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Rice University, 1988
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LES TROYENS: ASPECTS OF MUSICO-DRAMATIC STRUCTURE

by

PAULET PITTENGER GARRETT

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

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ABSTRACT

"Les Troyens": Aspects of Musico-Dramatic Structure

Paulet Pittenger Garrett

In *Les Troyens* one can find the embodiment of Berlioz's aesthetic doctrine. He believed that music is most effective when it faithfully reflects and develops the dramatic ideas that are presented in the libretto. In forming his libretto, Berlioz developed his own unique solution to the problem of dramatic unity. He composed only the parts of the text that he considered suitable, thus presenting a series of tableaux on Shakespearean lines. He believed above all else that music must be truthful, and he shaped it to suit the libretto but never subordinated the music to the words and dramatic action.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"I have passed my life with this race of demi-gods; it seems to me that they must have known me, so well do I know them."1 Thus wrote Hector Berlioz to his friend and staunch supporter, the Princess Carolyne Sayn-Wittgenstein, on 20 June 1859.

The epic opera Les Troyens is the consummation of Berlioz's career. He had, in a sense, spent his whole life preparing for it. After it was written, he was able to reconcile himself to its fate because, finally, his "Virgilian passion" was satisfied. As he wrote to the Emperor, "Now let discouragement and disappointment come if they will: nothing can take away the fact that the work exists."2

Since boyhood, Berlioz had had a passion for Virgil. He felt a strange kinship with the ancient poet. That unity of thought which Berlioz felt with him is apparent in the care he took and in the methods he used to adapt Virgil's poem to the operatic stage.

In writing Les Troyens, Berlioz also received inspiration from another of his idols, the English bard
William Shakespeare. Berlioz described his epic opera as "a vast opera on the Shakespearean plan" and as "Virgil Shakespeareanized." 

Although Berlioz had loved the *Aeneid* since childhood, it was not until the early 1850s that he seems finally to have given serious consideration to the idea of composing a large-scale work based on the first books of Virgil’s epic poem. In chapter fifty-nine of his *Memoirs*, dated 18 October 1854, he communicated his fears at the fate such a work, identified by a footnote added later as *Les Troyens*, would surely meet.

For the last three years I have been tormented by the idea for a vast opera, for which I would write the words and the music . . . I am resisting the temptation to carry out this project, and shall, I trust, resist to the end. To me the subject seems magnificent and deeply moving--sure proof that Parisians would think it flat and tedious. Even if I were wrong in attributing to them a 'taste so different from my own' (to quote the great Corneille), where would I find a woman of the necessary intelligence and dedication, capable of interpreting the chief role--a role which demands beauty, a great voice, true dramatic ability, impeccable musicianship, and a heart and soul of fire? Still less could I be sure of all the other various resources which I would have to have absolutely at my disposal, without interference from anyone. My blood boils at the very thought of encountering, over the performance and production of such a work, the senseless obstacles that I have had to face in the past, and which I see constantly impeding the efforts of others who write for our glorious Opera. 

Despite his foreboding, however, Berlioz finally "succumbed" to the temptation. After discussions with and much encouragement from Liszt's mistress, the Princess
Carolyne Sayn-Wittgenstein, he began. He started writing the libretto on 5 May 1856 and by 1858, slightly less than two years later, the enormous work was completed.

Sadly, true to his own predictions, no productions were forthcoming. In February 1858, Berlioz wrote to Adolphe Samuel:

I think you will be satisfied with my score. You can easily guess what the scenes of passion, of tenderness or of nature, whether calm or stormy, must be like: but there are other scenes of which you cannot as yet have an idea. It no longer matters to me what happens to the work—whether it is produced or not produced. My musical and Virgilian passion has been sated.

Despite his apparent indifference, Berlioz gave readings of the poem to those in authority at the Opéra. He even approached the Emperor, Napoléon III, in a vain attempt to secure an Imperial edict ordering the production of his new work. Napoléon accepted the libretto and promised to read it if he had the time, but that was the last that Berlioz ever heard from him. Finally, frustrated by the delays, Berlioz agreed to let his friend Léon Carvalho, director of the small Théâtre-Lyrique, stage the work. After a change in directors at the theater, *Les Troyens* was provisionally accepted at the Opéra in 1861, only to be rejected after a change in management in 1862.

