Review: New Letters of Berlioz

Reviewed Work(s): Oeuvres littéraires. Correspondance générale II (1832-1842) by Hector Berlioz and Frédéric Robert

Review by: Ralph P. Locke

Source: *19th-Century Music*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Jul., 1977), pp. 71-84

Published by: University of California Press

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/746771>

Accessed: 08-01-2018 14:18 UTC

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://about.jstor.org/terms>

JSTOR

University of California Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *19th-Century Music*

Reviews

New Letters of Berlioz

RALPH P. LOCKE

Hector Berlioz. *Oeuvres littéraires. Correspondance générale II (1832–1842)*. Edited by Frédéric Robert. Paris: Flammarion, 1975. 797 pp.

The long-awaited second volume of the Berlioz *Correspondance générale* has now appeared, and, with volume 3 scheduled for distribution this fall, we will soon be in possession of half of the projected six-volume edition.¹ Scholars will of course be mining these volumes for years to come; already at the 1975 *Colloque International Hector Berlioz* in Paris, volume 1 was being quoted, interpreted, and occasionally questioned in paper after paper.² But the letters of this great composer and writer deserve a wider audience as well, for they make captivat-

ing and enlightening reading. In spite of an occasional dull business letter, fascinating items are the rule here, and they make this an essential collection, one to be placed on the shelf next to the letters of Mozart or Mendelssohn.

The editorial responsibility for the *Correspondance générale* is being shared by eight scholars, under the general editorship of Pierre Citron. Each volume is officially assigned to a different editor or team of editors, and the work is then revised by both Citron and the secretary of the edition, Thérèse Husson. The general features of the *Correspondance générale* have been discussed in reviews of volume 1,³ but certain facts merit repeating here. Berlioz destroyed the correspondence in his possession in 1867, so the letters that survive are mainly those written by the composer himself, often preserved by the recipient and his or her heirs, although a number of individual letters have turned up on the auction market, and others have found their way into libraries and private collections. The

¹Hector Berlioz, *Correspondance générale*, ed. Pierre Citron (Paris: Flammarion, 1972–), vol. 1, 1803–[mai] 1832, ed. idem (1972); vol. 2, [mai] 1832–[septembre] 1842, ed. Frédéric Robert (1975); vol. 3, 1842–1852, ed. Michel Guiomar (forthcoming).

I would like to thank Jacques Barzun, Pierre Citron, Rudolf F. Kallir, Piero Weiss and the staffs of the New York Public, Columbia University and Harvard University Libraries for their answers to my queries and Peter Bloom, Jerald C. Graue and Jurgen Thym for much thoughtful advice.

²The main talks from the *Colloque* are to be published in two sets: the more literary in *Romantisme*, no. 12 (1976), the more musical in an issue of the *Revue de musicologie*. See also D. Kern Holoman, "Conference," *Musical Times* 117, no. 1595 (January 1976), 61.

³François Lesure, *Revue de musicologie* 58, no. 2 (1972), 274–76. D. Kern Holoman, *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 26, no. 1 (Spring 1973), 167–71. Peter Bloom, *Notes* 30, no. 1 (September 1973), 51–54. The musical examples are much improved in volume 2, although on p. 614 an italic "v" has wandered in where there should be two grace notes on A and G#.

Correspondance générale consolidates the letters previously published in over a dozen sources, most of them out of print, and adds a large number of new letters and documents, including letters between friends, relatives, and other contemporaries of the composer. The whole is presented in a scholarly manner, with annotations, helpful event-by-event chronologies of Berlioz's life, and the usual indexes.

The second volume of the series was entrusted to Frédéric Robert, who shares with the reader his extensive knowledge of French patriotic and military music, notably in commentaries on the *Grande messe des morts* and the *Symphonie funèbre et triomphale*. No doubt we have the editor-in-chief to thank for the identification of Berlioz's wide-ranging literary allusions.⁴ The editors also deserve praise for preserving Berlioz's abbreviations (and punctuation?) more consistently than in volume 1.

The physical characteristics of the new volume are cause for more mixed emotions. On the one hand, the publishers have belatedly agreed to produce the series in hardcover, an obvious necessity for any major scholarly edition. (Volume 1, after a preliminary issue in paperback, is now being distributed in hardcover at no increase in price.) On the other hand, the pages of these volumes are glued together rather than sewn. Unless French publishers have discovered a magic adhesive unknown to their American counterparts, one can expect random leaves of this new edition to begin to drop loose within fifteen years, a sad prospect indeed.

The contents of the volume, similarly, provide both pleasant and occasionally unpleasant surprises. The pleasant are by far in the majority, beginning with the inclusion of an even larger percentage of new letters than had been offered in volume 1. Of 485 letters in volume 2—not counting third-party letters in the footnotes and lost letters whose existence has been deduced—between 200 and 275 are new, depending on whether one wishes to describe as "new" certain letters previously published in

obscure and ephemeral sources, such as auction catalogues and periodical articles.

The character of the letters in volume 2 is noticeably different from that in the first volume. The struggling student has become a recognized young composer, going from triumph to triumph with the *Mélologue* (later renamed *Lélio*), *Harold en Italie*, the Requiem, *Roméo et Juliette*, and the *Symphonie funèbre*, not to speak of his success as critic and conductor. Only the failure of *Benvenuto Cellini* at the Opéra mars the ascending curve of the composer's success during these years.

The two most fascinating parts of volume 2 concern, as Citron pointed out in his report at the *Colloque Berlioz*, episodes in Berlioz's personal, rather than musical, life. His stormy courtship of Harriet Smithson against the furious opposition of both families, involving what seem to be serious threats of suicide from the thirty-year-old composer, has never before been presented in such full detail. Particularly ironic is Berlioz's violent reaction to his father's warning that the marriage would only make the actress miserable and eventually drive the composer to leave her for another; that is precisely what did happen eight years later, toward the end of the present volume. The second episode revealed by new letters also involves the composer's family. In his review of *Roméo et Juliette*, Jules Janin sketched the early biography of Berlioz, emphasizing the poverty into which Berlioz was thrown when his father discontinued his allowance. Hector's father, uncle, and sister Nanci all became enraged at Janin's public attack on the family name (which was nonetheless based on solid fact, as Berlioz *père* knew very well). The self-righteous and at times hypocritical letters of the family communicate the oppressiveness of respectable provincial life with a vividness worthy of Balzac.

Of the letters concerning musical matters, perhaps the most interesting is the one Berlioz wrote to Ludwig Rellstab on 31 March 1838 (letter 549, pp. 432–34). The Berlin poet and critic had asked him for information about his works, and Berlioz included in his grateful reply some autobiographical paragraphs as an addendum to the official biography published by d'Ortigue in late 1832.

⁴The plays mentioned on p. 96 and 639, fns., are by Racine.

I compose without instrument, for I do not play piano at all.

