, placing him ahead of his time and his contemporaries. Brian Primmer believes that “everything about Berlioz's music and his critical writings bespeak the Frenchman.”<sup>10</sup> His compositional style allowed the expressive power of the music to come from “artistically disciplined sound,” which Berlioz used to control his melodic lines.<sup>11</sup> The French mindset was also “open to exotic influences and sympathetic to Eastern minds.”<sup>12</sup> Poems such as *Les Orientales* by Victor Hugo, heavily influenced by the Spanish culture, were appealing to many Romantic composers, including Berlioz, who took advantage of exotic texts in his

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9. Brian Primmer, *The Berlioz Style* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1984), 14.

10. *Ibid.*, 2.

11. *Ibid.*, 4.

12. *Ibid.*, 1.



works. After the success of the songs *Mélodies irlandaises* and *La captive*, Berlioz continued to experiment with different musical influences from other cultures. For example, the song *Le jeune pâtre breton* deals with the Celts in France and *L'Ile inconnue* deals with looking for an imaginary island and has a Venetian swing.<sup>13</sup>

Primmer describes Berlioz's melodies as having an intimate relationship between their technical construction and their expressiveness.<sup>14</sup> In Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*, for example, the melody often has simple and clear repetitions and sequences; but with each occurrence he varied the harmonic texture or rhythmic characteristics, increasing the potential for a wider range of expression.

“The real subtlety of workmanship and feeling however is to be found in the phrasing, in the irregular lengths of its members, the variety of their contours and the variations in their scope. It is here, in its details of rise and fall, extension and contraction, shallowness and depth that the most intimate connection between music and expressiveness resides.”<sup>15</sup>

Berlioz's style is considered revolutionary because he adds to the past by carefully manipulating the melody, which often results in asymmetrical and dramatic qualities. By contrasting metrical freedoms with the overall regularity, Berlioz is able to include contrasting ideas and tones within a single work. Berlioz's focus on heightening expression in his music also led him to compose using nontraditional methods such as having conventional harmonies in unconventional patterns. These procedures though still have a logical foundation that Berlioz built upon.<sup>16</sup> These qualities that Primmer praises, however, have also often been criticized for showing Berlioz's incompetency.<sup>17</sup>

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13. Julian Rushton, *The Music of Berlioz* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 35.

14. Primmer, *The Berlioz Style*, 20.

15. *Ibid.*, 18.

16. *Ibid.*, 13.

Although Berlioz was careful in the relationships between technicality and expressiveness, he still was also noted for composing spontaneously and quickly.<sup>18</sup> Like a true Romantic, Berlioz considered himself a servant to music and put it above all other earthly demands, even his parents' disapproval of his musical choice.<sup>19</sup> Berlioz was also known for being a perfectionist, because even after publishing or performing a work, he would continue to revise it several times before considering it finished. In reference to his revisions of *Romeo et Juliette*, Berlioz wrote:

“If there are other blemishes that I have missed, at least I have tried sincerely and with what judgment I possess to detect them. After which, what can a composer do but admit candidly that he has done his best, and resign himself to the work's imperfections? What I had reached that point, and only then, the *Romeo and Juliet* symphony was published.”<sup>20</sup>

This care to each excruciating detail reveals Berlioz's desire for perfection and a higher end to music.

Berlioz's style throughout his works has sparked debate concerning his level of musical competency and skill. For a composer who openly praised his works and life events, even writing his own memoirs, there is little information regarding his opinions towards his own techniques and compositional methods. This leaves all of the irregularities and untraditional methods open to critical interpretation.

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17. *Ibid.*, 197-198.

18. Julian Rushton, *The Musical Language of Berlioz*, 12.

19. Peter Bloom, ed. *Berlioz: Past, Present, Future* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2003), 6.

20. Hector Berlioz, *The Memoirs of Hector Berlioz*, trans. and ed. David Cairns (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002), 246.

## *Berlioz and Song*

Berlioz's revisions and perfectionist mindset are evident in his songs. The previous research concerning these revisions has focused primarily on Berlioz's tendency towards orchestration and using expanded resources for dramatic effects. The reasons for these expansions, however, vary between researchers: Dickinson believes that orchestration provided a better medium for Berlioz to express himself.<sup>21</sup> Noske, on the other hand, hypothesizes that Berlioz wrote few melodies because he was uncomfortable with smaller, intimate genres. This lack of self-confidence is shown in Berlioz's revisions of over half of his songs, where he expanded them into larger orchestral works.<sup>22</sup> Bloom theorized why Berlioz wrote in a small genre by asking why Berlioz wrote songs (miniature genres) when they were not his passion. Bloom theorized that Berlioz might have wanted to show that he was a "normal" composer by having the ability to write in a popular genre; or he could have simply wanted the money that the song market provided. Berlioz's most popular song work, the cycle *Les nuits d'été*, could have been written for a particular singer or to just fulfill a concert requirement.<sup>23</sup> Regardless of which reason may be true, this cycle also fell into the pattern of expansion through revisions.

Berlioz's vocal works have been described as "eccentric" and different because they do not match the "versified simple folk songs, Italian arias, and other types of vocal music of his time."<sup>24</sup> Noske groups Berlioz's melodies into three main chronological

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21. A.E.F. Dickinson, "Berlioz's Songs," *The Musical Quarterly* 55, no. 3 (July 1969): 330, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/741004> (accessed October 18, 2011).

22. Noske, *French Song from Berlioz to Duparc*, 92.

23. Peter Bloom, "In the shadows of *Les Nuits d'été*," in *Berlioz Studies*, ed. by Peter Bloom, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 80-111.

24. Primmer, *The Berlioz Style*, 197.

periods: youthful *romances*, songs that show an evolution from *romance* to *mélodie*, and his last songs.<sup>25</sup>

Berlioz's early works were mostly strophic with a simple piano part, following the basic requirements of the *romance*. His first published work, *Le dépit*, was a *romance*, but yet even in this early work, the work was praised for its engaging melody.<sup>26</sup> However, within these songs (e.g., *La belle voyageuse*), he began incorporating characteristics of the *mélodie*, such as original melodic lines and harmonies. Berlioz also showed an attempt to move beyond the *romance* with his choice of more romantic texts and creating a musical structure and accompaniment that tied more closely to the text, as in *La captive*. Rushton notes though that Berlioz never fully escaped the influence of the *romance*.<sup>27</sup>

On the other hand, even in his early works (e.g., the *Mélodies irlandaises*) Berlioz showed the struggle to free himself from tradition and the attempt to form his own style. The songs in his middle period—from 1830 through the 1840 cycle, *Les nuits d'été*—reveal a more complex style and a new level of expressiveness found in the rising French style of the *mélodie*. “A leading French dictionary takes Berlioz's Irish melodies of 1830 as the ‘point of departure’ for the new genre of *mélodie*. The path eventually leads, ten years later, to *Les Nuits*.”<sup>28</sup> This cycle is often cited as predecessor of orchestral song cycles, of which later composers like Mahler took advantage. Although neglected for

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25. Noske, *French Song from Berlioz to Duparc*, 93.

26. Julian Rushton, *The Musical Language of Berlioz*, 60.

27. *Ibid.*, 6.

28. Peter Bloom, ed. *Berlioz Studies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992. 82.

almost a century, *Les nuits d'été* is now one of Berlioz's best known and performed works.<sup>29</sup> Rushton credits this cycle for differentiating itself from the *romance* through its through-composed forms, which Berlioz applied to his later *mélodies* as well.<sup>30</sup>

During this middle song period, several of Berlioz's other songs also witness this transition between song genres through their expansions and revisions. An analysis of one of his songs, *La captive*, reveals more revisions and subtleties than just the overt addition of the orchestration. Berlioz carefully crafted each melodic phrase to fulfill the drama of the text, and in his revisions, refined the melodies through strophic variation.

As Primmer points out, the legend of Berlioz's technical incompetence is a mistaken point of view.<sup>31</sup> His "irregularities," such as nonconventional use of harmonies, asymmetrical phrases, and tendency towards orchestration, all furthered Berlioz's attempt to escape the dominance of the previous *romance*. Although characteristics of this genre can be found in most of his songs, his innovations helped introduce the *mélodie* into the song market and make it an independent genre.

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29. Julian Rushton, *The Music of Berlioz*, 45.

30. *Ibid.*, 180.