The last three acts only were finally staged at the Théâtre-Lyrique in 1863. Under the title *Les Troyens*
à Carthage, they were divided into five acts and preceded by a prologue that Berlioz wrote for the production. The Carvalho staging was a drastic reduction of the original acts. The Royal Hunt and Storm scene, which audience and critics alike found incomprehensible, was cut after only one night.¹⁰ Nine other numbers were also excised: the entry of the builders, the entry of the sailors, the entry of the farmworkers, the scene between Anna and Narbal, the ballets (Egyptian dancing girls, slaves, and Nubian slave girls), Iopas's aria, the sentries' duet, Hylas's song, and the duet for Dido and Aeneas ("Errante sur tes pas"). Even in this mutilated state, however, the opera received mostly favorable critical reviews during its twenty-two performances.¹¹

Later proposals to stage the opera were discouraged by Berlioz. The first two acts of Les Troyens, made into a separate three-act opera entitled La Prise de Troie, were not staged until 1890,¹² twenty-one years after the composer's death. It was not until 1969, the year of the Berlioz Centennial and 111 years after the opera's completion, that the authentic production of Les Troyens as Berlioz wrote it—uncut, in French, and presented in a single evening—was given. That same year, the first complete full score of the opera, published according to Berlioz's original conception of the work as a single
five-act grand opera, appeared as part of the New Berlioz Edition.

In 1861-62 Berlioz had a piano-vocal score of Les Troyens engraved at his own expense, but it was never published. The five acts were divided into fifty-two numbers, which are indicated by MacDonald in the Bärenreiter orchestral score. The plates of the piano-vocal score were sold to Choudens in 1863, at which time Les Troyens was subjected to extensive cuts and was divided into two operas. Critical opinion during the years preceding the availability of the complete score and authentic productions of Les Troyens was thus based on extensively cut and rearranged versions, which destroyed the musical and dramatic structure of the opera.

With the publication in 1969 of Hugh MacDonald's edition of Les Troyens, a much neglected gap in Berlioz scholarship was filled. Brian Primmer's book, The Berlioz Style, published in 1973, was the first systematic and thorough stylistic analysis of the composer's musical language. Berlioz, Hugh MacDonald's study of the composer's life and music, published in 1982, discusses various musical aspects of Les Troyens. MacDonald, David Cairns, and others have written numerous articles that address particular facets of the opera. In addition, several dissertations explore in detail select aspects of the opera--its place in the French operatic tradition,
its unfortunate production history, and its reliance on Shakespearean methods, to name a few. 14

This thesis intends to examine the opera from a dramatic viewpoint. Because Berlioz wrote his own libretto, he was free to adapt it to his own musico-dramatic needs and was thus able to control both the literary and the musical aspects of the finished product. How did Berlioz choose to adapt Virgil's epic poem for the stage? In what ways are Shakespeare's influence apparent in Berlioz's libretto? Finally, how does Berlioz use music to support and enhance the dramatic structure of his libretto? Answers to these questions are the quest of this paper.
Notes: Chapter I


3Ibid., p. 484.


5Berlioz, Memoirs, p. 468 and n.8.

6The Princess was quite influential throughout the time that Berlioz worked on Les Troyens. She provided much encouragement to the composer and he in turn wrote her many letters describing his progress on the opera. An indication of his thoughts and some of the changes made during the composition of Les Troyens may be found in Briefe von Hector Berlioz an die Fürstin Carolyne Sayn-Wittgenstein, ed. La Mara (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1903).

7Berlioz, A Selection from His Letters, p. 156.

8Berlioz, Memoirs, pp. 486-87.


10The failure of this scene was perhaps at least partially due to the pathetic manner in which it was staged. Berlioz described the staging thus: "Instead of several real waterfalls, I was given a painted representation of a stream. The leaping satyrs were represented by a troupe of twelve-year-old girls, who brandished no flaming branches in their hands, the firemen having forbidden it for fear of a conflagration. There were no nymphs flying dishevelled through the forest with cries of 'Italy!' The
female choristers were stationed in the wings; their cries were not strong enough to penetrate to the auditorium. Even the stage thunder could scarcely be heard, despite the fact that the orchestra was thin and lacking in vigour. And when this miserable travesty came to an end, the scene-shifter always needed at least forty minutes to change his scenery. So I myself asked for the interlude to be removed" (Memoirs, pp. 490-91).


12 First performed at Karlsruhe, 6 December 1890 (MacDonald, "Foreword" to New Berlioz Edition, IIC:757).


CHAPTER II

SOURCES FOR THE LIBRETTO

Berlioz dated his Memoirs 1 January 1865. As they would not be published until after his death even though they were printed during his last years, Berlioz used the final few pages as an opportunity to express gratitude, to apologize, to explain, and to reconcile.

I must be reconciled . . . to not having known Virgil, whom I should have loved, or Gluck or Beethoven—or Shakespeare, who might perhaps have loved me. (The truth is, I am not reconciled.)