My opinions on harmony, melody, rhythm and orchestration are, I believe, the same as everybody's, aside from the "prejudices." These prejudices are so deeply rooted here in France, especially in our Paris Conservatoire, that a man who refuses to share them passes for an extravagant innovator. I have the most lively sympathy for Gluck and Beethoven, first of all, and for Weber next. I admire Mozart profoundly, but he *moves* me less than the three that I have just named, except in *The Magic Flute*, which seems to me to be his masterpiece.

The modern Italian school, beginning with Rossini, is odious to me, except in the comic genre; as for what is called opera seria, aside from the more or less brilliant effects of the music taken as such, I can find nothing in it but an insolent parody of dramatic propriety and of artistic expression and poetry. I believe there is much to be done in the area of rhythm and orchestration; contrary to the impression that people try to spread here, I am not imbued with exaggerated ideas on the expressive power of instrumental music; I only believe it is able to render certain *feelings* and certain *poetic ideas* of which nobody anywhere in the world has ever wished to deprive the domain of music, but which have often been the pretext for ambitious and ridiculous works.

The editors fail to remark that this letter was one of those seen by Jacques Barzun in the Preussische Staatsbibliothek in 1934;⁵ sometime after the War it came into the possession of the late Mme de Chambure. Dare we hope that more Berlioz letters and other missing items from Berlin will show up in her estate or in other private collections?⁶

Perusing the rest of the musical letters in volume 2, one is left with the strong impression that for several years Berlioz was more at the center of things than we sometimes imagine. Far from exciting general consternation, most of

his works found a degree of acceptance with audiences, certain critics, literary people, and even some government officials—at times because of the very innovations they contain. The congratulatory letters that Berlioz received after first performances of the Requiem, *Roméo*, and the *Symphonie funèbre* give new evidence of this sympathetic response.

The letters are equally graphic, though, in portraying the sharp resistance that Berlioz encountered from the musical establishment everywhere he turned. In 1838, for example, Berlioz sought appointment as director of the Théâtre-Italien. His detailed and well-reasoned proposals, reproduced here for the first time, were overwhelmingly rejected, yet three years later the theater was re-established along the very lines that Berlioz had suggested—but without Berlioz at the helm.

He had of course met with antagonism from the very beginning of his career. The depth of this hostility, however, became fully apparent only when *Benvenuto Cellini* was sabotaged not so much by the tenor Duprez as by the administration of the Opéra (assisted by critics, cabals and the usual accessories to assassination in musical Paris). If Berlioz still had illusions, they must have been dispelled by the hurdles put in his way when he tried to write a second opera, *La Nonne sanglante*. It is perhaps to Berlioz's increasing disenchantment that one must look for the explanation of what Boschot called the *années mystérieuses*, the last years of volume 2 (1841–42), during which the composer wrote little music and few letters. His hopes of establishing himself securely as teacher at the Conservatoire, as conductor at the Opéra, or as a well-paid opera composer were dashed one by one, and it took him some time to accept the unpleasant fact that long concert tours in foreign countries were his only path to financial and artistic stability. His liaison with Marie Recio, which began in the fall of 1841, was perhaps a further symptom of his growing desire to break with the frustrated dreams of the 1830s—in both public and personal life.

It is precisely these transitional years of the early 1840s that present the first disappointment in volume 2. The editors, to their credit,

⁵It is listed, but not summarized, in Barzun, ed. and trans., *Nouvelles Lettres de Berlioz/New Letters of Berlioz* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1954; 2d. edn. rev., Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1974), pp. 278, 309.

⁶Barzun listed nine Berlioz letters as missing, including the letter to Rellstab (*Nouvelles Lettres*, p. 309.)

Speculation about the fate of important musical autographs missing from the former Preussische Staatsbibliothek since World War II is discussed in P. J. P. Whitehead, "The Lost Berlin Manuscripts," *Notes* 33, no. 1 (September 1976), 7–15.

have been able to increase from seven [!] to thirty-five the number of published letters between January 1841 and September 1842, yet that is far too small a number to tell us all we would like to know about these crucial years. (By contrast, the volume offers some eighty letters *each* for the years 1838 and 1839.) It appears that Berlioz simply wrote few letters during this transitional period, perhaps for deeply-rooted emotional reasons. (Auguste Morel, in a little-known letter of 1843 to Lecourt, attributed Berlioz's recent neglect of friends and career to the "subjugating" influence of Marie Recio.)⁷

There are other disappointments in volume 2, harder to quantify, perhaps, but no less real. In many small ways one senses that the new volume was less carefully assembled than the first. Typographical errors in the text will cause few problems for the attentive reader (one exception: the reference at the end of p. 662 is to chapter *LI*), but a few foreign names should be corrected (p. 5: Albi Rosenthal; p. 466: Edwin Franko Goldman; p. 491: Koch; p. 504: Breitkopf; and the Sibley Music Library, *passim*, is located at the *Eastman School of Music, Rochester, N.Y.*). The chronologies for each year are not always as useful to the reader as those of volume 1; they appear to have been drawn up in part after the analogous tables in Boschot. More significantly, a number of Berlioz's correspondents go completely unidentified. Citron did not hesitate to propose possible identities for obscure figures in volume 1, and the editors could have done so more consistently for volume 2. They do not, for example, identify LeRoy, yet he is regularly listed in the almanacs of the period as "*employé*" of the Conservatoire Library; when Berlioz makes a request of him he is thus acting in his capacity as LeRoy's immediate superior as *Conservateur-adjoint* and *Sous-bibliothécaire*. Certainly the faithful Rocquemont deserves more than the simple designation "*copiste*,"⁸ and one would like to have some information on Lecourt, the Marseilles

lawyer who frequently corresponded with the composer. (A few more biographical matters: footnotes on pp. 513 and 526 regarding the unidentified friend Flayol should refer to p. 391, fn. 1; the Chevalier mentioned in a note on p. 225 is probably the leading Fourierist Jules Lechevalier; and both references to Félicien David in the index are mistaken: he was not a Jew, as is claimed on p. 553, and the "David" whom Berlioz mentions on p. 720 is, of course, the sculptor David d'Angers, *membre de l'Institut*.)

References to Berlioz's music in volume 2 are occasionally misleading, especially when the editor refers anachronistically to final versions of works which had not reached that state of revision during the years in question. The editors have provided lists of the works performed by Berlioz at certain concerts, but these lists are often taken over from Boschot and should be used with caution. Among other musical corrections, the Funeral March is not the penultimate number of *Roméo* (p. 562); Mme Dorus-Gras, a soprano, cannot have sung Ascanio's aria (p. 607)—perhaps mezzo-soprano Rosine Stoltz sang it as Boschot claims, or, more likely, Dorus-Gras sang Teresa's cavatine (see p. 611); and the unidentified "Romance avec orchestre" scheduled for 25 November 1838 (p. 471) is obviously *Le jeune Pâtre breton*.⁹ One further point of musical interest: the decision by Berlioz to use eight horns in certain scenes of *Le Freischütz* (p. 688) is an unauthorized "improvement"—Weber's score calls for only four.

At times the editors appear to have interpreted individual letters without sufficient reference to others in the volume. When Berlioz promises to send Ferrand some scores as soon as

⁷Letter from Morel to Lecourt, extract in *Catalogue de la librairie Simon Kra* 19 (June 1929): 18, item 7649.

