

Toronto Symphony Orchestra

Sir Andrew Davis, Interim Artistic Director

Thursday, September 20, 2018 at 8:00pm

Friday, September 21, 2018 at 7:30pm

Saturday, September 22, 2018 at 8:00pm

Sir Andrew Davis, conductor

Toronto Mendelssohn Choir

Calixa Lavallée/arr. Godfrey Ridout
“O Canada”

Hector Berlioz
Fantasy on Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*

Jacques Hétu
Variations concertantes, Op. 74
(TSO Commission)

Intermission

Hector Berlioz
Symphonie fantastique, Op. 14

I. Reveries and Passions: Largo – Allegro agitato e appassionato assai

II. A Ball: Waltz – Allegro non troppo

III. In the Country: Adagio

IV. March to the Scaffold: Allegretto non troppo

V. Dream of the Witches’ Sabbath: Larghetto – Allegro

These performances will be recorded live for Chandos Records.

The TSO’s Opening Weekend performances are generously supported by the Toronto Symphony Volunteer Committee.

The appearances of Sir Andrew Davis this season are made possible by Hans and Susan Brenninkmeyer.

ABOUT THE WORKS

Hector Berlioz

Fantasy on Shakespeare's *The Tempest*

14
min

Born: La Côte-Saint-André, France, December 11, 1803

Died: Paris, France, March 8, 1869

Composed: Original overture, 1830; inserted into *Le retour à la vie*, 1831

A year after the completion and première of his semi-autobiographical masterpiece, *Symphonie fantastique*, Berlioz created a sequel, which he entitled *Le retour à la vie* (The Return to Life). The composer's desire was that the two works would always be performed together; in the second part, the love-obsessed artist-hero who previously took opium with nightmarish consequences "returns to life", through a renewed faith in the power of literature and music. This transformation occurs in the sixth and final movement of the highly unusual *Le retour* (for narrator, chorus, and orchestra) in which the protagonist conducts a rehearsal of the "Fantasy on Shakespeare's *The Tempest*".

These days, *Le retour à la vie* is rarely performed, possibly because of its complex staging requirements. Yet, the "Fantasy" merits attention in its own right. Before being absorbed into *Le retour*, it originated as a stand-alone orchestral Overture—a commission from Narcisse Girard, conductor of the orchestra at Paris's Théâtre Italien—one that also features a chorus and a part for piano four-hands, both a first for the genre. Following the Overture's première at the Opéra on November 7, 1830, the influential critic François-Joseph Fétis praised it for its "great originality," for its "unheard of" instrumental sonorities, and the voices "handled with uncommon intelligence."

In a publicity notice introducing the Overture, Berlioz outlined the work's form as comprising four parts linked together: the "Prologue", "Tempest", "Action", and "Dénouement". Each is closely associated with the action of Shakespeare's play. In the Prologue, the "airy spirits", portrayed by a five-part chorus (minus basses), foretell the arrival of Miranda's future love, Prince Ferdinand. They sing against sparkling music of gossamer-like texture, scored for the upper registers of the piccolo, flute, clarinet, muted violins, and piano four-hands. The Tempest follows, with musical motifs depicting the surging waves and howling winds of the storm that bears the King of Naples and his son to the enchanted island.

After a brief return of the Prologue music, the Action illustrates "some of the characters of the Shakespearean drama: the timid emotions of the young Ferdinand; the virginal innocence of Miranda; the violence of the savage monster Caliban; the fearsome grandeur of the magician Prospero." A "tender farewell of the arial spirits to their protégée Miranda" leads into the Dénouement: Prospero, Miranda, and Ferdinand leave the island aboard the royal ship, "to the accompaniment of fanfares and the joyful cries of all."

In the full-length version of *Le retour*, after the chorus of spirits of the air has sung their

farewell, Lelio speaks to the performers: "Enough for today!" he says, praising their performance for its precision and warmth. "You have even reproduced several very delicate shades. I see that you can now approach compositions of a much higher order than this weak sketch."