31. Primmer, *The Berlioz Style*, 14.

## CHAPTER TWO

### *La captive: Captive in the romance*

The transition from the *romance* to the *mélodie* was not a clear or distinct process, since the two French genres overlapped in characteristics and time period.<sup>32</sup> However, the transformation can be seen on a small scale within the revisions in various songs by Hector Berlioz, particularly in *La captive*. This song started as a strophic *romance* with simple piano accompaniment, but finished as a complex *mélodie* with strophic variation and full orchestration. Although the final orchestrated version is more commonly performed today and considered more expressive,<sup>33</sup> the original *romance* is not void of expression. In this much smaller work, Berlioz creates an ambiguous tone in the piece through conflicting meters, displaced accents, and careful attention to the natural accents of the text. However, these effects are limited by the strophic structure, since the different emotions and texts are all set to the same music. By altering the strophes' musical settings through strophic variation—particularly through contrasting rhythms and accents—and adding orchestration in his final version, Berlioz creates different characteristics and moods for each verse. Although there are more overt opportunities for expression in the enlarged *mélodie*, the level of expressiveness between the *romance* and *mélodie*, is debatable.

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32. David Tunley and Frits Noske, "Mélodie." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, under "Mélodie," <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/42953> (accessed October 18, 2011).

33. *Ibid.*

The journey of *La captive* began in 1832, when Berlioz's friend accidentally knocked Victor Hugo's *Les Orientales* on the floor. Upon seeing the text to *La captive*, Berlioz immediately stated, "If I had some manuscript paper I would set this to music—I can *hear* it."<sup>34</sup> Spontaneously, he then began writing the melody and the bass line; a fortnight later, he filled in the piano accompaniment, completing the first version. However, Berlioz continued to revise this piece for twelve years until 1848. His second version was also for voice and piano, but included a shortened introduction and a revised conclusion. Version three was the first time Berlioz introduced an instrument other than voice and piano, the cello. However, even though there is this additional timbre, Berlioz did not alter the vocal line, accompaniment, or strophic form in the third version. Interestingly, the introductory theme of the cello will be echoed exactly in version five by the winds, foreshadowing his later grand orchestral form.

Version four seems to take a step back by taking away the solo instrument and only setting the first verse of the text. However, Berlioz's fifth and final version dramatically progressed forward through strophic variation and setting for voice and complete orchestra.<sup>35</sup> By the time he finished, this once strophic *romance* with simple piano accompaniment had transformed into a complex *mélodie* with strophic variation and full orchestration. Although Berlioz initially sought to create a unique character

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34. *The Memoirs of Hector Berlioz*. Trans and ed. David Cairns (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002), 173.

35. "Whatever the truth of the matter this first orchestral version evidently dissatisfied him; for no record can be traced of a performance of it or indeed of any orchestral version between 1834 and 1848. The second and third orchestral versions embody an entirely new conception of the original song. They were clearly intended to replace the first orchestral version, for Berlioz subsequently ignored that version's existence. They are substantially the same, the principal differences being that the second is in the original key of E major, whereas the third is transposed into D major and includes parts for bass drum, cymbals and optional second orchestra."

Hector Berlioz, *La captive*, *Hector Berlioz New Edition of the Complete Works*, vol. 13, *Songs for Solo Voice and Orchestra*, ed. by Ian Kemp, (London: Bärenreiter, 1975).

within the confines of the *romance*, the revisions tended towards expansion and increased expressiveness, suggesting that Berlioz sought to escape the captivity of the *romance*.

### *The Verses and Translations*

Although the original Hugo poem contained nine verses, Berlioz set only verses one, two, three, and nine; he also included verse eight in the final version. The translations and meaning of these verses are essential to understand the character of the piece, and to explain Berlioz's various techniques in the *romance* (and later, the *mélodie*).

Verse one introduces the main character—the captive, the subject of the entire poem—and describes the land where she is trapped.

1:  
If I were not a captive,  
I would like this country,  
And this plaintive sea,  
And these fields of corn,  
And these countless stars,  
If along the dark wall  
Did not glimmer  
The saber of the Spahis.<sup>36</sup>

Although Berlioz did not specify which verse may have inspired him to set the poem, the text setting best fits this stanza, as shown later in his choice of vocal accents and phrasing. Verse two continues the story, with the captive stating her identity and remembering the evenings she spent in her country.

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36. Victor Hugo, "La captive," trans. Korin Kormick, *The Lied, Art Song, and Choral Texts Archive*, [http://www.recmusic.org/lieder/get\\_text.html?TextId=20959](http://www.recmusic.org/lieder/get_text.html?TextId=20959) (accessed October 21, 2011).



2:  
I am no Tartar  
That a black eunuch  
Should tune my guitar,  
Should hand me my mirror.  
Far away from these Sodoms,  
In the country where we are,  
With the young men  
You can speak in the evenings.

In verse three, she continues her reminiscence with descriptive images she remembers vividly from her homeland.

3:  
Yet I like a riverbank  
Where the cold breath  
Of the winters never arrive  
Through the open windows.  
The summer, the rain is warm,  
The green insect that wanders  
Glistens, a living emerald,  
Under the blades of green grass.

Berlioz omitted verses four through eight of the Hugo poem and skips to verse nine; however, he included verse eight in the fifth version.

4:  
Smyrna is a princess  
With her beautiful chapel;  
The happy spring unceasingly  
Responds to her call,  
And, like a laughing group  
Of flowers in a bowl,  
In her seas are outlined  
More than one fresh archipelago.

5:  
I like these vermilion towers,  
These triumphant flags,  
These houses of gold, similar  
To children's toys;  
I like, for my thoughts  
More softly cradled,  
These tents balanced  
On the backs of elephants.

6:  
In this fairy palace,  
My heart, full of concerts,  
Believes, in muffled voices  
That come from the deserts,  
It hears genies  
Blending the harmonies  
Of infinite songs  
That they sing in the air!

7:  
I like the sweet burning perfumes  
Of these lands,  
On the gilded windows  
The trembling foliage,  
The water that the spring pours forth  
Under the bending palm tree,  
And the white stork  
On the white minarets.

A common theme among the omitted verses is the poet's drift to imagination. Verse four begins to vary from the initial subject and tone of the poem by introducing a princess, Smyrna, and her effect on her land. Verse five continues in this fantasy-like world with the captive's remembrance of "towers" and "black elephants." Verses six and seven also continue this imaginative world, including a "fairy palace" and more descriptions of the land. Berlioz may have cut these verses because they did not serve any crucial purpose. Instead, they offer an alternative fantasy in opposition to the somber reality of the captive. The omission of these verses helps the poem emphasize the tragedy

of the tale, following Rousseau's definition of a traditional *romance*.<sup>37</sup> The final verse offers a conclusion to the poem by bringing the captive back to reality, leaving her to reflect on her situation alone in the moonlight.

9:  
But especially, when the breeze  
Touches me while fluttering about,  
In the night, I like to be sitting,  
Sitting while dreaming,  
An eye on the deep sea,  
While, pale and blonde,  
The moon opens in the waves  
Her silver fan.

The textual meaning of the added eighth verse continues the captive's remembrance of her homeland.

8:  
I like in a bed of froth  
To tell a Spanish song,  
When my gentle companions,  
Feet skimming the ground,  
Vagabond legion  
Where smiles abound,  
Whirl around in circles  
Under a round parasol.

By adding this verse in the final version of *La captive*, Berlioz introduced a new element of exoticism, since the captive's Spanish nationality is revealed. If this verse had been included in the earlier versions, Berlioz would have been forced to set the text strophically. By waiting to introduce this in the strophic variation, Berlioz was able to use Spanish rhythms and variations to add more depth and description to the character.

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37. Edward Lockspeiser, "The French Song in the 19th Century." *The Musical Quarterly*, 26, no. 2 (April 1940): 193, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/738847> (accessed October 18, 2011).

### *Ambiguity in Meter and Accents*

In this story, the character has an internal battle, wanting to love the beautiful country she is in, but cannot because it is holding her captive. Berlioz sets the tone for this story in the piano introduction, by creating ambiguity that permeates throughout the entire piece (see example 1).