Although Les Troyens is based primarily on Books I, II, and IV of the Aeneid, there can be no doubt that the whole poem contributed to the opera. That the opera is the result of a long and influential familiarity with the Aeneid is apparent by Berlioz’s account in his Memoirs of an incident that occurred when he was about seven years old. When construing Virgil with his father he could hardly bring himself to stammer out the words Quaesivit coelo lucem ingenuitue reperta, so overcome was he by the terrible vision of Dido’s death. His father tactfully closed the book, and the young Hector rushed away to vent his "Virgilian grief" in solitude.
In making his adaptation of the *Aeneid* for the operatic stage, Berlioz selected, reworked, and invented scenes as he needed. One of the biggest changes he had to make was the reordering of events, since Virgil's poem does not present the sequence of events chronologically, as is conventional in opera.

Act I and the first tableau of Act II of *Les Troyens* correspond to Book II of the *Aeneid*, which contains a first-person flashback to the fall of Troy. The book begins at the point where the Greeks depart, leaving the wooden horse behind. In Virgil's poem, Laocoön is the prophet of doom and the voice of caution; it is he who warns of Greek treachery. After he hurls his spear against the horse, the gods send two serpents from the sea to devour him in the presence of a crowd of startled onlookers. Meanwhile, the Trojans have found the Greek warrior Sinon, who seems to have been abandoned by his countrymen but who in fact was left behind to trick the Trojans into moving the horse into the city. He tells the Trojans that the horse was built as a gift to the goddess Minerva in order to ensure a safe voyage home. Sinon warns that if the Trojans destroy the horse the gods' wrath will fall upon them, but if they take the horse into the city the Greeks will be destroyed. The Trojans take the horse into their city and in the ensuing battle Troy is conquered by the Greeks. Only Aeneas and
a small band of men escape, carrying with them the Trojan treasures.

The last three acts correspond to Books I and IV. The *Aeneid* begins in medias res, with the author's third-person account of Aeneas's voyage from Sicily to the coast of Africa. The sequence of events that Virgil narrates is different from that presented by Berlioz in Act III. In Virgil's poem, Aeneas, after landing at Carthage, begins exploring the unknown territory. His mother Venus appears to him and, in order that he might explore the city of Carthage unnoticed, cloaks him in a shield of invisibility. In Carthage he sees the people of the city busy at various tasks necessary to maintain and to improve the city while their queen, Dido, moves among them dispensing justice and instruction. Aeneas finds part of his shipwrecked Trojan band at Dido's court seeking temporary shelter. When Dido offers to let the Trojans live in Carthage permanently and to send a search party to find Aeneas, Aeneas's protective cloud vanishes, and he appears in the court before Dido. He thanks the queen for her generosity and she, in turn, orders a banquet in honor of the Trojans. Aeneas sends for his son, Ascanius, to come to the feast and to bring with him the Trojan treasures to present to Dido. Before Ascanius arrives, however, Venus puts Cupid in his place. During the festivities Cupid begins to cast a magic spell of love
over Dido. The queen is overpowered by love for Aeneas and, in order to keep him with her as long as possible, asks him to recount the story of the fall of Troy and his seven years of subsequent wanderings.

Book IV continues the story in chronological order beginning at the point where Book I ends—in Dido's court. In this book Dido admits to her sister, Anna, that she is in love with Aeneas. Virgil describes how, because of her preoccupation with Aeneas, Dido has neglected her responsibilities and has allowed the city of Carthage to fall into a state of disrepair. Also related here is the story of the hunt and ensuing storm that drives Dido and Aeneas to seek refuge in a cave where they consummate their love. Afterward, Mercury appears to Aeneas and reminds him of his duty to go to Italy. Aeneas departs immediately and Dido, greatly distressed, builds a huge funeral pyre on which she kills herself. This scene, the last in Book IV, also brings Berlioz's opera to a close.

Much of the libretto of *Les Troyens* is either paraphrase or direct translation of the Latin of the *Aeneid*. Not all of the scenes found in Books I, II, and IV are found in Berlioz's opera, however, and, conversely, not every scene in the opera is drawn directly from Virgil. In order to better understand how Berlioz formed his libretto and to see exactly what he selected for dramatiza-
tion, it is necessary to examine each scene of *Les Troyens* and compare it with the original epic.

Act I takes place on a plain a short distance from the walls of Troy. The opening scene is based on lines 38-42 of Book II:

> The gates are opened wide; gladly we go to see the Doric camp, deserted places, the abandoned sands. For here a squadron of Dolopians, here fierce Achilles once had pitched his tent;[^3]

Because these lines are part of Aeneas’s narration of the story, Berlioz had to invent his own choral texts and dialogue to relate the tale. But in this first part of the opera the composer took his most important departure from Virgil’s poem—he made Cassandra the protagonist of the first two acts. Virgil told the story of the capture of Troy in flashback; Berlioz shows us the tragedy from the perspective of a character, Cassandra, as flashback is unsuited to opera.