At this point, from behind the curtain, the opening motif, the *idée fixe*, of the *Symphonie fantastique* is heard, completing the cycle envisioned by the composer.

Program note by Hannah Chan-Hartley

VI. Fantasy on Shakespeare's *The Tempest*

LIBRETTO

CHŒUR D'ESPRITS DE L'AIR

Miranda! Miranda!
Vien' chi t'è destinato sposo,
Conoscerai l'amore.
Miranda, d'un novello viver
L'aurora va spuntando per te.
Miranda, addio, addio, Miranda!
Miranda! e desso, e tuo sposo, sii felice!
Caliban! Horrido mostro!
Temi lo sdegno d'Ariello!
O Miranda, ei t'adduce, tu parti!
O Miranda, no ti vedrem, ormai
Delle piaggie dell'aura nostra sede,
Noi cercarem invano
Lo splendente e dolce fiore
Che sulla terra miravan.
No ti vedrem ormai, dolce fiore.
Addio! Addio! Miranda, addio!

Translation

CHORUS OF SPIRITS OF THE AIR

Miranda! Miranda!
Your destined mate is coming,
You shall know love.
Miranda, a new life
Will dawn for you.
Miranda farewell, farewell Miranda.
Miranda, here he is, your beloved, be happy!
Caliban! Hideous monster!
Fear the wrath of Ariel!
O Miranda, he is taking you away!
O Miranda, we shall see you no more,
From the slopes, the skies of our homeland,
We will seek in vain
The bright sweet flower
We beheld in this place.
We shall see you no more, sweet flower.
Farewell! Farewell! Miranda, farewell.

ABOUT THE WORKS

Jacques Hétu

Variations concertantes, Op. 74

(TSO Commission)

14
min

Born: Trois-Rivières, Quebec, Canada, August 8, 1938

Died: Saint-Hippolyte, Quebec, Canada, February 9, 2010

Composed: 2006

Commissioned by the Toronto Symphony Orchestra in 2005, Variations concertantes was première by the TSO under Peter Oundjian in 2006. At that time, the composer himself wrote the following description of the work:

This composition might be described as a combination of concerto for orchestra and variation form. With mood changes ranging from peaceful to dramatic to exuberant, each variation exhibits a specific orchestral color and develops one or another of the motifs presented in the theme. While each section of the orchestra is featured, it is the woodwinds in particular that predominate. The overall form of the work may be seen as a kaleidoscopic succession of crescendos and decrescendos.

The theme is presented *adagio* and is divided into three main motifs: A) introductory motif—lyrical, heard first in the strings, then in the woodwinds; B) central motif—more dramatic, using the full orchestra; C) concluding motif—heard in turn by the violins, woodwinds and brass. (This ternary structure will be found in most of the variations as well. An *accelerando* transition leads into the first variation.)

Var. 1—A sort of waltz: strings with woodwind episodes. In the central section woodwinds are heard in imitation. **Var. 2**—Scherzo-like: clarinets present a frenetic variant of motif A, which spreads quickly throughout

the orchestra. The central section consists of four short passages for clarinets, oboes, flutes and bassoons in turn. **Var. 3**—A short march of strongly articulated and willful character: over a vigorous pattern in the strings, the woodwind theme is punctuated by brass and percussion. **Var. 4**—Somewhat calmer, in the spirit of a chorale: woodwinds, then brass as accompaniment to the song of the flutes and violins. **Var. 5**—Once again the full orchestra, with vehemence: the central section is for strings, then woodwinds. **Var. 6**—The original slow tempo again: In a mood of sustained lyricism, woodwinds present melodic variants of motif A. **Var. 7**—To a slow and expressive *crescendo*: the strings develop motif B; following a short tutti, the mood gradually turns elegiac. **Var. 8**—Return to rapid tempo: a fugato passage, derived from motif A, begins in the clarinets, moves on to other woodwinds, then brass. Following the climax, everything dies away. **Var. 9**—Transitional material: a short dialogue between woodwinds and violins to a new kind of harmony. **Var. 10**—Another fugato, this time in the strings: derived from motif B in the manner of a toccata, gradually working its way through the orchestra in alternation with melodic extensions of motif A. **Var. 11**—Return to *adagio* tempo: woodwind dialogue over a background of varied harmonic colours in the strings. Following