Example 1. Hector Berlioz, *La captive*, mm. 1-4.<sup>38</sup>



In the first version, Berlioz achieves this by creating an eighth-note pattern in the accompaniment that stresses every other quarter note. Since each of the three quarter notes is emphasized, the meter feels as if it is in 3/4. When the voice enters, it follows the notated 6/8 meter; two beats per measure with three eighth notes per beat. This conflict in meter creates a sense of mystery, which represents the captive's own uncertainty. Additionally, the introduction has an alternating eighth-note pattern, with the chordal root and third on the downbeat and the fifth played below the root on the offbeat. When the vocal line enters the alternation in the accompaniment switches, placing the fifth of the chord on the downbeat and the root and third on the offbeat (see example 2).

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38. Hector Berlioz, *La captive*, *Hector Berlioz New Edition of the Complete Works*, vol. 15, *Songs with Piano*, ed. by Ian Kemp, (London: Bärenreiter, 1975).

Example 2. Hector Berlioz, *La captive*, mm. 1-5.<sup>39</sup>

*Allegretto moderato*

(mollement et sans faire sentir la mesure)

1. Si je n'étais cap-ti - ve,  
 2. Je ne suis point Tar-ta - re  
 3. Pour-tant j'aime u - ne ri - ve  
 4. Mais sur - tout, quand la bri - se

The alternation displaces the perceived beat and continues the feeling of unrest, perhaps representing the captive who was also displaced, since she sings of how she wants to love the land that is not her home. Berlioz removes this switch on the downbeat in the rest of his versions, so that the fifth of the chord is always heard first. The rhythm however, still leaves the conflict between the 6/8 and 3/4 meters as well as the ambiguity of the triad's rhythm.<sup>40</sup>

In the following versions, Berlioz makes other minor changes in the introduction. For example, from version one to two, Berlioz reduces the length of the introduction. In addition to maintaining the rhythmic ambiguity, he creates tonal ambiguity by removing the clear cadence from dominant to tonic. This lack of tonal establishment continues the theme of ambiguity that seeks resolution through the song. Berlioz does not return to the tonal establishment in each of the subsequent versions.

39. *Ibid.*

40. It is interesting to note that in the piano reduction of the final version, the tonic triad is filled in completely on the downbeat, and then the offbeat has the fifth played simultaneously with the third, and is above instead of below the tonic. This change is striking because it defies what Berlioz was seeking to do in his previous versions by giving a definitive sense of tonal and rhythmic centrality. Also, this structure is not represented in Berlioz's orchestration, which suggest that perhaps these changes were made by the editor, Heller.

In addition to the piano's conflicting meters and lack of tonal resolution, Berlioz also reflects the ambiguous tone through metric displacement of the vocal line. When the vocal line enters in measure three for example, the primary accent is shifted a half measure. As a result, the accents of the French syllables are displaced, falling primarily on beat two of the measure instead of beat one. In example 3, the stressed syllable “ti” in “captive” occurs on beat two, instead of beat one, which would have been the stronger choice.<sup>41</sup>

Example 3. Hector Berlioz, *La captive*, mm. 1-5.<sup>42</sup>

This pattern of metric displacement continues for the first half of the verse.

Berlioz anticlimactically resolves the displacement with regular phrasing and rhythms. In addition, the tension created by increasingly rising phrases finishes with a regular descending rhythmic line (see example 4).

41. Dr. Alex Thiltges, interview by Victoria Graves, Waco, TX, September 29, 2011.

42. Hector Berlioz, *La captive*, *Hector Berlioz New Edition of the Complete Works*, vol. 15, *Songs with Piano*, ed. by Ian Kemp, (London: Bärenreiter, 1975).

Exemple 4. Hector Berlioz, *La captive*, mm. 17-21.<sup>43</sup>

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nom - bre, Si le long du mur som - bre N'é - tin - ce - lait dans l'om - bre Le  
 - do - mes, Au pa - ys dont nous som - mes, A - vec les jeu - nes hom - mes On  
 chau - de; L'in - sec - te vert qui rô - de, Luit, vi - vante é - me - rau - de, Sous  
 - fon - de, Tan - dis que, pâle et blon - de, La lune ou - vre dans l'on - de Son

Although this might feel like a complete resolution, it is instead a summary of the reality of the character. This regular and rhythmically strict ending symbolizes the defeat of the singer who must give in to the control and restrictions of the land holding her captive.

This effect is also mirrored in the phrase structure. Each verse has eight lines of text, which could be set in regular and equal phrases.<sup>44</sup> However, Berlioz groups them into three main phrases. Instead of setting the text in regular and equal four measure phrases, Berlioz divides the phrases irregularly. The first two phrases, each five measures in length, could be thought of as regular phrases that have been expanded through the vocalist's metric displacement and the lengthening of the final syllables.<sup>45</sup> The third phrase concludes regularly by being eight measures in length, since it does not include phrase expansion.

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43. *Ibid.*

44. Berlioz's contemporaries Widor, Reber and Monpou, all set the same text but used equal four measure phrases. These will be discussed in further detail in Chapter 3.

45. William Rothstein, *Phrase Rhythm in Tonal Music* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1989). Rothstein introduces the concept of phrase expansion. He defines two types of expansion: external expansion adds a prefix or a suffix to a phrase, whereas internal expansion comes from repetition from within the phrase or through parenthetical insertion. This setting in *La captive* is an example of internal expansion.

### *Strophic Variation*

One of the greatest limitations of strophic form is its ineffectiveness to correctly accent each strophe, since each verse may have different text, word order, and stressed syllables. As shown in table 1, each verse of *La captive* has slightly different stressed syllables when spoken. When set strophically, the latter verses must all adhere to the accent pattern of the first verse. For example, in the first verse, the textual accents of phrase one fall on the fourth and sixth syllables. The final verse, though, has accents on the third and sixth syllables of the first phrase. This slight shift of accents in the spoken French cannot be shown in strophic form, because the musical accents are consistent through each verse.

Table 1. Syllabic Stress. Numbers indicate which syllable of the spoken phrase receives a stress.<sup>46</sup>

Verse	1	2	3	8	9
Phrase 1	4 6	4 6	2 4 6	1 4 6	3 6
Phrase 2	3 6	4 6	3 6	1 3 6	2 6
Phrase 3	4 6	2 6	2 4 6	4 6	2 6
Phrase 4	3 6	2 6	2 4 6	2 4 6	3 6
Phrase 5	3 6	2 6	2 4 6	2 5	4 6
Phrase 6	<b>3 6</b>	3 6	2 4 6	<b>4 6</b>	2 4 6
Phrase 7	4 6	2 4 6	1 3 6	4 6	2 6
Phrase 8	2 6	2 4 6	4 6	4 6	4 6

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46. Dr. Alex Thiltges, interview by Victoria Graves, Waco, TX, September 29, 2011.



Although Berlioz created expressiveness within the restrictions of the strophic *romance*, he did not appear satisfied until he introduced strophic variation in his final version. This leads to dramatically different rhythms for the different strophes, offering a way to allow the musical accents to follow the changing textual accents. In phrase six, shown again in example 4, the accented syllables, three and six, or “long” and “som” are correctly accented by being placed on beat one of the measures. This does not work as well in the third verse because the fourth syllable, “sec,” needs to be accented. Instead, the strophic structure forces the least important syllable of the word, “insecte,” to be accented, causing a separation between the text and rhythm.

Example 4. Hector Berlioz, *La captive*, mm. 17-21.<sup>47</sup>

By varying the rhythms in the final version, Berlioz is able to fix these conflicts between the text and rhythm. Example 5 shows how the accents now align correctly with the text.

Example 5. Hector Berlioz, *La captive*, mm. 48-51.<sup>46</sup>

47. Hector Berlioz. *La captive*, *Hector Berlioz New Edition of the Complete Works*, vol. 15, *Songs with Piano*, ed. by Ian Kemp, (London: Bärenreiter, 1975).

Another limitation of strophic structure is the inability to express various different characteristics and emotions through text painting and other musical elements, since these techniques only follow the first verse. By using strophic variation in his final version, Berlioz is able to convey the different meanings of the other verses. For example, Berlioz adds the eighth verse of the original poem that describes the character's homeland and then accompanies it with Spanish rhythms. According to Rushton, it is through these rhythms that the song "evokes [a] Mediterranean atmosphere and the context is Spanish and Turkish, not Italian."<sup>48</sup> Not only does Berlioz include this verse in the final version, he also, for the first time, chooses to repeat the text, providing even more contrasting variation within the verse. It is also interesting that in the verse where the singer most reveals her nationality is when the rhythm is most confined to the 6/8 meter. However, when Berlioz has the captive laugh, even though not specified in the original poetry, her rhythm is hemiolic,<sup>49</sup> perhaps her one attempt to defy the restrictions.