⁸On Rocquemont (the correct spelling, although Berlioz regularly dropped the "c") see the chapter "Copyists" in D. Kern Holoman's *Autograph Musical Documents of Hector Berlioz c. 1818–1840* (Ph.d. diss., 1974), pp. 123–34.

⁹The performance was postponed to 16 December 1838, with a change of singer (Rosine Stoltz); see Ian Kemp, ed., *Songs for Solo Voice and Orchestra, New Berlioz Edition* 13 (Kassel, London: Bärenreiter, 1975), x.

they are printed (p. 89) he can hardly be referring to *La Chasse de Lützow*, as the editors suggest, for he did not arrange Weber's chorus until a few months later (p. 113) and does not refer to a possible publication until the next year (pp. 183–84). Presumably he intends to send Ferrand the same works that he promised DuBoys two months earlier (p. 59). Another letter to Ferrand (p. 462) was taken over from *Lettres intimes* along with what must have been an editorial date of “septembre 1838.” On the basis of its reference to *Cellini* and “le ballet,” it can in fact be limited to 20 February, 8 March, or 17 March 1839—the only days on which *Cellini* (or rather its first act) was on a double bill with a ballet.

In a footnote on p. 165 the editors hesitantly cite a statement from Adolphe Jullien's biography of Berlioz, but Jullien himself was simply drawing on a well-known letter of the composer that is reprinted on pp. 184–85 of the present edition.¹⁰ Letter 473 (pp. 299–300) refers to an opera in more than two acts and thus presumably was directed to Scribe in October 1841, rather than to Barbier, librettist of the two-act *Cellini*. (It is difficult to speak with complete assurance, though, because the editors have—here as elsewhere—retranslated into French the English catalogue entry that is the sole source for the letter.) There is a contradiction between footnotes on pp. 716 and 718; two other footnotes (pp. 390 and 393) each mention a receipt for 1000 francs as if there were two, but a glance at Tiersot's collection of correspondence shows that there is only one document involved here, quoted from different sources. Finally, a letter of Harriet Smithson-Berlioz, originally published by Tiersot, is dated 1833 on p. 57 and 1834 on p. 301. The earlier date appears to be correct, since she refers to her broken leg, the result of an accident on 1 April 1833. The summary of the letter

is inaccurate at the first citation and incomplete at the second, and the reader must finally turn to Tiersot for enlightenment.¹¹

But these questions of annotation are irrelevant if the letters themselves are incomplete or missing entirely. Such a problem did not arise in volume 1, which drew mainly from a small number of collections of letters to friends and relatives. Beginning with volume 2, however, Berlioz is an active public figure, dispatching letters in all directions, and consequently one must look in all directions to find them. The new volume contains summarized versions of letters in some private and public collections, presumably because their curators did not respond to requests for the full texts. Yet public libraries have a clear responsibility to make their holdings widely available; were the editors not persistent enough in pursuit of their quarry?¹²

¹¹The 1834 date comes from the auction catalogue which is the only source for the letter. Tiersot, in reprinting the text, retained the 1834 date and merely pointed out that it is “inexacte” (Hector Berlioz, *Les Années romantiques: 1819–1842*, ed. Julien Tiersot [Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1904], p. 259). This misled Barzun to compound the error by suggesting 1835 (*Nouvelles Lettres*, pp. 20–21).

In regard to another letter of Smithson's, 11 July 1836 to Bloqué, the present editors claim that it was already published in the *Revue et gazette musicale* in 1838. They have mistaken one of Barzun's footnotes which in fact referred to an article of Heine touching on Smithson's acting career.

¹²In addition to the collections about to be discussed, the editors could have consulted the facsimile of letter 396 (p. 180), which, as they themselves state, is published in Binental's *Chopin*. (The facsimile reveals that Berlioz spelled three words differently: *villagiatura*, *spero* and *saranno*. At least at the time of publication [c. 1930], the letter was part of Binental's personal collection.) The editors mention that letter 603 (p. 491) was published in the *Allgemeine Musikzeitung* of 1898 but do not give the text.

Several other omissions may at first baffle the reader. The editors supposedly distinguish with an asterisk letters of which they were able to consult either the original or a reproduction. A number of letters lack this asterisk, yet they are published for the first time; certainly the autographs must have been consulted in some form! (letters 577, 609, 751bis, 763, 764, and 767.) Some letters transcribed from the originals by other scholars—letters 503, 542, 567, 727, and 766—presumably deserve asterisks as well. The editors also quote two “third-party” letters without indicating the source: Liszt's letter to Ferdinand Denis (p. 457) is drawn from Otto Haas Catalogue 7 (by way of Barzun, *Nouvelles lettres*, pp. 28–29) and the letter of Félix Marmion (p. 396) is presumably in the Reboul Collection.

¹⁰“Je le mettrai dans quelque opéra,” wrote Berlioz; in fact he did consider using this song in *Le Cri de guerre de Brisgaw* (see Kemp, loc. cit.). Elsewhere in Jullien a passage from the *Mémoires* (chapter 52) is quoted without identification. It has inadvertently been taken into volume 2 as letter 742 (p. 680).

The Berlioz letters in the New York Public Library, for example, were originally surveyed by Jacques Barzun, who published full texts of a few and brief summaries of the rest in his *Nouvelles Lettres*. Somehow the current editors were not able to consult the original letters and relied instead on Barzun's book (and some supplementary transcriptions Barzun made but never published). Two of the New York letters thus appear only in Barzun's summary, retranslated into French. (Perhaps the full texts can be included in the supplement projected for volume 6.) Additionally, the New York Public Library has an unpublished, undated letter of Harriet Smithson-Berlioz which can clearly be assigned to 1836 and is thus of interest to readers of volume 2. It is given below in the original English, with all its awkward turns of phrase. Harriet's French was amusingly ungrammatical (see p. 564) but considerably less stilted.

The editors encountered a similar short circuit with the Columbia University Library, which has acquired from private owners two letters that Barzun had mentioned briefly. These, too, appear in summary only in volume 2. No. 719 is little more enlightening than its summary, but no. 733 in its full text (printed below) gives further evidence of Berlioz's unflagging efforts on behalf of the works of his idol, Spontini.

One important source of Berlioziana, although known for some time, was until recently inaccessible to inquiring scholars, and it is to this collection that the remainder of the present article will be devoted. This is the private collection of Kapten Rudolf Nydahl, now administered by the Stiftelsen Musikkulturens främjande, Stockholm, which includes ten Berlioz letters—largely unpublished—and some additional papers.¹³

¹³For an overview of the Nydahl Collection, a rather neglected source considering its riches, see Gunnar Holst's brief catalogue, *Svenskt Musikhistoriskt Arkiv Bulletin* 8 (1972). The catalogue is highly condensed and even incomplete—it lists, for example, only two instead of ten letters for Berlioz—and a direct inquiry to the Stiftelsen [Torstenssonsgatan 15; 114 56 Stockholm] is usually both necessary and rewarding. (continued)

The Nydahl Collection offers the full text, for example, of a letter that was previously known only from a partial citation in an auction catalogue. (The recipient's name, Molinent, can now be corrected as well.) There is also a snippet of another letter, otherwise lost, containing merely the closing phrases, signature and address: "Repondez moi un mot je vous prie. Tout a vous. H. Berlioz rue neuve S^t Marc N^o 1." For what it is worth, this fragment, at once prize and victim of some collector of autograph signatures, can be dated by its address to the years 1832–34.