an episode in the brass come passages for woodwinds, strings and muted trumpet. Then an expressive violin solo begins the transition to the final variation. **Var. 12**—Rapid tempo and dance-like character reminiscent of the first few variations: woodwinds and strings toss a short melodic idea back and forth. Following the central section, in which once again we hear the woodwinds, comes

a harmonic progression in the brass leading to an outburst from the full orchestra in one last variant of motif A, featuring the trumpets. In the coda, which is preceded by a brief lull, all the motifs derived from the theme rush forward in disjointed fashion.

(Transl. Robert Markow)

ABOUT THE COMPOSER



JACQUES HÉTU'S biography on the Canadian Music Centre website says of his musical style that it "can best be described as one using neoclassical forms and neo-romantic expression within a musical language of twentieth-century techniques.... Within traditional forms, he arranges elements in a cyclical manner based on the affirmative force of thematic material, rigorous writing and the need for unity."

Born in Trois-Rivières, Quebec, in 1938, he studied composition from 1956 to 1961 with Clermont Pépin at the Conservatoire in Montreal, and from 1961 to 1963 with Henri Dutilleux at the École Normale de Musique in Paris as well as analysis with Olivier Messiaen at the Paris Conservatory.

Hétu's orchestral catalogue includes five symphonies, the last of which was also a Toronto Symphony Orchestra Commission, premièred by the TSO in March 2010, just weeks after the composer's death. His other orchestral works include concertos for viola, flute, oboe/English horn, clarinet, bassoon, horn, trumpet, trombone, piano, organ,

ondes martenot, guitar, and marimba/vibraphone; and a triple concerto for violin, cello, and piano. Other orchestral works include *Images de la Révolution*, *Le Tombeau de Nelligan*, *Variations concertantes*, and *Légendes*, and compositions for voice and orchestra like *Les Abîmes du rêve*, the *Missa pro trecentesimo anno* (written for the tercentenary of the birth of J.S. Bach), and the opera *Le Prix*.

Hétu is one of the most performed Canadian composers both at home and abroad. In 1990, he travelled with Pinchas Zukerman on the National Arts Centre Orchestra tour of Germany, Denmark, and England, with two works he composed—the Third Symphony and *Antinomie*—in the tour repertory. In November of that year, Charles Dutoit conducted the New York Philharmonic in *Images de la Révolution*, which the Montreal Symphony Orchestra had commissioned on the occasion of the bicentenary of the French Revolution. In May of 1992, Kurt Masur and the New York Philharmonic gave the American première of the Trumpet Concerto with Philip Smith as soloist. *Le Tombeau de Nelligan*, premièred in Paris by the Orchestra of Radio France, went on tours by both the Montreal and Toronto Symphony Orchestras.

ABOUT THE WORKS

Hector Berlioz

Symphonie fantastique, Op. 14

49
min

Born: La Côte-Saint-André, France, December 11, 1803

Died: Paris, France, March 8, 1869

Composed: 1830

In his twenties, Berlioz was an ardent Romantic whose imagination was teeming with new ideas absorbed from any source in which Romanticism stirred. The “supreme drama” of his life (as he later put it) came in September of 1827, when, through a visiting English theatre company, he found a new model for his rebellion against established forms of artistic expression: Shakespeare. Smitten with the Irish actress Harriet Smithson, whose Juliet left him “scarcely breathing, suffering as if an iron fist were clutching my head,” he developed an almost violent romantic obsession with her, and eventually married her (unhappily, in the end). New passions soon followed—first, Goethe’s *Faust*, and then, in 1828, Beethoven, whose symphonies showed him the potential instrumental music had for drama, poetry, and expression, appealing to the imagination in a way that was “richer, more varied, less restricted, and, thanks to its very indefiniteness, incomparably more powerful” than music with words.