In the final version, the last verse returns to the original musical theme found in the first verse. However, this time Berlioz creates variations through the addition of rests, as shown in example 6.

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48. Julian Rushton, *The Musical Language of Berlioz* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 34.

49. Hemiola denotes the articulation of two units of triple meter as if they were notated as three units of duple meter.

Example 6. Hector Berlioz, *La captive*, mm. 115-118.<sup>50</sup>

In this way, Berlioz is able to add extra depth to the character by suggesting through the rests her hesitancy to finish her song and accept her fate.

### *Two Different Pieces*

Berlioz's tendency towards orchestration and expansion has often been associated with his lack of confidence in writing in smaller intimate genres. Berlioz wrote, "It is indeed a rare genius who can create works whose simplicity is in direct proportion to their size. Unfortunately, I am not one of them; I need ample resources to produce any effect."<sup>51</sup> It was only after the dramatic and orchestral revisions, in *La captive* that Berlioz called the song "one of the most colourful [sic]" works he had written.<sup>52</sup> Over a century later, Hugh MacDonald, an English musicologist and general editor of *Hector Berlioz: New Edition of the Complete Works*, agreed with Berlioz and called the final version of the song an example of Berlioz's "most expressive style." The choice for

50. Hector Berlioz, *La captive*, *Hector Berlioz New Edition of the Complete Works*, vol. 15, *Songs with Piano*, ed. by Ian Kemp, (London: Bärenreiter, 1975).

51. Noske, *French Song from Berlioz to Duparc*, 92.

52. *The Memoirs of Hector Berlioz*. Trans and ed. David Cairns (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002), 173.

expansion through strophic variation, such as the addition of Spanish rhythms, and orchestra, appears successful on both personal and historical levels for increasing expressiveness.

Opposing this expansion, Frits Noske, author of “French Song from Berlioz to Duparc,” wrote:

“Despite the evident beauties of this last version, the deep and varied expression, the careful prosody, and the richness of the orchestral accompaniment, ‘La captive’ in its simple strophic form with only piano accompaniment is preferable as a work of art; the ‘symphonic *mélodie*’ of 1848 robs this spontaneous inspiration of its intimate atmosphere, so fully in harmony with the poem.”<sup>53</sup>

However, the *romance* was not written with dramatic purposes in mind to convey the meaning of the piece. Two hundred years before Noske, eighteenth-century philosopher and composer Jean-Jacques Rousseau defined this small and intimate genre as:

“not at all striking and consequently is not at first touching; but each verse adds something to the effect of the last, the interest grows imperceptibly, until one is sometimes moved to tears without being able to define the charm which has produced the effect.”<sup>54</sup>

The first four versions of *La captive* follow this definition of the *romance*, by creating subtle effects throughout the song. For example, Berlioz introduces conflicting meters of 6/8 and 3/4, which immediately creates an ambiguous tone throughout the whole work. He also creates tension between the restrictiveness of the foreign land and the singer’s longing towards freedom through the alternation between regular and irregular rhythms and phrasing. These effects are open to interpretation especially since upon listening they are not always easily recognizable. It is through their reserved effects that they fulfill

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53. Noske, *French Song from Berlioz to Duparc*, 106.

54. Edward Lockspeiser, “The French Song in the 19th Century.” *The Musical Quarterly*, 26, no. 2 (April 1940): 193, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/738847> (accessed October 18, 2011).

their roles as little “charms,” and as they repeat throughout the entire piece, work together to invoke the true character of the piece.

Upon comparison of the dramatic differences among the versions, it can be seen why it is difficult to assess which version of *La captive* is more expressive. The original version is, as Noske said, “in harmony with the poem”<sup>55</sup> because of its simplicity. However, Berlioz also discovered new opportunities for expression by varying the rhythms and accents of the verses, which is more in line with the *mélodie*. Whether it was his need to compose in a more comfortable large scale genre or his desire to continually push the boundaries of the *romance*, Berlioz demonstrated through his revisions the transition of French song towards the rising *mélodie*.

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55. Noske, *French Song from Berlioz to Duparc*, 109.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Comparing *La Captive* to Berlioz's Contemporaries

As the *mélodie* increased in popularity in the nineteenth century, many composers began setting texts by rising French romantic poets such as Lamartine, Musset, and Hugo.<sup>56</sup> Berlioz set Victor Hugo's poem, *La captive*, in 1832; the poem was also set by several of Berlioz's contemporaries, including Hippolyte Monpou (1804-1841) in 1841, Henri Reber (1807-1840) in 1837, and Charles Marie Jean Albert Widor (1844-1907) in 1879. Like Berlioz, all three also wrote in the style of the *romance*, by creating simple melodies over a basic accompaniment in strophic form. Although Berlioz continued to revise this piece until 1848—with the final version set as a symphonic *mélodie*—his original version still displayed more advanced musicality and freedom from the *romance* than his contemporaries' works. Berlioz achieved this by stretching the requirements of the *romance* through phrase extensions, nonfunctional harmonies, and accents that served the text. Monpou, Reber, and Widor, by contrast, used completely regular phrasing and traditional harmonies to set the poem, which limited the possibilities for expressiveness.

#### *Verses*

Since each composer was bound to the limitations of the strophic form, the selection of verses was crucial to the evolution of the song. Widor, Monpou, and Reber set the first three verses, as well as verse nine; this is identical to Berlioz's verse selections. This concurrence reveals a unity in the desired tone of the piece, since the

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56. Tunley, David, and Noske, Frits. "Mélodie." In *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/42953> (accessed October 18, 2011).

selected verses deal directly with the character's conflicted mind and desire to return to her homeland. Monpou also included verses six and seven, which deal more with the character's imagination and fantasy. This addition may have been intended to increase characterization, or it could have been an attempt to avoid direct comparison with the two previous settings of the same poem. Berlioz's addition of verse eight in his final version is clearer in its intent for expressiveness because of the accompanied varied musical strophe that matches the introduced exoticism of the character's Spanish homeland.

### *Accompaniment*

Following the characteristics of the *romance*, each composer created an accompaniment that was simple, triadic, and supported the vocal line. Berlioz's accompaniment in the original version resembles an Alberti bass,<sup>57</sup> but includes the middle and highest note of the chord on the same beat, as shown in example 1.

Example 1. Hector Berlioz, *La captive*, mm. 1-6.<sup>58</sup>

The musical score for Example 1 shows measures 1-6 of Hector Berlioz's *La captive*. The tempo is marked 'Andantino' and the time signature is 8/8. The score includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part features a left-hand accompaniment of broken triads, where the notes of each triad are played in the order: lowest, highest, middle, highest. The right hand of the piano part has a simple melody. The lyrics are: 1. Si je n'é- 2. Je ne suis 3. Pourtant j'aime 4. Mais sur - tout,.

57. David Fuller. "Alberti bass." In *Grove Music Online*. Oxford Music Online, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/00447> (accessed November 28, 2011). Left-hand accompaniment figures in keyboard music consisting of broken triads whose notes are played in the order: lowest, highest, middle, highest, and taking its name from Domenico Alberti (c. 1710–1746).

58. Hector Berlioz, *La captive*, *Hector Berlioz New Edition of the Complete Works*, vol. 15, *Songs with Piano*, ed. by Ian Kemp, (London: Bärenreiter, 1975).

Monpou's accompaniment is also repetitious with triadic structures, except for some additional decorative runs in the introduction. Widor provided a few ornamentations in his accompaniment, but only when the vocal line is silent. Reber slightly varied the straight chord structure through the use of neighbor tones. These consistent and simple accompaniments make Berlioz's later orchestral version—with the contrasting sections and textures—dramatically rise higher than the expectations created by his contemporaries' works.

### *Harmony*

The *romance* did not normally include overt chromaticism in its music, and Monpou and Reber follow this expectation. Monpou did so by completely adhering to traditional tonal requirements and never venturing away from the tonic harmonies. The key of his version is C major, and throughout the verse, a majority of the harmonies focus on the tonic C major chord. The melody uses only the notes of the diatonic scale, without ever employing chromaticism. Reber followed this same pattern by drawing from notes and traditional chords in the A major scale.