Just as Virgil derived the character of Aeneas from a brief hint in Homer’s *Iliad*, Berlioz derived the character of Cassandra from only a few lines in Virgil. In the *Aeneid* Cassandra is mentioned briefly in lines 340-42 of Book II:

> Even then can Cassandra chant of what will come with lips the gods had doomed to disbelief.

Her gift is further enumerated in lines 240-47:

> ... Cassandra was the only one who saw this destiny for us—Cassandra,
so battered by Troy's fates . . .
she prophesied what lay in wait, and often
she named Hesperia and Italy . . .
Who then could heed Cassandra's prophecy?

This character had only a minor role in Virgil's poem, but Berlioz turned her into the central dramatic focus of the first two acts. In the opera, Cassandra serves the same function that Aeneas provided in Book II, where he related the downfall of Troy several years after the event. But in the opera the story of the tragedy comes to us with an added dimension. We see the disaster twice. Our first awareness of impending doom occurs gradually as we hear of Cassandra's vague sense of foreboding in her aria "Malheureux roi," and then of the gruesome fate of the Trojan people in her duet with Corebus. Soon afterward we experience the tragedy of the downfall of Troy as it happens. This double view of the catastrophe intensifies the sense of ruin. A dichotomy of emotions is created by the contrast of Cassandra's vehement prophetic ravings and the blind ignorance of her fellow countrymen. This presence of two clashing emotions allows Berlioz an opportunity to project simultaneously two different musical moods, a technique of primary importance to his musico-dramatic method.

The part of Cassandra does more than supply the means to achieve a powerful bipolar situation. She is the first of the two tragic heroines who provide the pillars
around which the entire opera is constructed; Dido is the other. Cassandra's adversity serves as preparation for the parallel although far more heart-rending plight of Dido at the end of Act V. Just as the Aeneid revolves around the personal tribulations of Dido and Turnus, Les Troyens encompasses the fates of Dido and Cassandra. Berlioz created the disastrous fate of Cassandra to serve not only as a dramatic conclusion to the first part of the opera but also to complete the pair of tragic heroines whose personal fate is but a result of the inevitable fulfillment of the Roman destiny.

Following Cassandra's aria is a lengthy duet for her and her betrothed, Corebus. Corebus, too, is an expansion of a character derived from only a slight hint in the Aeneid, Book II, lines 464-69.

... young Corebus ... insane with love for his Cassandra, bringing his help, as son-in-law, to Priam and the Phrygians---sad Corebus, would he had heeded the warnings of his frantic bride!

In the Aeneid Corebus is married to Cassandra, but in the opera he is only betrothed to her. Thus Berlioz provides the possibility of a future happiness, which we know will never be fulfilled, and sharpens the poignancy of Cassandra's personal grief. He also takes musical advantage of the addition of the tragically devoted Corebus. The dichotomy of emotions expressed in the duet---the optimistic hope of Corebus seen against Cassandra's
despair—is lent a cruel irony by the melodic unification of the lines of the two characters.

Following this duet are two numbers of Berlioz's invention: a procession of the King and Queen, and a ballet, the wrestler's dance. They provide the scenic spectacle that was the standard fare of French grand opera of that time.

Likewise, the pantomime scene that appears next continues a long tradition in French opera. The portrayal of King Priam's blessing of Hector's mourning widow, Andromache, and her son, Astyanax, are not present in the Aeneid. The scene, however, serves an important purpose. The introduction of Andromache mourning her recently dead husband originates a parallel with Queen Dido, who vows to remain true to the memory of her deceased husband. This scene lays the groundwork for a later scene, in Act IV, in which Aeneas relates to Dido the circumstances of Andromache's remarriage, an event that enables Dido to proceed with her own longings despite the promise of faithfulness she made to her late husband's memory.

Berlioz had originally included after the pantomime a quite lengthy scene based on lines 81-231 of Book II—the Sinon scene. Due to the large amount of conversation in this section of the Aeneid, a musical setting necessitated summarization. Thus Berlioz used almost none of Virgil's narrative, instead inventing his own dialogue. In
1861, however, the entire scene was deleted when the work was tentatively accepted at the Opéra. Royer, the director, felt that the first act was too long, but Berlioz did not restore the scene even after a change of management caused the production of *Les Troyens* to be eliminated from consideration.

Cutting the first act required the pantomime scene to move directly into Aeneas's narration of the death of Laocoön. Dramatic contrast to the previous scene of communal bereavement is provided by Aeneas's abrupt incursion. Aeneas, the leader firmly in command of the situation, has now been introduced.