Shakespeare, Goethe, Beethoven, Harriet Smithson—it all came to brilliant fruition in 1830, in the *Symphonie fantastique*, the work in which Berlioz single-handedly forged a new kind of symphony, a new conception of instrumental program music, and a new style of orchestration. He wrote it “furiously,” he recalled; his mind was “boiling over”; “fire and

tears” went into the work. At 26 years of age, just three years after the death of Beethoven, Berlioz had created one of the most characteristic and influential works of Romantic music.

He was not working entirely without precedents: vestiges of sonata form in the first movement; a slow movement; the equivalent of a minuet or scherzo; a dance-like finale. Models are occasionally apparent—Beethoven’s “Pastoral” Symphony in the slow movement, Weber’s *Der Freischütz* in the finale. Berlioz borrowed from his own earlier works, too—the march movement from his unperformed opera, *Les francs-juges* (1826); and the principal melody of the whole symphony, the famous *idée fixe* that recurs in each movement, from the cantata *Herminie* (1828).

But these debts seem trivial given the work’s unfettered originality. He used every means at his disposal to express the emotional, psychological, and pictorial implications of his chosen program. Form, melody, harmony, orchestral sonority—everything was subservient to the program, even, at times, the most entrenched rules of musical syntax. The first bar of the symphony includes a parallel octave progression that would have been red-pencilled in any conservatory of the day, and, at one point in the march, he added a footnote assuring the performers that his strange

juxtaposition of D-flat-major and G-minor chords was not a misprint.

The *Symphonie fantastique* reveals a composer with a genius for musical depiction, both abstract and concrete. It opens, for instance, with a depiction of the hero's tormented mind. And when the hero finds new meaning in a vision of his beloved, Berlioz conjures up both figures memorably: the beloved in the long-breathed *idée fixe* melody (violins and flutes), and the inflamed hero in the thumping lower strings, which portray his pounding heart. At the beginning of the slow movement, Berlioz sets the pastoral scene unmistakably—the gentle rustling of leaves under the shepherds' pipes. At the end of the march, you can hear the hero's last thoughts of the beloved (*idée fixe* in the clarinet), the fall of the guillotine blade (*fortissimo* chord), the drop of the severed head (*pizzicato* notes briefly falling in the strings), and the cheers of the crowd (brass and woodwind fanfares).

Beyond even his melodic gift, rhythmic vitality, and harmonic daring is his revolutionary orchestral style. He imported into the orchestra (as Beethoven had done) instruments previously heard only in the opera house or military band—the E-flat clarinet, the English horn, the cornet, the ophicleide (a kind of bass bugle), the harp, the bells, and various unusual percussion instruments. He also used conventional instruments in novel ways. Four tuned timpani conjure up distant (and dissonant) thunder at the end of the slow movement. Double basses create a percussive pulse at the beginning of the march. Upper strings, muted and played with the tips of the bows, create a mysterious sonority at the start of the finale.

Berlioz's score is fantastically fussy: he precisely notates every modulation of volume, accent, detail of phrasing, shift of tempo, and expressive nuance. He tells the timpanist exactly which sticks to use, where to use them, and whether to hit the drum with one stick or two. He tells the string players how to use the wood of the bow in the finale. He tells the brass

players how to achieve stopped effects and when to put their bells in the air. He prescribes slides between pitches, not only in the strings in the "Ball" movement, but in the woodwinds in the finale. He asks the oboist, at the start of the third movement, to play behind the scenes.

The *Symphonie fantastique* made unprecedented demands on the orchestra, but Berlioz was not just showing off. He needed an enormous range of tone colours in order to realize his program—a new kind of musical expression demanded a new palette of sounds. There is scarcely a moment in this strikingly original piece that did not influence someone, somewhere, at some later date. Liszt, Wagner, Strauss, and Mahler are difficult to imagine without the *Symphonie fantastique*, and, to this day, film composers get mileage out of orchestral effects pioneered by Berlioz. He was one of those rare composers who did not begin his musical life as a virtuoso performer; he played a little flute, a little guitar, and a little piano, but nothing really well. His instrument, as it turned out, was the orchestra.