The greatest treasure in the Nydahl Collection for the period of volume 2 is the second of two short musical manuscripts. The first, a signed but undated album leaf of the opening twenty-one bars of the *Villanelle* from *Les Nuits d'été* (arranged on two treble staves), offers some curious but unimportant musical variants. The second is the lost autograph of the *Chansonette de M^r Léon de Wailly*, "Au levant là-bas est une île." The musical text is identical to that published (from a copy) in D. Kern Holoman's dissertation.¹⁴ The poem, here published for the first time in its entirety, suggests that Berlioz conceived the music (later incorporated into Act I of *Cellini* as the ironic "De profundis" chorus) as a gentle fisherman's love song.

I am grateful to Lesley A. Wright and M. Elizabeth C. Bartlet for first drawing my attention to the holdings of the Nydahl Collection, and to Erling Lomnäs (Assistant Curator) and other members of the staff of the Stiftelsen for permitting me to consult the Berlioz documents on microfilm.

In a recent letter, Hugh Macdonald has graciously informed me that the letter to Ferrand, cited below, was mentioned in the *Revue de musicologie* 8 (1924), 79, and that the letter to Fétis was quoted in the Heyer sale catalogue and in Julien Tiersot's *La Damnation de Faust de Berlioz* (Paris: Paul Mellottée, c. 1924), p. 64. Macdonald agrees with David Cairns that the pages for the Weimar *Cellini* are forged (see note 16), and they both have some doubts about the authenticity of the *Villanelle* album leaf.

The Stiftelsen has provided the following descriptions of the three Berlioz musical manuscripts in the collection: *Chansonette*: fol. 1 (= p. 1), 23.1 × 32.8 cm.; fol. 2 (= pp. 2–3) 23.4–23.6 × 33.7 cm.; ink light brown to dark brown.

Villanelle: 25.0 × 33.0–33.1 cm.; ink light brown.

Cellini pages: 30.5 × 26.4 cm.; ink yellowish/light brown to dark brown.

¹⁴*Autograph Musical Documents*, pp. 89, 425–27.

Au levant là bas est une ile,
 Je la découvris l'autre jour.
 Elle a bien, elle a bien trente pas de tour, ah,
 Trente pas de tour.
 Quand la mer est bleue et tranquille
 On l'entrevoit a l'horizon.
 J'y veux bâtir une maison

Toute en nacre, en plumes de cygnes,
 De martins pêcheurs et de Paons,
 De coraux, de coraux aux festons grimpons, ah,
 Aux festons grimpons.
 Au lieu de myrthes et de vignes,
 Nacre et corail, voilà nos fleurs,
 A nous autres maitres pêcheurs.

Mon amour, je veux t'y conduire,
 Et lorsque la nuit ma pierre [sic]
 À la fenêtre se mettra, tra la la la la,
 Tra la la la la,
 Les marins sur l'eau, voyant luire
 Ses grands yeux et son teint vermeil,
 Diront: Tiens, voilà le soleil.¹⁵

The remaining items date from later periods in Berlioz's life, and they are given below, with the exception of three which I have sent directly to Professor Citron for inclusion in volume 3. These are letters of 2 February 1843 to Mendelssohn, 20 November 1844 to the Ministre de l'Instruction Publique, and 26 November 1850 to an unknown composer.¹⁶ The only mundane item in the collection is a business letter to an

unnamed soprano, no doubt Mme Miolan-Carvalho, who had—as Berlioz says—sung the Clari duet recently at the Conservatoire (with Mlle Boulard).

The other four letters all offer fascinating glimpses into Berlioz's life and works. To his friend and colleague Joseph d'Ortigue he vents his exasperation at the mediocre concerts that he is forever expected to publicize in his articles. (He exaggerates for effect. Sauzey and Del-sarte did perform much old music, but they were only 45 and 43 years old respectively—hardly “vieillards”!) To Humbert Ferrand he gives a composition lesson which is as precious as it is rare in the letters, touching on tonal motion, on prosody, even on matters of style.

To Stéphen de la Madelaine he defends his opposition to Armand Chevé's tonic sol-fa method and numerical musical notation (which must have seemed barbarisms to a professional musician brought up on fixed-do and the traditions of French solfège), to the intolerance of the music reformers who had adopted Chevé's system (Berlioz compares them to the Jacobins), and to Stéphen's own ideas on singing. Stéphen had enthusiastically proposed to the Académie des Beaux-Arts a new tool for teaching style and interpretation: heavily annotated editions of music in which the master had set down the inflexion, character, and dynamic level of each note. Berlioz, for whom adherence to the composer's score—no more, no less—was a religion, choked at the thought of a system which, as Pougin put it, encouraged students to make changes in the composer's text “in the form of cadenzas, glissandos, etc., relying on their taste and wisdom.” Stéphen must have infuriated Berlioz even further by submitting to the Académie, of which Berlioz was then a member, a stéphenized version of Agathe's aria from *Der Freischütz*, the very opera for which Berlioz had done battle all his life against the arrangers and adapters. The Académie, says Pougin,¹⁷ responded to Stéphen's *envoi* with “un rapport

¹⁵The text given in the manuscript has been arranged in stanzas. (The original stanzas, without Berlioz's additions, clearly had six lines, rhymed *a b b a c c*.) I have capitalized the beginnings of lines and standardized punctuation but preserved the spelling of the autograph.

¹⁶One other item in the collection, a three-page list of cuts and changes in *Benvenuto Cellini* (those of the Weimar version of 1852), should be mentioned, although David Cairns has informed me that, in his best judgment, it is an unusually clever forgery. If the *Cellini* list proves to be authentic after all, it will only confirm our impression that Berlioz was never in favor of scrapping the final allegro section of the Sextet, although he did approve the cut under pressure from Liszt. (See Berlioz's two letters to Liszt, 2 July and 3 or 4 [sic] July 1852, published by La Mara [pseudonym for Marie Lipsius] in *Briefe hervorragender Zeitgenossen an Franz Liszt*, vol. 1 [Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1895], pp. 233–38. In the second letter, Berlioz speaks of some “petites feuilles de musique” which he is enclosing. The sheets in the Nydahl Collection are ostensibly the final three of these “small sheets of music.” They are numbered 5, 6, and 7 and contain the changes for the latter part of the opera, from the Prayer of Teresa and Ascanio through the final scene.) Hugh MacDonald has compared the Paris and Weimar versions in “The Original ‘Benvenuto Cellini,’” *Musical Times* 107 (1966), 1042–45.