The one-and-one-half lines in which Virgil tells of the awesome terror that grips the Trojans at the news of Laocoön's death are expanded by Berlioz into a full-scale ensemble, octet, and double chorus. The Trojans make the fatal decision to bring the wooden horse inside their walls. The remainder of Act I is suggested in lines 325-45 of Book II, which tell how the horse was brought into Troy. Again the dichotomy of moods is apparent in the contrast of Cassandra's lamentations against the sounds of the jubilant procession dragging the horse to the accompaniment of the glorious Trojan March. The simultaneity of opposing dramatic elements that characterizes this great finale is alluded to in Virgil's poetry:
. . . four times it stalled
before the gateway, at the very threshold;
four times the arms clashed loud inside its belly.
Nevertheless, heedless, blinded by frenzy,
we press right on and set the inauspicious
monster inside the sacred fortress. Even
then can Cassandra chant of what will come
with lips the gods had doomed to disbelief
by Trojans. 6

The addition of Berlioz's magnificent music only serves
to underscore and heighten the dramatic tension of the
story.

Overall, Berlioz's adaptation of the Aeneid for
Act I of Les Troyens consisted of relatively little
strict transcription. From mere hints in the Aeneid,
Berlioz expanded the roles and developed the characters
of Cassandra and Corebus. Although he followed the main
outline of events suggested in the original, Berlioz
occasionally invented whole scenes. These include the
processions, ballet, and pantomime. While these scenes
can be explained simply by the needs determined by grand
operatic tradition, 7 certain of the numbers provide either
necessary dramatic preparations or the opportunity to
present simultaneous contrasting musical moods or to
juxtapose antithetical situations. 8

In the first tableau of Act II, Berlioz altered
his technique of adaptation, utilizing for the first time
substantial borrowings from Virgil's poetry. The entire
scene in Aeneas's palace is taken from lines 371-479 of
Book II. Indeed, Aeneas's opening lines directed to the
shade of Hector—"O lumière de Troie! . . . de quels bords inconnus reviens-tu?"—are a direct translation from Virgil. Much of Hector's speech to Aeneas, in which he exhorts Aeneas to flee to Italy and build a new empire there, is taken directly from Virgil. So too is an oft-quoted line from this tableau that also appears occasionally in some of Berlioz's letters written about his operatic career in Paris during this time—"Salvation for the defeated lies in not expecting any." 9 After three iterations of this line, Aeneas and his followers bravely depart to face the Greeks who have already overtaken the city.

Whereas the first tableau of Act II was mostly direct quotation, the second tableau shows just the opposite kind of derivation: pure invention on Berlioz's part. In a further expansion of Cassandra's role, she and the other Trojan women sacrifice themselves in order to avoid becoming prisoners of the Greeks.

Langford points out that the dramatic situation in this tableau bears a striking resemblance to that of the finale of Rossini's opera Le Siège de Corinthe. 10 We know from a comment in his Memoirs that Berlioz was familiar with Rossini's opera. 11 Whatever the influences on Berlioz in his creation of the scene, the courageous death of Cassandra serves a host of dramatic purposes
in *Les Troyens*. By having Cassandra die under heroic circumstances, Berlioz provided a dramatic climax to the first part of the opera. In addition, as we have seen, the valiant death of Cassandra sets up the parallel, though more personal and therefore devastating, tragedy of Dido in Act V.

Berlioz effected two additional dramatic preparations in this tableau, both indirectly associated with the death of Cassandra. Her dying prophecy of a future Trojan empire in Italy provides the audience with yet another statement of the goal of Aeneas's wanderings. Also, near the end of the tableau a detachment of Greeks announces that Aeneas and his band of men are escaping with the Trojan treasures. Although a departure from Virgil's poetry,\(^{12}\) this plot device supplies a powerful dramatic event with which to end the second act. The escape of Aeneas, again a joyous occurrence that contrasts poignantly with Cassandra's tragic fate, gives a forward impetus to the opera as a whole and holds out the possibility for the ultimate achievement of the Trojan destiny.

Act III is based on the events that occur in Book I. It is a well-constructed unit that vividly demonstrates the ways in which an opera libretto not only can, but must, differ from an epic poem. Berlioz dropped
a number of the details that are incorporated in Book I, including the shipwreck, the appearance of Venus to Aeneas, and Aeneas's cloud of invisibility. He opens Act III at Dido's court with the Carthaginians celebrating the great strides made in the seven years since they first settled in North Africa. The opening scenes give the impression of a vital and thriving Carthage, and Berlioz, in the texts of the choruses and Dido's recitatives, cleverly conveys all of the necessary background information about Dido and her city that is included in Book I of the *Aeneid*.

Dramatically, the beginning of the act serves as a point of repose, a welcome contrast to the tumultuous events of the previous two acts. In addition, the prosperity and joy of Carthage and its queen, so adeptly portrayed by Berlioz, provide a stark contrast to the subsequent Carthaginian state of affairs. Berlioz's emphasis on the achievements and good fortunes of Carthage and Dido allows the tragedy of their disrepair and rejection to be fully felt. He paints an image of a culturally self-sufficient Carthage that lacks only one thing: a hero to defend it from attacks by its enemies. Ironically, the very hero who saves it will later be the cause of its destruction. But for the present, in Act III, Berlioz evokes a gentle pastoral mood, a moment of tranquility between the twin tragedies of Cassandra and Dido.