Widor and Berlioz are set apart from Monpou and Reber through their use of chromaticism. Widor, for example, shifts the mode from minor to major at the end of each verse, offering a feeling of resolution. He also introduces one chromatic note, D#, in his melody outside of the major key, on the words "si" and "sombre" (see example 2).



Example 2. Charles M. Widor, *La captive*, mm. 19-27.<sup>59</sup>

as - - tres sans nom - bre. si le

long du mur som - bre né - tin - ce - lait dans l'om - bre le sa - bre des spa -

*sf* *dim.* *pp* *cresc.*

This chromatic note does not resolve immediately; rather, it initiates a descending half-step motion that is harmonized by nonfunctional chords. Instead of the harmonies providing a foundation for the melody to be built upon, the process reverses and the melody determines the harmonies.

Berlioz employed this technique decades earlier in his setting of *La captive*. His style has been noted for its “harmonic logic [that] results from the extended linear activity, even if it sounds strange.”<sup>60</sup> For example, as in Widor’s later setting, a descending half-step vocal line is harmonized by a nonfunctional chord progression (see example 3).

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59. Andrew Thomson, “Forgotten Frenchmen: Widor and D’Indy: Andrew Thomson Pleads for a Fuller Appreciation of Two of France’s Forgotten Sons.” *The Musical Times* 135, no. 1812 (February 1994): 80-82. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1002975> (accessed October 18, 2011).

60. Brian Primmer, *The Berlioz Style* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1984), 170.

Example 3. Hector Berlioz, *La captive*, mm. 17-21.<sup>61</sup>

17

nom - bre, Si le long du mur som - bre N'é - tin - ce - lait dans l'om - bre Le  
 - do - mes, Au pa - ys dont nous som - mes, A - vec les jeu - nes hom - mes On  
 chau - de; L'in - sec - te vert qui rô - de, Luit, vi - vante é - me - rau - de, Sous  
 fon - de, Tan - dis que, n'ôte et blon - de, La lune ou - vre dans l'on - de Son

20

Tonic Deceptive Cadence Linear Harmonies Cadence Tonic

Measure 17 begins with an E chord, the major tonic chord of the key, and leads to a deceptive cadence. Beginning on beat two in measure 18, a series of nonfunctional diminished chords harmonize the vocal line. Although the chords are not functional, their inclusion moves logically because of the parallel descending motion in both the bass line and the vocal line. Measure 20 uses D# as a leading tone to progress back to the traditional cadence to tonic in E major. This shift from functional to nonfunctional harmonic progression emphasizes Berlioz's close connection between the music and the poetry.

### *Melodic Phrasing*

The rhythm Hugo created in *La captive* allows for a clear division of four phrases. This clarity in division is conveyed in the strophes of Monpou, Reber, and Widor, who all chose to set each verse regularly, with four equal phrases each divided into four equal beats. Monpou's phrasing is difficult to see at first because of the lack of rests between the phrases. He also connected the phrases by having them begin on beat two of the

61. Hector Berlioz, *La captive*, *Hector Berlioz New Edition of the Complete Works*, vol. 15, *Songs with Piano*, ed. by Ian Kemp, (London: Bärenreiter, 1975).

measure, and then ending on beat one of a measure, instead of the other way around (see example 4).

Example 4. Monpou, *La captive*, mm 5-11.<sup>62</sup>

Monpou's phrasing, although connected between the measures, can still be divided into four equal phrases. Widor and Reber also followed this structure: Reber is the most obvious with his phrasing by inserting a one-note rest in the vocal line between each subphrase and then a full-measure rest between each complete phrase (see example 5).

62. Hippolyte Monpou, *La captive*, ed. David Tunley, *Romantic French Song: 1830-1870*, Vol. 1, Early Romances by Bérart, Berlioz, Duchambge, Grisar, Meyerbeer, Monpou, Morel, Panerson, and Romagnes, *Selected Songs of Louis Niedermeyer and Ernest Reyer*, (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1994).

Example 5. Henri Reber, *La captive*, mm 1-14.<sup>63</sup>

N° 8. Très modéré. (♩=100)

CHANT.

PIANO.

Si je n'étais cap. - ti - ve, d'ai - me - rais ce pa - ys, Et cet - te mer plain - ti - ve.

Berlioz could have followed this structure as well, since the irregular phrase lengths are only created because of measure displacement and phrase extension. Example 6A shows Berlioz's irregular first two phrases, which expand into 5 measures per phrase. A recomposition of these phrases, in example 6B, shows how Berlioz's same melodic line and rhythms can be easily shifted to form two regular, four-measure phrases.

63. Henri Reber, *La captive*, ed. David Tunley, *Romantic French Song: 1830-1870*, Vol. 3, Songs by Henri Reber (1807-1880), Six Romances Populaires (1849) Six Mélodies de Victor Hugo (1855) and Five Other Songs by Edouard Lalo (1823-1892), (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1995).

Example 6A. Hector Berlioz, *La captive*, mm. 1-15.<sup>64</sup>

1. Si je n'é-tais cap-ti - ve,  
J'ai - me-rai ce pa - ys, Et cet - te mer plain-ti - ve,  
Et ces champs de ma - i's, Et ces as-tres sans nom - bre, Si le long du mur

Example 6B. Hector Berlioz, *La captive*, recomposed mm. 1-15.

Si je n'é-tais cap - ti - ve, J'ai - me-rai ce pa - ys, Et  
cet - te mer plain - ti - ve, Et ces champs de ma - i's,

Although the phrasing in example 6B better aligns with the expectations of Berlioz's critics and the compositional style of his contemporaries, the subtle charm of the phrasing is lost, leaving less room for interpretation. The extensions of the phrases enable the listener to be captivated by the direction and stretching of each phrase, as the singer expresses her longing of her homeland. Berlioz was capable of following the regular rhythm and phrasing of the poem and proved he could do so in measures 16-22. By creating a dramatic contrast between irregular and regular phrasing, Berlioz explored different tones within the phrasing structure. The “correct” rigidity of his contemporaries,

64. Hector Berlioz, *La captive*, *Hector Berlioz New Edition of the Complete Works*, vol. 15, *Songs with Piano*, ed. by Ian Kemp, (London: Bärenreiter, 1975).

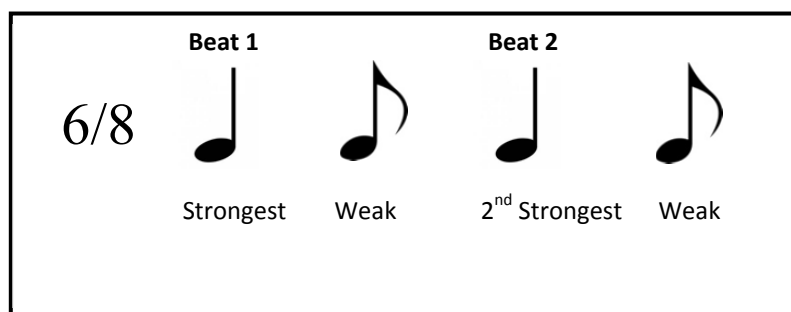
on the other hand, only allowed for a single tone to permeate throughout the eight phrases.

### *Melodic Accents*

Musical accents provide additional ways to convey the text and create expressiveness. There are a variety of ways to provide an accent, or emphasis, on certain notes. The accent that is the easiest to spot in the written score is the marked accent, which is shown with a > symbol above the musical note. Berlioz and his contemporaries—Reber, Monpou, and Widor—all relied upon unmarked accents: metric and agogic.

Although metric accents are not marked in the score, they are implied on music notes based on their placement within each measure. In every meter, beat 1 receives the highest emphasis, and then the subsequent beats receive less importance. In 6/8, the meter which Berlioz, Monpou, and Reber used for *La captive*, the strongest beat is on beat 1 and the second strongest beat is beat 2, with the subdivided beats having the least importance (see figure 1).

Figure 1. Metrical Accents in 6/8 meter.