¹⁷“Stéphen de la Madelaine” in F.-J. Fétis, ed., *Biographie universelle des musiciens*, Supplement, ed. Arthur Pougin, vol. 2 (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1880), pp. 68–69.

très-élogieux, trop élogieux peut-être."

But it is F.-J. Fétis who gets the most touching letter. One need only recall Berlioz's attack on Fétis in *Lélio* or Fétis's vindictive review of the *Symphonie fantastique* in 1835 to see how matters had changed. Berlioz in July 1860 was a beaten man. His beloved sister Adèle had just died and he was in great pain from his intestinal neuralgia. In two years he would give up his activity as a composer; in three, his work as a music critic. The brash young man was heading for a bitter, isolated and premature old age. In this state of mind he must have realized that

Fétis, though a pedant and a high-handed "improver" of Mozart and Beethoven, need not have become a personal enemy. In fact Fétis had tried to help the young composer, and it was Berlioz who attacked first in 1832. This letter, then, is in some way an apology,¹⁸ part of the general reconciliation with the past which would be Berlioz's obsession during the last years of his life. It is not least for human documents such as this and for their insight into the emotional life of a great creative artist that generations of readers have loved and will continue to love the letters of Hector Berlioz.

¹⁸The relationship between Berlioz and Fétis is discussed in detail by Peter A. Bloom in his dissertation, *François-Joseph Fétis and the Revue musicale (1827–1835)* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, 1972), pp. 208–240, and in "Berlioz and the Critic: *La Damnation de Fétis*," forthcoming in *Studies in Musicology in Honor of Otto E. Albrecht*.

¹⁹Listed, with an incomplete summary, in Barzun, *Nouvelles Lettres*, p. 302. Barzun interpreted the calligraphic flourish at the end of "Friday Mar." as an "8". The letter, however, clearly dates from 1836 (compare Letter 465, *Correspondance générale* 2:289), and 8 March 1836 was not Friday but Tuesday.

²⁰On Édouard Sainte-Barbe, Astolphe de Custine and the comte de Castellane, see *Correspondance générale* 2:755, 742, 289.

²¹Act V of Nicholas Rowe's *The Tragedy of Jane Shore Written in Imitation of Shakespeare's Style* (1714), a Restoration "she-tragedy" combining historical grandeur with a pathetic tale which "hath never failed of melting gentle eyes" (Prologue, verse 4).

²²A poor quarter of London traditionally associated with the destitute Jane Shore.

²³Édouard Monnais, a friend of Berlioz, served briefly as Director of the Paris Opéra (1839–40) and then became the government's commissaire to the opera houses and the Conservatoire.

²⁴On the tenor-baritone Massol, see *Correspondance générale* 2:661.

²⁵In Spontini's *La Vestale* and Gluck's *Iphigénie en Tauride*, respectively. Berlioz apparently hoped to perform excerpts from the two works on his "festival" concert at the Opéra, 1 November 1840. There had been much public pressure in 1839 for a full revival of *La Vestale* at the Opéra, to no avail. Berlioz, too, did not succeed in performing anything from *Vestale*, but he did begin the concert with Act I of *Iphigénie* (and Massol did sing Thoas).

²⁶The tenor Marié (1814–?) made his Opéra debut in 1840, but his full, unmanageable voice soon brought him into disfavor. Even at his best, he was clearly the wrong singer for the works in question.

²⁷Presumably Charles Béchem, who contributed music articles to the *Dictionnaire de la conversation et de la lecture*, 2d edn. An almanac of 1837 lists under "Compositeurs" one Bechem, rue Pavée 4 (Marais), perhaps the same person (Planque, *Agenda musical* [Paris: E. Duverger] 3 [1837], 137).

EIGHT UNPUBLISHED LETTERS

REVIEWS

The following letters are published in the order in which they were discussed in the text. The first three belong to the years of *Correspondance générale II*. The remaining five were written between 1854 and 1862. In the French letters, punctuation and capitalization have occasionally been altered to prevent confusion; spelling and titles of works, however, have been preserved faithfully. These letters are each followed by an English translation. Harriet's letter, originally in English, is transcribed literally.

HARRIET SMITHSON-BERLIOZ TO ÉDOUARD SAINTE-BARBE, [?] March [1836], 2 pp. plus address (New York Public Library)¹⁹

Dear Sir²⁰

—I am seized with such a violent cold that I fell unable to rise from my bed. *I am really ill*—Nothing but crosses, every kind of Cross except the indispensable one for our Tragedy,²¹ perhaps you will condescend to speak about it today & also to banish the blooming cocoa tree & clear blue waters of the Lake from *Shoreditch*.²²

I am quite unhappy that we are deprived of the honour of waiting upon you & M. de Custine this Eve. also of attending the rehearsal, but a little timely care will enable me to repeat twice tomorrow at any time you please and every one concerned being in full possession of the business of the scene perhaps this arrangement will only prove annoying to you.

ever grateful & sincere ser^t

H. Berlioz

May I entreat of you dear Sir to present our respectful excuses to M. de Custine & M. le comte de Castellane.

Friday Mar. [day left blank]

[Address:] Monsieur
Monsieur S^t Barbe

BERLIOZ TO ÉDOUARD MONNAIS, Letter 733, [late October 1840 (?)], 1 p. plus address (Columbia University Library)

Mon cher Monnaiss²³

Massol²⁴ chante *Licinius* et Thoas:²⁵ vous n'avez pas compris sa réponse, voyez donc Marié²⁶ pour arranger cela; Massol sait le rôle, c'est d'ailleurs un grand avantage. Veuillez prévenir Bechem²⁷ (rue Montholon N^o 20) pour le changement à faire sur l'affiche; il faut tacher de ne pas blesser Marié en tout cas. C'était un malentendu.

Tout à vous
H. Berlioz

[Address:] Monsieur Ed. Monnaiss
9 rue neuve S^t Georges

My dear Monnaiss,²³

Massol²⁴ will be singing *Licinius* as well as Thoas;²⁵ you misunderstood his answer. So go see Marié²⁶ to arrange the matter. Massol knows the role already, which is a great advantage. Please inform Béchem²⁷ (rue Montholon N^o 20) of the change to be made on the poster. We should try not to hurt Marié in any case. It was a misunderstanding.

Yours,
H. Berlioz

[Address:] Monsieur Ed. Monnaiss
9 rue neuve S^t Georges

[Footnotes on page 78]

BERLIOZ TO MOLINENT, Letter 564, [late August 1838],
2 pp. (Nydahl Collection)²⁸

Mon cher Monsieur Molinent²⁹
J'ai été bien contrarié de ne m'être pas trouvé chez
moi quand vous avez pris la peine d'y venir et surtout
que vous n'ayez pas laissé votre adresse [sic]. Enfin
j'ai su par Masson³⁰ que vous habitiez toujours
Brunoy [Seine-et-Oise] et je vous prie, si ce n'est pas
une corvée trop rude pour vous, d'assister à ma répé-
tition générale samedi soir avec Madame Molinent.
Je crois pouvoir ce soir là vous remettre deux places
pour la représentation.³¹ Malgré toutes les intrigues
et cabales qui s'agitent autour de moi la chose s'an-
nonce assez bien. C'est la grande affaire de ma vie qui
va se décider; je serais bienheureux de vous compter
parmi ceux qui m'aideront à la mener à bien.