In adapting Virgil's poetry to the far different
medium of the operatic stage, Berlioz also made certain changes in the chronology of events described in the *Aeneid*. The duet between Dido and her sister, Anna, is based not on Book I, but on a part of Book IV, wherein Dido tells Anna that she has sworn not to marry anyone but to remain true to the memory of her dead husband. Anna scoffs at her sister's vows and tenderly assures her that she is too young not to marry again. Within this duet Berlioz included a reference by Dido to the wedding ring her husband had given her, which she still wore:
"May the gods and my people curse me / If I ever forsake this consecrated ring."¹³ This pointed remark draws attention to the ring and enhances the significance of a gesture in Act IV in which Ascanius pulls the ring from Dido's finger. Neither the mention of the ring in the duet nor the ring scene in Act IV is taken from the *Aeneid*. The idea of the removal of Sichaeus's ring from Dido's finger came from a source other than Virgil, as we shall see later,¹⁴ and it seems likely that the mention of the ring in the Dido-Anna duet was a clever preparation on Berlioz's part for the succeeding scene.

In the *Aeneid*, Virgil tells the story of the fall of Troy through the mouth of Aeneas. Aeneas recounts the events of the tragedy and its aftermath during the festivities at Carthage, at the specific request of Dido. Thus, during this flashback to previous events, tension
heightens gradually toward the eventual passion and longing expressed by Dido to her sister in Book IV. Berlioz, however, does not have the luxury of developing tension and preparing for passion in the same way as Virgil did. Because of the totally different medium of opera, he is forced to relate the events of the plot sequentially. After telling the story of the sack of Troy and the heroic deaths of Cassandra and the Trojan women in Acts I and II, Berlioz has to start the Carthaginian part of his story without preparation. Due to this necessary change in sequence, Berlioz also had to change the order of events in Dido's longing for love and her passion for Aeneas. In Book IV, Dido, having already met Aeneas and heard his story, admits to Anna that she is enamored with Aeneas but that she has vowed to remain true to her late husband. Anna urges her to follow her heart and also reminds the Queen that the Trojan army would be a great asset to Carthage, which is surrounded by barbarous enemies.

To adjust these details for the operatic stage, Berlioz placed an adaptation of the conversation between Dido and Anna prior to the arrival of Aeneas in Carthage. Through this device Berlioz was able to project the vague restlessness and longing in Dido's heart just before Aeneas's arrival in her life. In the duet, the Queen expresses to Anna her yearning for love and her obscure discontent with her life. Thus, when Aeneas presents
himself to her later in the act, her passion for this heroic man seems to make dramatic sense. Despite the fact that Berlioz did not have over two thousand lines of verse in which to build tension in preparation for Dido's burst of passion for Aeneas, he very effectively created the tension through the expression of Dido's longing in the duet, and foreshadowed her passion for Aeneas by the inclusion of Anna's tender entreaties toward love and marriage. Dido's desire to follow her advice is depicted by the melodic union of the two sisters' lines near the end of the duet. The music has set the stage for what is to follow.

In order to prepare more effectively for the appearance of Aeneas, Berlioz again made important changes in the details as presented in the Aeneid. First, he created an operatic procession out of the scene involving the shipwrecked Trojan warriors' solicitous meeting with Dido. In addition, Ascanius's offering of elaborate treasures to the Queen is included in this scene even though Virgil delayed the gift-giving until after Aeneas's introduction of himself. Berlioz also modified Virgil's depiction of Aeneas just before he confesses himself to Dido. In the Aeneid, Aeneas is cloaked in a cloud of invisibility, hidden from view until he is convinced it is safe to emerge. In Les Troyens, however, he is disguised
as an ordinary warrior among the band of Trojans asking for refuge.

The third major change in Virgil's narrative involves Iarbas, the neighboring Numidian chief. Virgil introduced Iarbas as a suitor of Dido who, upon learning of her love for Aeneas, petitioned the gods for reparation. His prayers caused Jupiter to send Mercury down to earth to remind Aeneas of his duty to go to Italy. Berlioz, however, used the character of Iarbas as a vehicle to provide a climax for the third act of his opera and to lend a spectacular emphasis to the entrance of the hero. While the Trojans are in the middle of their audience with Dido, Narbal, her minister, breaks in with the news that Iarbas and his Numidians are attacking Carthage. With the report of the attack, Aeneas drops his disguise and, bedecked in splendid armor, gallantly offers to fight with the Carthaginians to drive back the Numidian invaders. Thus, Berlioz utilized this change in the part of Iarbas as the basis for an operatic ensemble-finale, and ended Act III with a decidedly forward-looking event.