Although Widor wrote in 3/8 meter, leaving only one primary beat to receive the emphasis, the same kind of relationship between strong and weak beats can be seen by pairing every two measures together.<sup>65</sup>

Metrically, Berlioz followed most of the correct spoken accents in the poem, but he did not always adhere to the rules of the meter.<sup>66</sup> For example, in the first line of text the accented syllables are “tais” and “ti,” yet Berlioz added extra accents to “je” and “ve.” This is shown in table 2: two dots represent beat 1, the strongest metrical accent; one dot stands for beat 2, the second strongest metrical accent.

Table 2. Metrical Accents in Berlioz’s *La captive*, line 1.

Si	je	n’é-	<u>tais</u>	cap-	<u>ti</u> -	ve
	•		• •		•	• •
J’ai-	me-	<u>rais</u>	ce	pa-	<u>ys</u>	
• •			•		• •	

Since Berlioz misplaced the emphasis on “ti” by putting it on beat two instead of beat one, the perceived downbeat is also displaced by half a measure. Berlioz continued this metric pattern in the next line, except this time, the correct stressed syllable “ys” falls on the downbeat. Hugo’s rhythm changed from 7 syllables to 6 syllables, allowing for the rhythmic alignment to be more easily placed within Berlioz’s same pattern. The measure

65. This strong and weak relationship between the measures causes the measures to act as beats within “hypermeasures,” producing a “hypermeter”. William Rothstein, *Phrase Rhythm in Tonal Music* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1989).

66. All references to spoken accents in the poem *La captive* are from: Dr. Alex Thiltges, interview by Victoria Graves, Waco, TX, September 29, 2011.

displacement continues into the third line, “Et cette mer plaintive.” Unusually, the accents in the next line, “Et ces champs de maïs” do not fall on the subject, “champs,” but rather the preposition “de” as shown in table 3.

Table 3. Metrical Accents in Berlioz’s *La captive*, line 4.

Et	ces	<u>champs</u>	de	ma-	<u>is</u>
•			•		•
•					•

This misalignment is expected when looking at the overall rhythm of the text, because Berlioz often placed the fourth syllable of each line on beat 2.

As the song progresses, Berlioz’s metrical accents shift to the correct downbeat of each measure and are also more in line with the stresses of the text (see table 4).

Table 4. Metrical Accents in Berlioz’s *La captive*, lines 5-8.

Et	ces	<u>as-</u>	tres	sans	<u>nom-</u>	bre
	•		•		•	
	•				•	
Si	le	<u>long</u>	du	mur	<u>som-</u>	bre
•		•	•		•	•
		•			•	
N’é-	tin	ce	<u>lait</u>	dans	<u>l’om-</u>	bre
	•		•		•	•
	•				•	
Le	<u>sa-</u>	bre	des	spa-	<u>his</u>	
	•		•		•	
	•				•	



The accents in the rhythm match the metric accents because of their consistent long–short patterns. This striking contrast between metrical displacement and alignment is another way Berlioz created a contrast between the phrases.

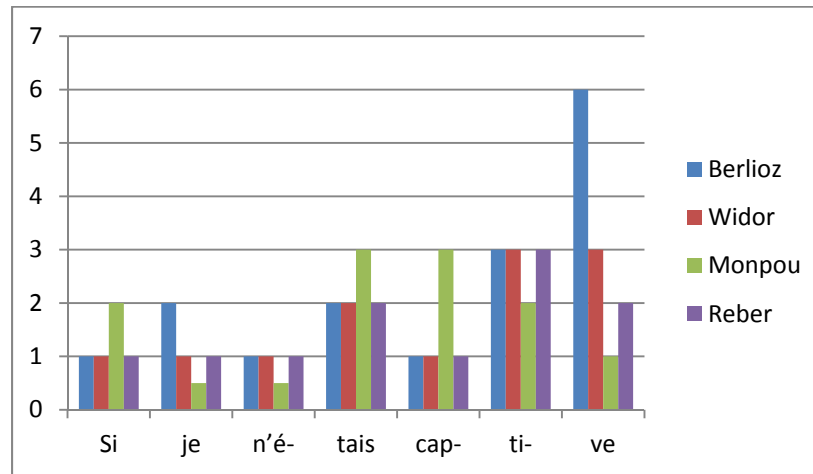
Widor and Monpou’s metric accents vary between their emphasis on beat one or two on minor words such as “Si” and “je” in the first phrase. Widor began on beat 1, while Monpou waited until beat 2 to begin the phrase. This continues throughout the poem, making it unclear whether the poem’s rhythm or the meaning of the text was more important in the choice of metric setting. Unlike Berlioz, Widor and Monpou both place the syllable “ti” in “captive” and “plaintive” on beat one, giving it the stronger metrical accent that is required when spoken. However, their concurrence on accents ends as the piece continues, further diverging in regularity from both Berlioz and each other.

Reber’s metric accents are not as easy to identify because he chose to set this to a 3/8 meter instead of 6/8, as mentioned above, there can still be a sense of pairing of strong and weak by putting every two measures together. For example, the word “captive” has “ti,” the stressed syllable, in measure three and “ve” in the following measure. Pairing these two measures gives “ti” more emphasis since, as the first of the two beats, has the strongest emphasis. This meter allowed Reber to put more important words on a downbeat; as a result, he was the most consistent in his metric patterns, even in the strophic structure.

Another type of accent, agogic, is created through the relative placement and comparison of note durations. Metrically Berlioz’s accents align with the rhythm of the poem, while on the agogic level, the accents line up more with the interpretation of the text. For example, in the first phrase, Berlioz, Widor, and Reber all agree on having the

value of the syllable “ti” in “captive” be the longest so far in the phrase, because of its importance (see chart 1).

Chart 1. Agogic Accents in *La captive*, line 1. The numbers indicate note lengths.



Although Berlioz started to follow this pattern by increasing the value on “ti”, he is the only composer who continued to increase the note values, leaving the unstressed syllable “ve” to have the longest duration of the phrase. This agogic accent causes the phrase to be extended, creating irregularity in the phrasing, which as mentioned above, enables increased expressive interpretations.

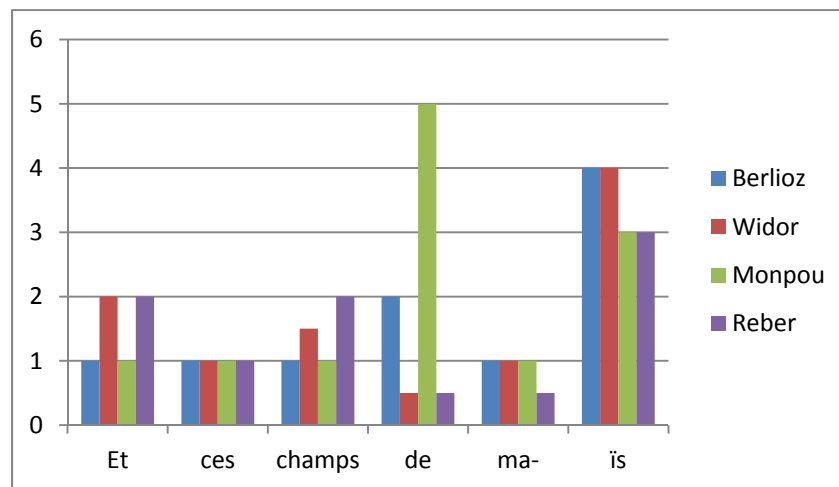
By the last phrase, Berlioz shifted to completely regular rhythmic phrasing, which causes the syllables to comply with their expected agogic accents. The consistency of the other composers’ versions is compromised as they continued their rhythmic patterns found in the earlier phrases. This causes a variety of differences between their previously unified “correct” accents. For example, on the preposition *de*, meaning “of,” Monpou provided the most durational emphasis, even though the syllable immediately preceding syllable is more important grammatically (see example 7).

Example 7. Monpou, *La captive*, mm. 10-15.<sup>67</sup>



Berlioz also gave this preposition a higher agogic accent, but still placed the correct primary emphasis on the syllable “is” (see chart 2).

Chart 2. Agogic Accents in *La captive*, line 4.



These accent patterns relate to the first verse, but each of Hugo’s verses has variations in the word order, accents, descriptions, and other factors that contribute to the text’s stress. Since each verse is different, it is impossible to have an accentual pattern that fits each line correctly. Although the other composers may be credited for following

67. Hippolyte Monpou, *La captive*, ed. David Tunley, *Romantic French Song: 1830-1870*, Vol. 1, *Early Romances by Bérart, Berlioz, Duchambge, Grisar, Meyerbeer, Monpou, Morel, Panerson, and Romagnes, Selected Songs of Louis Niedermeyer and Ernest Reyer*, (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1994).

correct rhythmic and phrasing conventions, they were inconsistent and lacked innovation and expressiveness.