Mille compliments et amitiés
H. Berlioz

BERLIOZ TO MARIE CAROLINE FÉLIX MIOLAN-
CARVALHO, 10 March 1855, 2 pp. (Nydahl Collection)

Madame
J'ai une précieuse faveur à vous demander. Je donne
un concert spirituel à l'opéra comique le samedi 7
avril, et je vous serais extrêmement obligé si vous
vouliez bien, dans ce concert, chanter avec M^{elle}
Boulard le Duo de Clari "Cantando un dì"³² qui vous
a valu un si beau succès au Conservatoire. Je viens
d'arriver d'Allemagne et je repars demain pour
Bruxelles sans quoi je fusse allé vous demander ce
service pour le quel je vous prie de recevoir d'avance
mes sincères remerciements.

J'ai l'honneur d'être, Madame,
votre dévoué serviteur
H. Berlioz
10 mars 1855
19 rue de Boursault

P.S.
Si ce n'était abuser de votre complaisance je vous
demanderais aussi de vouloir bien accepter la partie
de soprano dans le Trio de la Création de Haydn.

My dear Monsieur Molinent,²⁹

I am quite annoyed that I was not at home when
you went to the bother of coming by and especially
that you did not leave your address. I finally learned
from Masson³⁰ that you are still living in Brunoy
[Seine-et-Oise] and I would like to ask you to attend
my dress rehearsal Saturday evening with Mme Mol-
inent, if it is not too great a burden for you. I think I
will be able to give you at that time two seats for the
[first] performance.³¹ In spite of the plots and cabals
at work all around me, the prospects are good. The
great opportunity of my life hangs in the balance; I
would be fortunate to count you among those who
will be helping me to make it a success.

A thousand regards and greetings,
H. Berlioz

Madame,

I have an important favor to ask of you. I am
giving a Concert Spirituel at the Opéra-Comique
Saturday, 7 April, and I would be much obliged if you
and Mlle Boulard would sing the Clari duet, "Can-
tando un dì,"³² which brought you such acclaim at
the Conservatoire. I just arrived from Germany and
tomorrow I leave again for Brussels—otherwise I
would have come myself to ask of you this service, for
which I beg you in advance to accept my sincere
thanks.

I have the honor of being, Madame,
Your devoted servant
H. Berlioz
10 March 1855
19 rue de Boursault

P.S. Without wanting to take advantage of your good
nature, I wonder if you would also accept the soprano
part in the trio from Haydn's *Creation*.

²⁸Extract published in Otto Haas Catalogue No. 7 and re-
printed in Barzun, *Nouvelles Lettres*, pp. 26–27, from which
we borrow some details of translation.

²⁹The name, unclearly written, could possibly be Molineuf,
Molinet or Molinent.

³⁰Perhaps the novelist Michel Masson (see the note in *Cor-
respondance générale* 2:30).

³¹The dress rehearsal of *Benvenuto Cellini* was held Satur-
day, 1 September. The premiere, scheduled for 3 September,
finally took place on 10 September.

³²This Baroque duet with continuo, one of the *Duetti et
terzetti da camera* of Giovanni Clari (1677–1754), was per-
formed at the Concerts du Conservatoire on 14 January by
Mme Miolan and Mlle Boulard (or Boulart).

Mon cher d'ortigue
fais la réclame qu'on te demande j'en serais d'autant plus aise que cela me dispensera de parler de ce concert pour le quel M^{lle} Bertin³³ a déjà écrit à M^r de Sacy³⁴ qui m'a écrit pour me le recommander. Je vais prévenir M^r de Sacy qu'à l'avenir comme il est inutile que ma tâche soit faite deux fois quand quelqu'un me préviendra, comme l'a fait deux fois de suite Janin pour l'Etoile du Nord, je la tiendrai pour accomplie.³⁵

Ne faudra-t-il pas illuminer Paris parceque M^r Sausay [sic]³⁶ qui est un garçon de talent et d'esprit, mais qui a quatorvingt dix sept ans, a donné un roquet de concert dans le quel il a fait entendre trois ou quatre jolies petites bamboches pour un violon avec accompagnement de piano pour deux doigts et d'un quatuor? faudra-t-il tirer le canon des Invalides (ce serait une allusion peut-être) à cause de l'apparition de M^r Delsarte³⁷ qui a voulu [?] chanter avec une voix de botte trouée des rogatons de récitatifs mesurés sur de vieux vers? que diable y a-t-il donc là dedans de si extraordinaire? Cette coterie de vieillards crachotant des vieillotteries finit par m'exaspérer à la fin, et si tu veux m'être très agréable tu feras la réclame à condition que tu ne la signeras pas et me donneras ainsi le prétexte de me taire.

Mille amitiés
Ton dévoué
H. Berlioz

[Address:] Monsieur D'ortigue
Cour d'orléans
Rue S^t Lazare

My dear d'Ortigue,

Do write the announcement that they asked you to. I will be particularly pleased, since that will free me from having to talk about the concert—for which Mlle Bertin³³ already wrote to M. de Sacy,³⁴ who wrote to me about it. I shall tell M de Sacy that in the future, since there is no point in having my job done twice, I will assume that, when someone tells me (as Janin did twice in a row for *L'Étoile du nord*), it has been done.³⁵

Are we supposed to light up all of Paris because M Sauzay,³⁶ who is a bright, talented boy but who is 97 years old, gave a dog of a concert in which he performed three or four pretty little playthings for violin with two-finger piano accompaniment and string quartet? Should we set off the cannon at the Invalides (an allusion, perhaps) to celebrate the appearance of M Delsarte,³⁷ who chose to sing—with a voice like a boot full of holes—some scraps of measured recitatives based on old verses? What in God's name is so extraordinary in that? This collection of old men sputtering out these antiquated things will be the death of me, and if you want to do me a great favor, write the announcement but don't sign it. That way you will give me an excuse not to say anything myself.

A thousand greetings,
Your devoted
H. Berlioz

[Adress:] Monsieur d'Ortigue
Cours d'Orleans
rue S^t Lazare

³³Louise Bertin was the composer of *Esméralda* (1836) and daughter of Armand Bertin, owner of the *Journal des débats*.

³⁴Silvestre de Sacy, one of the leading journalists of the *Débats*.

³⁵This sentence is not completely clear. Did Jules Janin at first promise to review this important Meyerbeer premiere and then back out? Berlioz ended up writing an entire feuilleton on the work (in the *Débats*, 24 February 1854).

³⁶Eugène Sauzay, one of France's leading violinists, had in fact a strong preference for the "antiquated" chamber works of Haydn, Boccherini and Mozart (Brigitte François-Sappey, "La Vie musicale à Paris à travers les *Mémoires* d'Eugène Sauzay [1809–1901]," *Revue de musicologie* 60 [1974], 159–210).