Program note by Kevin Bazzana

Berlioz published his own movement-by-movement program note (with some slight differences to the names of the movements) for the Symphonie fantastique, considering it "indispensable to the full understanding of the dramatic plan of the work."

"The composer's intention was to recount, in a musical setting, various episodes in the life of an artist," he wrote. "Since this instrumental drama lacks the assistance of words, an explanation of its plan beforehand is essential. The following program, therefore, should be thought of as if it were the text of an opera, introducing the musical movements and explaining their character and expression."

I. Reveries, Passions

The composer imagines that a young musician, suffering from the spiritual sickness that a

ABOUT THE WORKS

famous writer [Chateaubriand] once called *le vague des passions* [i.e., a Romantic welling-up of emotion], sees for the first time a woman who possesses all of the charms of the ideal being that has fired his imagination, and falls desperately in love with her. By some fluke of fancy, the vision of the beloved never appears to the artist's mind except in association with a musical idea, in which he perceives the same character—passionate, yet noble and demure—that he attributes to the object of his love.

This melodic image and its model pursue him ceaselessly like a double *idée fixe*. That is why the melody at the beginning of the first allegro constantly recurs in every movement of the symphony. The transition from a state of dreamy melancholy, interrupted by several fits of aimless joy, to one of delirious passion, with its feelings of rage and jealousy, moments of tenderness, tears, and religious solace, is the subject of the first movement.

II. A ball

The artist is placed in the most varied circumstances: amid the tumult of a festival; in peaceful contemplation of the beauty of nature—but everywhere, in town, in the meadows, the vision of the beloved appears before him, troubling his soul.

III. Scene in the meadows

One evening in the country, he hears in the distance two shepherds playing a *ranz des vaches* [a tune used by the Swiss to call their flocks together]; this pastoral duet, the effect of his surroundings, the light rustle of the trees gently stirred by the wind, certainly feelings of hope that he has lately entertained—all combine to bring a new peace to his heart, and a more cheerful cast to his thoughts. He thinks

about his loneliness; he hopes that he will soon be alone no longer ... But what if she deceives him! ... This mixture of hope and fear, thoughts of happiness troubled by dark forebodings, form the subject of the adagio. At the end, one of the shepherds resumes the *ranz des vaches*; the other no longer answers ... Sounds of distant thunder ... solitude ... silence ...

IV. March to the scaffold

The artist, now knowing beyond all doubt that his love is not returned, poisons himself with opium. The narcotic dose is too weak to end his life, but it plunges him into a sleep accompanied by the most terrible visions. He dreams that he has murdered his beloved, and that he is condemned to death, is led to the scaffold, and witnesses his own execution. The procession is accompanied by a march that is alternately somber and wild, brilliant and solemn: loud crashes are followed abruptly by the dull thud of heavy footsteps. At the end of the march, the first four bars of the *idée fixe* recur like a last thought of love interrupted by the fatal stroke.

V. Dream of a witches' sabbath

He sees himself at a witches' sabbath, amid a ghastly crowd of spirits, sorcerers, and monsters of every kind, assembled at his funeral. Strange sounds, groans, bursts of laughter, distant shouts to which no one seems to reply. The beloved melody appears once again, but it has lost its noble and demure character; it has become nothing but a vulgar dance tune, trivial and grotesque; it is she who has come to the sabbath ... A roar of joy greets her arrival ... She joins the infernal orgy ... Funeral knell, ludicrous parody of the *Dies irae* [a Gregorian chant used in a mass for the dead], sabbath round-dance. The sabbath round-dance and the *Dies irae* in combination.

THE ARTISTS



Sir Andrew Davis conductor

Sir Andrew Davis, Interim Artistic Director, served as TSO Music Director from 1975 to 1988, when he was named TSO Conductor Laureate.