Even within the confines of a strict genre, the *romance*, Berlioz was able to create and evolve the character of the poem through traditional elements. The techniques he used were not revolutionary and were common in the rise of Romanticism, but his unusual use and combination of them, as in the nonfunctional harmonic passages, differentiated him from his contemporaries. Even though Berlioz transformed this piece into a larger and more sophisticated work later on, his ability to create the same effect on a much smaller and subtler scale reflected his wide range of musical ability and expression.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Various Transformations

Though Berlioz freed himself from many restrictions of the *romance* genre in *La captive*, not all of his other revised orchestral *mélodies* experienced the same level of transformations. For example, Berlioz composed songs that contain a mixture of the two genres—*romance* and *mélodie*—before any revisions. The subsequent orchestrations are straightforward, showing that Berlioz may already have the later instruments in mind. On the other hand, several of Berlioz's other *mélodies* attempt to match the level of "artistic value" as found in *La captive*. These songs experience more progressive transformations, including different choices in harmonies and alterations in the strophic structure. The transformations had mixed results: Some songs—such as *Les champs*—are labeled as having little artistic value, while others "attain an artistic level surpassing by far the taste of the time and could only be appreciated by later generations."<sup>68</sup>

This irregularity in song output suggests that either Berlioz was not able to completely free himself from the *romance*, or that he chose to blend both genres, maximizing his possibilities for expressivity. Although his original intent may remain a mystery, it is clear that Berlioz's expansions—whether through form, harmonic language, or orchestration—enhanced the level of musicality in his songs and set him ahead of his time.

#### *Blending Genres: Le chasseur danois and La belle voyageuse*

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68. Frits Noske, *French Song from Berlioz to Duparc: The Origin and Development of the Mélodie*, Translated by Rita Benton, (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1970), 114.

Some of Berlioz's revised songs used the orchestrations themselves as the main transitional tool between the two genres. For example, the orchestration of *Le chasseur danois* has been referred to as a "straightforward orchestration of the original," which was published only the year before. In the introduction, Berlioz redistributes the opening pitches of the piano (see example 1A) to the winds and percussion (see example 1B) for coloring effects.

Example 1A. Hector Berlioz, *Le chasseur danois*, with piano accompaniment, mm. 1-5.<sup>69</sup>



Example 1B. Hector Berlioz, *Le chasseur danois*, with orchestral accompaniment, mm. 1-5.<sup>70</sup>

69. Hector, Berlioz. *Le chasseur danois*, *Hector Berlioz New Edition of the Complete Works*, vol. 15, *Songs with Piano*, ed. by Ian Kemp, (London: Bärenreiter, 1975).

**Allegro**

Flûtes (I, II) [Ième: Petite flûte]

Hautbois I, II

Clarinettes (En Ut) I, II unis. f

Bassons I, II f

III, IV

(En Ré) I, II unis. f

Cors (En Si) III, IV unis. f

Trombones I, II unis. mf

III mf

Timbales (En Ré, La) (baguettes d'éponge) mf

Unlike in *La captive*, Berlioz does not alter any rhythms or harmonies for expressive purposes. Instead, he relies solely on the instrumental coloring to convey the character of the piece. Berlioz also maintains the same accompaniment pattern and vocal melody throughout the entire four verses, only occasionally changing orchestral textures. The late date of this piece's composition—1844—exemplifies Berlioz's lack of intention for being a revolutionary in this art form, since he returned to the style of the simple *romance*.

However, even within this simple song, Berlioz shows a synthesis of the *romance* and *mélodie*. In both versions, he accomplishes this primarily by altering the strophic

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70. Hector Berlioz, *Le chasseur danois*, *Hector Berlioz New Edition of the Complete Works*, vol. 13, *Songs for Solo Voice and Orchestra*, ed. by Ian Kemp, (London: Bärenreiter, 1975).

structure in the fourth verse. This shift directly parallels the text: The character in the first three verses is a boy urging his father “to the hunt.” In the fourth verse, the character switches to the role of narrator who comments on the boy’s “empty wishes.” Berlioz depicts this by changing the tempo, meter, and rhythms from the original version. When the theme “to the hunt” returns, Berlioz uses it as an echo and returns to the original structure of the verse. Although the orchestral version only adds instrumental color, Berlioz’s expressivity and adherence to the text in the original version shows the influence of the rising *mélodie* in his songs.

*La belle voyageuse*—from the collection of songs, *Irlande*—went through a number of revisions: Originally written for solo voice and piano in 1827, the song was first orchestrated for a male quartet (1834). The second orchestral version returned to a solo vocalist (1843), and the piece’s final revision was for a two-part female chorus with orchestra (1851). However, the song experienced few changes in its revision process, except for the change in voicing. Noske and Rushton both state that the originality of the melodic lines and the unusual harmonies provide the way to differentiate this from completely being a *romance*.<sup>71</sup>

As with many of Berlioz’s other works, *La belle voyageuse* contains functional harmonies, but they are varied through nontraditional placement. For example, Berlioz alternates between A major and A minor, which reflects the chromaticism in the descending vocal line (see example 2).

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71. Noske, *French Song from Berlioz to Duparc*, 114.



Example 2. Hector Berlioz, *La belle voyageuse*, mm. 20-24.<sup>72</sup>



Although not completely innovative harmonically, Berlioz uses this chromaticism as another technique that provides more color within one of his straightforward, strophic songs.

*Transitioning to the mélodie: Le jeune pâtre breton and Zaïde*

After finishing *La captive*, Berlioz “underwent virtually the same transformation” for his piece *Le jeune pâtre breton*.<sup>73</sup> At first, Berlioz set this piece as a strophic *romance* for voice and piano; within the following year, he added an obligatory horn and then revised the work as an orchestral *mélodie*. This rapid transformation greatly contrasts with the twelve years it took for Berlioz to complete *La captive*. Although Rushton does not classify *Le jeune pâtre breton* on the same musical level as *La captive*,<sup>74</sup> the similarities in revisions—even outside of the orchestration—show Berlioz’s transition to the *mélodie*.

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72. Hector Berlioz, *La belle voyageuse*, *Hector Berlioz New Edition of the Complete Works*, vol. 15, *Songs with Piano*, ed. by Ian Kemp, (London: Bärenreiter, 1975).

73. *Ibid*, 106.

74. Julian Rushton, *The Music of Berlioz*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 35.

In the original version, the accompaniment for *Le jeune pâtre breton* follows the conventions of the *romance* by primarily providing chordal support using a repeated pattern. One of the characteristics that differentiates the original version from the *romance* is the melodic line, which includes expanded phrases that are irregular in length (similar to what occurs in *La captive*). For example, Berlioz extends the first phrase by giving the last syllable [e] in “éveillée” the longest durational accent of the line (see example 3).

Example 3. Hector Berlioz, *Le jeune pâtre breton*, mm. 1-10.<sup>75</sup>

The musical score for Example 3, Hector Berlioz's *Le jeune pâtre breton*, measures 1-10. The score is in 8/8 time, marked "Allegretto semplice". It features three staves: Cor (en Mi♭), Ténor ou Soprano, and Piano-forte. The vocal line (Ténor ou Soprano) has lyrics: "1. Dès que la grive est é - veil - lé - e." and "Sur cet - te lande en - cor mouil - lé - e Je viens m'as-seoir Jus-ques au". The piano accompaniment (Piano-forte) features a repeated pattern of eighth notes in the right hand and a similar pattern in the left hand, with dynamics "mf" and "pp" indicated.

The lengthened note extends the text into the next measure. As in *La captive*, Berlioz uses irregular phrase lengths to shape the melodic contour and expressivity. The short, three-measure phrases in the beginning lead to a final ten-measure phrase. This 3+3+10

75. Hector, Berlioz. *Le jeune pâtre breton*, ed. Ian Rumbold, Hector Berlioz New Edition of the Complete Works, Vol. 15, Songs with Piano. London: Bärenreiter, 1975.

structure repeats for each strophe, causing a feeling of anticipation and resolution in each of the verses.