³⁷François Delsarte (1811–71), after failing as an opera singer, established an idiosyncratic career as teacher of vocal interpretation, inventor, and occasional performer (and editor) of early vocal music. Delsarte's life and career are discussed in Mina Curtiss's authoritative biography of his nephew, Georges Bizet (*Bizet and his World* [New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1958], pp. 3–14).

Delsarte and Sauzay gave a joint concert on 14 May 1854, featuring early vocal music (Lully, Rameau, Gluck and chansons of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries), an instrumental serenade by Sauzay, and a Sauzay setting, composed in the style of the period, of a poem of the late sixteenth-century poet and critic Malherbe. (*Revue et gazette musicale* 7, no. 21 [21 March 1854], 165.)

10 mars 1862

Mon cher Humbert

Je vous renvoie votre plainte avant d'y avoir ajouté un accompagnement, pour vous faire remarquer que votre modulation de *la* en *si* la rend à peu près inexécutable. Non que le passage de *la* en *si* ne soit bien ménagé, mais parce qu'il est impossible, *dès le second couplet*, de recommencer en *la* sans une insupportable dureté. D'ailleurs une plainte ne doit pas aborder des modulations aussi ambitieuses. On peut certainement faire des chansons commençant dans un ton et finissant dans un autre, à condition que ces deux tons soient dans une étroite relation de parenté. Ainsi j'ai commencé la Ronde des paysans dans [La Damnation de] Faust, en mi mineur et je l'ai finie en sol, mais le retour en mi après l'accorde [*sic*] sol, est très doux et très facile. J'ai marqué le changement que je propose à votre air; il faut rester en *la* d'un bout à l'autre, en modulant seulement en *la* mineur pendant les 5 mesures qui précèdent le point d'orgue. Le retour en *la* majeur produit ainsi sans dureté l'effet que vous avez cherché en modulant en *si*.

Si cela vous va je vous ferai votre accompagnement, et même si cela ne vous va pas.

Seulement les filles ni les garçons de la campagne ne vous chanteront jamais je vous en réponds; et les amateurs aidés par l'accompagnement de piano feront la grimace en reprenant l'air au 2^{me} couplet et aux suivants; et les musiciens diront: On s'est trompé en copiant la mélodie. J'ai marqué aussi d'une croix certaines petites fautes de prosodie. On ne dit pas: *Un ange pour*—lui veille.³⁸ On dit: Un ange pour lui—veille et prie.

On ne dit pas: Nuit et jour au—pied. On dit: Nuit et jour—au pied.

Au reste il est probable que si vous corrigez les fautes pour le premier couplet il y en aura d'autres au second et aux suivants, parceque le rythme des vers, sans aucun doute, ne sera pas le même qu'au premier. Mais c'est par conscience que je vous fais cette critique.

Adieu renvoyez moi vite votre *chanson* et votre *décision* au sujet de la *modulation*.

Mille amitiés

H. Berlioz

Peut être aussi voulez vous garder partout cette forme

dont la monotonie convient à la plainte. En ce cas il faut subir les fautes de prosodie.

³⁸The lines stand for melismatic passages on a single syllable.

10 March 1862

My dear Humbert,

I am returning your Lament, without having added an accompaniment, in order to tell you that your modulation from A [major] to B [minor?] makes it nearly unperformable. Not that the transition from A to B is poorly carried out, but because it is impossible to begin again in A at the second strophe without unbearable harshness. Besides, a lament should not involve such ambitious modulations. Certainly one can make songs beginning in one key and ending in another on the condition that the two keys are closely related. Thus I began the Peasants' Dance in [*The Damnation of*] *Faust* in E minor and ended it in G. But the return to E after the G chord is very pleasing and very easy. I have marked the change I propose making in your melody; you should stay in A from beginning to end, only modulating to A minor for the five measures before the fermata. The return to A major will produce without harshness the effect you were seeking in modulating to B.

If you accept what I have said, I will do the accompaniment for you. And even if you don't. But I assure you the girls and boys in the countryside won't sing your song, and the amateurs, helped by the piano accompaniment, will make faces when they begin the second and subsequent strophes, and the musicians will say, "Someone made a mistake in copying the song."

I have also marked with a cross some small errors in prosody. You can't sing, "An angel watches over—him."³⁸ You sing, "An angel watches over him—and prays." You can't sing, "Night and day at the—foot." You have to sing, "Night and day—at the foot." It is likely that if you correct the errors for the first strophe there will be others in the second and subsequent strophes, because the rhythm of the verses will without doubt be different. But I wouldn't be honest if I didn't make this criticism [of the first strophe.]

Adieu. Send me back quickly your *song* and your *decision* in regard to the *modulation*.

A thousand greetings,

H. Berlioz

[P.S.] Maybe you wanted to keep this form throughout

since the monotony would be appropriate to a lament. In that case one will have to put up with the errors in prosody.

Mon cher Stéphane
Vous m'accusez et vos accusations sont d'autant plus dures qu'elles sont moins méritées. Non, je ne suis pas de la troisième catégorie de vos amis, *de ceux qui vous détestent*; non je n'ai pas oublié une *amitié de trente ans*; non je ne vous ai pas attaqué. J'ai combattu votre doctrine que je crois pernicieuse pour l'art, et encore l'ai-je fait seulement parcequ'on m'accusait de l'avoir approuvée comme membre de l'Institut.³⁹ Vous n'êtes pas exposé depuis longtemps à la controverse, voilà pourquoi la contradiction vous paraît si difficile à supporter. Mais, soyez de bonne foi, y a-t-il quelque justice à répondre à la critique d'une opinion⁴⁰ d'art par des accusations comme les vôtres? soyez bien certain que plus tard vous ne le penserez pas.

Vous citez un journal, la *Réforme musicale*. Ce journal assure que l'invitation à la Valse a fait au concert de Padeloup une *fort vilaine figure*; quand ce morceau a été redemandé, au contraire, par plus de quatre mille auditeurs et répété au milieu des plus vives acclamations.⁴¹ Vous ignorez le fait, je n'en doute pas; mais pourquoi accueillir si aisément les assertions d'un journal qui m'attaque parceque je n'ai pas pu, ainsi que beaucoup d'autres, reconnaître l'utilité et l'excellence de la méthode Chevé?⁴² "Loue moi ou je te diffame. Fraternité ou la mort!" Certes, ce n'est pas à vous qu'il conviendra jamais de donner par votre exemple de l'autorité à des usages renouvelés de 93.⁴³ Tout cela n'est que le résultat d'une irritation passagère. Laissez moi le croire et ne vous acharnez plus trop contre ma *névralgie*, car ce ne sera bientôt plus qu'un fantôme, la voilà qui s'en va.

Adieu, avec ou sans *névralgie*, je n'en reste pas moins, je le dis parceque je le sais, votre ami dévoué.