Sir Andrew Davis is the Music Director and Principal Conductor of the Lyric Opera of Chicago, and Chief Conductor of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. Maestro Davis's career spans over 40 years during which he has been the musical and artistic leader at several of the world's most distinguished opera and symphonic institutions, including the BBC Symphony Orchestra (conductor laureate; chief conductor, 1991–2004), Glyndebourne Festival Opera (music director, 1988–2000), and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra (Conductor Laureate; Music Director, 1975–1988), where he has also been named Interim Artistic Director from 2018 to 2020. He also holds the honorary title of Conductor Emeritus from the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra. One of today's most recognized and acclaimed conductors, Sir Andrew has conducted virtually all of the world's major orchestras, opera companies, and festivals.

Born in 1944 in Hertfordshire, England, Maestro Davis studied at King's College, Cambridge, where he was an organ scholar before taking up conducting. His wide-ranging repertoire encompasses the Baroque to contemporary, and spans the symphonic, operatic, and choral worlds. A vast and award-winning discography documents Sir Andrew's artistry, with recent CDs including the works of Berlioz, Elgar, Grainger, Delius, Ives, Holst, Handel, and York Bowen. The recording of Handel's *Messiah* (with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir) was nominated for a 2016 GRAMMY® for Best Choral Performance, and the York Bowen recording was nominated for a 2018 GRAMMY® for Best Orchestral Performance. Maestro Davis currently records exclusively for Chandos Records.

In 1992, Maestro Davis was made a Commander of the British Empire, and in 1999, he was designated a Knight Bachelor in the New Year Honours List.



Toronto Mendelssohn Choir

David Fallis, *Interim Conductor and Artistic Advisor*

Cynthia Hawkins, *Executive Director*

Ezra Burke, *Associate Conductor*

The Toronto Mendelssohn Choir made its TSO début in March 1937.

The Toronto Mendelssohn Choir (TMC), Canada's world-renowned large vocal ensemble, performs choral music drawn from five centuries, including grand symphonic masterworks, world premières of new compositions, and rarely heard works. In addition to appearing regularly with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, the TMC presents an annual series of subscription concerts and makes other guest appearances.

THE ARTISTS

The TMC presented its first concert on January 15, 1895, as part of Massey Hall's inaugural season. Since then, the TMC has won widespread praise from audiences and critics for its recordings and performances, including tours to the U.S. and Europe. The 2018/19 season marks the Choir's 125th performance season.

The choristers of the TMC include professional singers, auditioned volunteers, and choral apprentices. As part of its mission to champion the choral music experience, the Choir webcasts select concerts, supports emerging conductors and composers, and hosts a series of choral workshops for singers of all ages and abilities. See tmchoir.org for more information.

Choristers for these Toronto Symphony Orchestra performances

Soprano

Kathryn Barber
Nicole Bernabei
Lesley Emma Bouza*
Joanne Chapin*
Leslie Finlay
Kaveri Gandhi
Julia Goss
Pui See (Natasha) Ho
Christine Kerr
Jennifer Kerr
Sarah Maria Leung
Marlene Lynds
Teresa Mahon*
Sachiko Marshall
Lydia McIntosh
Lindsay McIntyre*
Cathy Minnaar
Julia Morson*
Jennie Worden
Kate Wright*
Sophya Yumakulov

Alto

Jane Agosta
Marlo Alcock
Julia Barber*
Sarah Climenhaga
Kirsten Fielding*
Ilone Harrison
Valarie Koziol
Jennifer McGraw
Pamela Psarianos
Amy Rossiter
Alison Roy*
Jan Szot
Chantelle Whiteside
Emma Willemsma
Andrea Wong
Jessica Wright*

Tenor

Mitch Aldrich*
Mason Borges¥
Samuel Broverman
Brian Chang
Peter DeRoche
John Duwyn
John Gladwell
Nicholas Gough*
Alejandro Guerrero
Valdis Jevtejevs*
James Jones
Clement Kam
Nestor Li
Lawrie McEwan*
Paul Oros*
William Parker
William Reid*
Isaiah-John Sison¥
Steve Szmutni*
Max von Holtzendorff
Bill Wilson
David Yung*

* Elora Singer

¥ Apprentice