As in *La belle voyageuse* and *La captive*, Berlioz also deviates from traditional chords in *Le jeune pâtre breton* for brief but expressive purposes. For example, Berlioz uses an ascending melodic line in stepwise motion (see example 4), as in *La captive*.

Example 4. Hector Berlioz, *Le jeune pâtre breton*, mm. 16-20.<sup>76</sup>

However, in this example the chords do not deviate far from what is expected, since the ultimate harmonic motion can be seen as tonic (Eb) to subdominant (Ab), and eventually to dominant (Bb) in measure 21.

Berlioz also adheres to the confines of the strophic structure in the revised version of this work. Only in the last verse does Berlioz add some variations, but these occur only by editing a few note values. For dramatic effect, he shortens the value of the word “Dieu!” and has a rest separating the words. Berlioz even takes away the extension on the first phrase by shorting the note value of “aile.” These minor changes show his close connection to the text but do not match the level of expression offered in strophic variation.

76. Hector Berlioz, *Le jeune pâtre breton*, *Hector Berlioz New Edition of the Complete Works*, vol. 15, *Songs with Piano*, ed. by Ian Kemp, (London: Bärenreiter, 1975).

In his song *Zaïde*, Berlioz makes more dramatic changes between the two versions of the song, yet these changes have often been ignored.<sup>77</sup> The original version of *Zaïde* was written for soprano and piano and—as with his other songs—the accompaniment is simple, providing the harmonic foundation for the singer’s melodic line. However, even as a *romance* the more unique rhythms and harmonies already stretched this genre. The opening rhythm in the piano, with the subdivision of repeated notes, highlights the rhythm of the *bolero*. The varying sections within each verse also provide contrasts within the strophic structure.

The second version of *Zaïde* surpasses basic expanded orchestration because of its harmonic changes and elaborations both in the accompaniment and vocal line. As in *La captive*, Berlioz varies the accompaniment’s structure by giving it different characteristics throughout the piece. This change occurs immediately, with a dramatically different and expanded introduction. Instead of starting with the repeated tonic chord, F major (see example 5A), the introduction begins with an F#dim7 chord that moves up chromatically by half step in the bass line until finally reaching the tonic (see example 5B).

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77. Hector Berlioz, *Hector Berlioz New Edition of the Complete Works*, vol. 13, *Songs for Solo Voice and Orchestra*, ed. by Ian Kemp, (London: Bärenreiter, 1975): XIII. Ian Kemp refers to the orchestral version of *Zaïde* as “a slightly enlarged and elaborated reworking of the original.”

Example 5A. Hector Berlioz, *Zaïde*, with piano accompaniment, mm. 1-5.<sup>78</sup>

Example 5A shows a musical score for Hector Berlioz's *Zaïde*, measures 1-5. The tempo is marked *Allegro con brio*. The score is for Soprano and Pianoforte. The Soprano part begins with the lyrics "« - Ma vil - le, ma bel - le vil - le, C'est Gre-". The Pianoforte part has dynamics *poco f* and *p*.

Example 5B. Hector Berlioz, *Zaïde*, with orchestral accompaniment, mm. 1-5.<sup>79</sup>

Example 5B shows a musical score for Hector Berlioz's *Zaïde*, measures 1-5. The tempo is marked *Allegretto*. The score is for Castagnettes (ad libitum), Soprano, and Pianoforte. The Soprano part begins with the lyrics "« - Ma vil - le, ma bel - le vil - le, C'est Gre-nade au frais jar -". The Pianoforte part has dynamics *mf*, *f*, and *p*. The Castagnettes part has a dynamic *p*.

Instead of the character immediately beginning in major and singing about her “lovely city,” the dissonances of the chords create a completely different tone to the piece. This

78. Hector Berlioz, *Zaïde*, *Hector Berlioz New Edition of the Complete Works*, vol. 15, *Songs with Piano*, ed. by Ian Kemp, (London: Bärenreiter, 1975).

79. Hector Berlioz, *Zaïde*, *Hector Berlioz New Edition of the Complete Works*, vol. 13, *Songs for Solo Voice and Orchestra*, ed. by Ian Kemp, (London: Bärenreiter, 1975).

suggests a different feeling towards the city and creates a sense of anticipation and urgency for the listener to discover the true intention of the character.

Berlioz creates the strophic structure for the poem by treating the first verse as the refrain and then subsequently groups every two stanzas together, with each grouping set as a single verse. In the orchestral version, Berlioz slightly varies the accompaniment and vocal line throughout the verses. When the second verse begins, for example, he adds triplet sixteenth-note rhythms for the violins, creating new chromaticism with the neighboring tones. Berlioz's vocal elaborations at the end of verses are more dramatic. When the refrain returns in the orchestral version, Berlioz adds several melismatic embellishments (see examples 6A and 6B).

Example 6A. Hector Berlioz, *Zaïde*, original version, mm. 11-15.<sup>80</sup>

11

- vil - le, Qui vaut Cor - dou - e, qui vaut Cordoue et Sé - vil - le.

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80. Hector Berlioz, *Zaïde*, *Hector Berlioz New Edition of the Complete Works*, vol. 15, *Songs with Piano*, ed. by Ian Kemp, (London: Bärenreiter, 1975).

Example 6B. Hector Berlioz, *Zaïde*, orchestral version, mm. 48-52.<sup>81</sup>

48  
- vil - - le, Qui vaut Cor - - - doue et Sé-vil - le! »

The character proclaims how her city, Grenada, is “worth more than” both “Cordoue and Séville.” Not only do these elaborations display more vocal virtuosity with the melismas, they also create a more playful tone to the character as she proudly compares her city to others. Although Berlioz’s variations are slight and rarely noted in this orchestral version, they show the transition from the *romance* to the *mélodie*.

### *Blending Styles*

Although “there is no evidence to suggest that he considered himself a pioneer in the genre,”<sup>82</sup> Berlioz’s songs and their revisions reveal steps that transition between the *mélodie* and the *romance*. It has been commented that

“Berlioz made settings for voice and orchestra because in the first place it was for him a natural step to take, and he presumably judged the songs in question, the most likely, of the two dozen or so he wrote for voice and piano, to profit from orchestral treatment.”<sup>81</sup>

However, Berlioz did not use the orchestrated versions as a vehicle simply to add orchestral colors to the songs. Instead, he used these revisions to create other variations

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81. Hector Berlioz, *Zaïde*, *Hector Berlioz New Edition of the Complete Works*, vol. 13, *Songs for Solo Voice and Orchestra*, ed. by Ian Kemp, (London: Bärenreiter, 1975).

82. Hector Berlioz, *Hector Berlioz New Edition of the Complete Works*, vol. 13, *Songs for Solo Voice and Orchestra*, ed. by Ian Kemp, (London: Bärenreiter, 1975): VIII.

internally, which helped weaken the restrictions imposed by the older, dominating song style.

The criticism of these revised songs' success diverges greatly among scholars. Noske often calls the original versions the better versions. For example, when referring to *La belle voyageuse*, he claims that the song "escapes the insipidity of the *romance* while still conserving the poem's artlessness; this quality is unfortunately lacking in the orchestral version of 1834."<sup>83</sup> Noske also calls the first version of *Le jeune pâtre Breton* the best because of its "rustic simplicity."<sup>84</sup> Rushton, on the other hand, admires how *La belle voyageuse* was able to combine "rustic naivety with considerable sophistication."<sup>85</sup>

Though some scholars may prefer the "rustic simplicity" found in Berlioz's *romances*, this taste is not necessarily shared in today's concert halls. When his songs are performed publicly or recorded, the orchestral versions are the most often used. However, as discussed above, the orchestral versions are popular not only because of their grand effects, but because they offer more opportunities for expression and interpretation through the different variations and harmonic colors, which are more intimately tied to the text.

The "irregularities" that exist between Berlioz's different styles of compositions should not be unjustly criticized. As this thesis has shown, Berlioz was not just working within the confines of the popular genre at the time, the *romance*. Instead, he worked within that genre while also embracing the expressive possibilities in the rising *mélodie*.

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83. Noske, *French Song from Berlioz to Duparc*, 198.

84. *Ibid.*, 106.

85. Julian Rushton, *The Musical Language of Berlioz*, 63.



Although this was not entirely new, Berlioz's attempts through his revised orchestral songs show a clear progression for the French art song moving forward into a new level of "artistic value."

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