Hector Berlioz
1 December 1861
4 Rue de Calais

My dear Stéphane,

You accuse me, and your accusations are all the harsher because they are undeserved. No, I am not in the third category of your friends, *those who detest you*. No, I have not forgotten a thirty-year friendship. No, I did not attack *you*. I opposed your doctrine which I believe is pernicious for art, and even then I only did it because I was accused of having approved it as a member of the Institut.³⁹ You have not been long exposed to controversy; that is why you find contradiction so hard to take. But, in all honesty, is it fair to answer criticism of an opinion⁴⁰ about art with accusations like yours? No doubt you will not think so later.

You quote from a newspaper, *La Réforme musicale*. The paper claims that the *Invitation to the Waltz* made a *poor showing* at Padeloup's concert, whereas in fact the piece was—at the insistence of more than 4000 listeners—repeated amidst the most excited applause and cheers.⁴¹ You did not know this, I am sure, but why accept so willingly the assertions of a newspaper that attacks me because, like many others, I have not been able to recognize the excellence and usefulness of the Chevé method.⁴² "Praise me or I will slander you. Fraternity or death!" Certainly it is not fitting for you ever to sanction by your example a revival of the practices of '93.⁴³ This is all the result of a passing irritation—let me believe it and do not rail on about my neuralgia, for soon it will pass. There, it is going away.

Adieu. With or without neuralgia, I am none the less—I say it because I know it is true—your devoted friend.

Hector Berlioz
1 December 1861
4 rue de Calais

³⁹Institut de France, Académie des Beaux-Arts, to which Berlioz was elected in 1856.

⁴⁰Berlioz first wrote "*question*."

⁴¹Berlioz's orchestral version of the piano piece by Weber was in fact so well received at the concert in question (3 November 1861) that Padeloup included it again on his concert of 29 December.

⁴²Berlioz had reported on the École Galin-Paris-Chevé in his feuilleton of 19 February 1861 in the *Journal des débats*.

⁴³An allusion to the French Revolutionary motto "Liberté, égalité, fraternité ou la mort," first proposed by the Club des Cordeliers on 30 June 1793 and quickly put into literal practice by Robespierre during the Reign of Terror.

BERLIOZ TO F.-J. FÉTIS, 22 July 1860, 4 pp. (Nydahl Collection)

Mon cher Monsieur Fétis
Je viens de lire dans votre nouvelle Biographie [universelle] des musiciens la notice qui me concerne.⁴⁴ Laissez moi vous remercier pour la bienveillance manifeste qui vous animait en l'écrivant. J'y suis extrêmement sensible et je regrette de ne pouvoir aller à Bruxelles vous serrer la main. Cela, d'ailleurs, est si bien écrit, et j'aime tant le bon style, que j'ai lu vos six colonnes avec un plaisir où la satisfaction de mon amour propre n'entraînait vraiment pour rien. Vous n'avez commis qu'une erreur de fait insignifiante, et une autre encore d'opinion en m'attribuant moins d'estime pour *La Damnation de Faust* que pour mes autres ouvrages. Cette partition est au contraire une de celles que je préfère, et si je l'ai plus rarement fait entendre à Paris que les autres, ce n'est point pour une raison d'art mais pour une raison d'économie. Les études des chœurs pour cet ouvrage sont trop longues et *content trop cher*. De plus je ne trouvais pas à Paris le Ténor qu'il faut absolument pour le rôle de Faust. Les exécutions de *la Damnation de Faust* à Dresde, à Weimar, à Berlin, à Petersbourg, à Moscou et à Londres ont toujours été pour moi de véritables évènements heureux; bien que dans ces villes je n'aie pas non plus trouvé *le ténor*.

... Une autre observation me reste à vous faire: Le morceau dont vous parlez sous le titre de *Concert des Sylphes*, n'a point été écrit sur un programme; il faisait partie des quelques scènes du Faust de Goethe que j'écrivis (*fort mal*) il y a trente cinq ans.⁴⁵ Comme le public d'alors n'était pas encore très familier avec le poème allemand, il est possible (je ne m'en souviens pas) que j'aie donné quelques explications sur le sujet de ce morceau, comme on le fait souvent pour des fragmens de certains opéras que le public ne connaît pas. En ce cas je n'aurais donc pas fait ma musique pour⁴⁶ un programme, mais un programme pour ma musique.

Je voudrais bien trouver une occasion de causer avec vous sur l'art que nous aimons et respectons tant tous les deux. Je ne vois que des gens qui aiment ou haïssent selon que le vent de leurs passions, de leurs préjugés ou de leurs intérêts souffle dans un sens ou dans un autre. Je suis malade, fort triste, et les vives lueurs de votre esprit dissiperaient sans doute les nuages qui assombrissent le mien. Mais quoi? on ne fait presque rien de ce qu'on veut, et la plupart du temps pour des motifs différents de ceux que le monde suppose. En tout cas, permettez moi de solliciter un peu de votre amitié; quant à votre estime je l'ai toujours eue, je crois; vous savez que *j'aime la musique d'un amour noble*.⁴⁷

Votre tout dévoué
Hector Berlioz
22 Juillet 1860

4 rue de Calais, Paris.

My dear Monsieur Fétis,

I just read the article about me in your new *Biographie [universelle] des musiciens*.⁴⁴ Let me thank you for the manifest spirit of goodwill in which you wrote it. I deeply appreciate that, and I am sorry I cannot come to Brussels to shake your hand. What's more, the article is so well written, and I like good writing style so much, that I read your six columns with a pleasure which was quite independent of my feeling of personal gratification. You have made but one insignificant error of fact and another of opinion when you said I hold *The Damnation of Faust* in less esteem than my other works. The score is, on the contrary, one of my favorites, and, if I have performed it more rarely in Paris than the others, it is rather for reasons of economy than of art. Training the choruses for this work takes too long and *costs too much*. In addition, I did not find in Paris the tenor that is absolutely essential for the role of Faust. The performances of *The Damnation of Faust* in Dresden, Weimar, Berlin, St. Petersburg, Moscow and London have always been truly happy experiences for me, although in these cities, too, I did not find *the tenor*.

As for the second point I wanted to make, the piece which you speak of as *Concert des sylphes* was not written on a program. It was part of some scenes from Goethe's *Faust* that I wrote (*quite badly*) thirty-five years ago.⁴⁵ Since the public was not at the time very familiar with the German poem, it is possible (I can't remember) that I gave some words of explanation on the subject of this piece, as is commonly done for fragments of operas that the public does not know. In that case I did not write my music for a program,⁴⁶ but a program for my music.

I would very much like to find an opportunity to chat with you about the art which we both so love and respect. I see nothing but people who love or hate according to the direction that the wind of their passions, prejudices or interests happens to be blowing. I am sick, very sad, and the lively gleam of your mind would no doubt disperse the clouds that are darkening mine. But, then, one never does what one wants, and most of the time for different reasons than the world supposes. In any case, permit me to solicit a bit of your friendship; as for your esteem, I have always had it, I believe. You know that *I love music with a love that is noble*.⁴⁷

Your devoted
Hector Berlioz
22 July 1860

4 rue de Calais, Paris

[Footnotes on page 85.]