Before going off to battle, however, Aeneas entrusts Ascanius to Dido's care. In a response that will bear great future significance, Dido assures Aeneas that she will look after Ascanius "with a mother's love." Aeneas then delivers to his son a brief speech that paraphrases the words Virgil had Aeneas impart in the Aeneid.
(Book XII, lines 586-92) just before going to his final battle against Turnus and the Rutilians. Carthaginians and Trojans unite to battle the Numidian hordes.

The first tableau of Act IV, commonly known as the "Royal Hunt and Storm," is a large pantomime-ballet. Its content is a quite literal translation into pantomime of the events narrated in Book IV, lines 202-23. In his poem, Virgil implied no dialogue and Berlioz, in Les Troyens, retained the same general effect, substituting pantomime for the verbal narration of events given in the poem. Unfortunately, the consummation of the lovers' relationship, which is the main point of the scene in Virgil, is lost in the pantomime. Although Berlioz blamed the failure of the scene on the pathetic staging it received at the Théâtre-Lyrique, the cause may also have been that the audience, failing to know Classical mythology, was unable to grasp the meaning of the scene and its importance to the rest of the opera.

The second tableau of Act IV, set in Dido's palace gardens by the sea, begins with a duet freely invented by Berlioz. The duet is for Anna and Narbal, Dido's minister, a character not even mentioned by Virgil. It serves two purposes. The first is to show, by Narbal's concerned words, the decline into which Carthage has fallen after Dido, faced with the conflicting choices of love and duty, chose love. Secondly, when Anna tries to
reassure Narbal of the importance of the love between Dido and Aeneas, he responds by reminding her that ". . . fate calls Aeneas / Inexorably to Italy."¹⁶

This statement serves to keep the audience aware of the continuing conflict of the opera, which is love versus duty.

Following the duet is a procession of the royalty, who are subsequently entertained by several ballets. This sequence of numbers—i.e., duet, procession, and ballets—corresponds to the succession of numbers in Act I that begin with the duet between Cassandra and Corebus (Nos. 3, 4, and 5). The events in this scene correlate with those narrated by Virgil at the end of Book I. Here, as in the opera, Dido entertains Aeneas and his warriors at a huge feast. In addition, she has her court poet, Iopas, sing for them. Whereas in the Aeneid Iopas sings of the moon and the sun, of water and fire, in the opera the poet sings of the farmer, the shepherd, and the fruits of the soil. These topics enhance the image of a pastoral Carthage that Berlioz sketched at the beginning of Act III. The festivities that he depicts in this second tableau of Act IV are drawn from the end of Book I, where Dido throws a great feast for her Trojan visitors. She welcomed the Trojans in Act III but the invasion of Iarbas and the Royal Hunt and Storm scene were interjected before the feast had a chance to begin.¹⁷
Later in Book I, Venus substitutes Cupid for Ascanius in order to make Dido fall in love with Aeneas. In the opera, however, Dido has already fallen in love with the Trojan hero, so there is no need for Cupid. Nevertheless, Berlioz managed to work Virgil's idea of Cupid into his libretto by including a comment by Anna in which, pointing to Ascanius, she notes that he looks "like a Cupid."

Although Virgil used Cupid to induce Dido to give up her vow of faithfulness to her husband and to fall in love with Aeneas, Berlioz, dealing with a love that had already been consummated, used Aeneas's tale of Andromache's remarriage to effect the absolution of Dido's guilt about having betrayed her late husband's memory. Book III of the Aeneid contains a reference to the fact that Andromache, Hector's widow, had married Pyrrhus; Berlioz, in a recitative and quintet (No. 35), adapted this idea to his advantage. He used Dido's discovery that Andromache is now married to the man who killed her husband to prompt the Queen to finally sever her emotional ties to her late husband. Aeneas tells her the story:

Alas, bound
In slavery by Pyrrhus
She begged for death;
But that prince's love for her
Was so stubborn
That in the end she forsook
Her dearest memories.
After long refusing, she married Pyrrhus.  
Dido responds first with shock, then with relief:  
What!  She, Hector's widow? . . .  
Everything conspires  
To overcome my remorse, and my heart is absolved.  
At this point the Queen is sitting on a couch, with  
Ascanius--instructed in the stage directions to look  
"like a statue of Cupid"--standing next to her.  Ascanius  
slips Sychaeus's wedding ring off of her finger.  Dido  
takes it back but, symbolically, leaves it forgotten on  
the couch when she rises.  This action clearly indicates  
to the audience that the Queen has accepted the idea of  
remarrying; the number thus provides a pivotal point in  
her feelings.  The idea for this scene, one of the few in  
the opera not inspired by Virgil, was taken from a  
painting by Pierre-Narcisse Guérin entitled Enée racontant  
à Didon les malheurs de Troie, which now hangs in the  
Louvre.  
The use of Andromache as the vehicle by which to  
release Dido's guilt prompts a sudden recollection in the  
viewer's mind of the scene of Andromache's mourning near  
the middle of Act I (No. 6).  In that act, Berlioz con-  
trasted Andromache's silent pain with the rejoicing Trojan  
crowd.  Now he draws a similar contrast between the memory  
of Andromache's previous sorrow and the report of her  
present marital bliss.  Her happiness, in paralleling  
Dido's newfound contentment in love and absolution of
guilt, enhances the tranquil feeling of happiness of this tableau. The underscoring of Dido's joy at this point in the opera allows the tragedy of her later rejection to be fully felt.\textsuperscript{21}

This number (No. 35) is dramatically important also in its reference to Hector, Andromache's late husband. Reminders of either Hector or his ghost appear at strategic points throughout the opera. In Act I (No. 6), Hector was mourned by his widow and son. Subsequently in Act I (No. 12), during the sack of Troy, the shade of Hector revealed himself to Aeneas and urged him to flee to Italy. In Act IV (No. 35), the remarriage of Hector's widow helps Dido overcome her reluctance to fully love Aeneas, while in Act V (No. 42), when Aeneas falters before leaving Carthage, the shades of Hector and other Trojans materialize before Aeneas to urge him onward. The two appearances of Hector's ghost serve to remind both Aeneas and the audience of the Trojan hero's destiny.

The two other references to Hector, by way of Andromache's mourning and subsequent remarriage, occur in numbers that reflect vivid, although contrasting, emotions. The power of the quintet (No. 35) is thus intensified by the viewer's sense of poignancy and hopelessness because, while watching Dido's acceptance of her ill-fated love for Aeneas, the spectator is unable to forget the inevitable destiny to which Aeneas is called.
The quintet is important also because it functions as preparation for later incidents in the opera, which recall this quintet to the viewer's mind. In the emotional turmoil brought about by Aeneas's impending departure, Dido's moods vacillate between rage and grief. Twice during this time she mentions Ascanius, causing the listener to remember his actions during the quintet. In the first instance, just before Aeneas departs (Act V, No. 44), Dido openly longs for something to remind her of Aeneas.

Yet had I but a tender pledge of your trust,
Yes, had I, cradled in my arms,
Aeneas' son, his proud, sweet face
Smiling at me, to remind me of you,
I would be less forsaken.

The next example occurs when Dido, in her humiliation and anger after Aeneas abandons her, seeks vengeance and finds Aeneas's son Ascanius a fitting weapon for her revenge.

I should have foreseen their treachery then,
And set fire to their fleet,
Avenged myself on Aeneas and, to end, served him
His own son's limbs for a hideous banquet.

In both sorrow and rage Dido thinks of Ascanius. At both references the viewer thinks of the quintet, during which Ascanius sat close enough to Dido to remove her wedding ring. The second reference also reminds the listener of the setting for that quintet, a banquet in honor of the Trojans. Dido's earlier longing to be entrusted to Ascanius's care (No. 44) calls to the viewer's mind the
scene in Act III (No. 28) in which Aeneas, before going off to battle, gave his son to Dido's care. In addition, a very subtle association is made with the pantomime in Act I (No. 6) in which, while mourning the death of her beloved husband, Andromache is accompanied by her son Astyanax. Dido's sorrow parallels that of Andromache but, in direct contrast to Hector's widow, Dido has no child to call her own.

Following this pivotal quintet is a well-known septet in which all those assembled celebrate the peaceful summer night. Berlioz was pleased with the music he wrote for this brief number (No. 36), as he indicated to the Princess Sayn-Wittgenstein:

"... The last piece I have written, which I hope will please you, is the ensemble preceding the duet of the lovers in the fourth act... It seems to me that there is something new in the expression of this happiness at seeing the night, and hearing the silence and lending sublime accents to the sleeping sea. Further, this ensemble links with the duet in a totally unexpected fashion brought about by chance because I had not thought of it when writing each of the pieces separately."

The number that follows the septet is the famous love duet, "Nuit d'ivresse," whose words represent the only major textual borrowing from someone other than Virgil. They are adapted from the scene between Jessica and Lorenzo in Act V of Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice that begins "In such a night." The words of Berlioz's duet also refer to the serene beauty of the
Mediterranean night, and this peacefulness is echoed by the music. This duet depicts not a fiery passion but a self-assured acknowledgement of the love between Dido and Aeneas. The serene music, in its sharp contrast with the preceding passionate music of the Royal Hunt and Storm scene, reflects the mature progression in the feeling of the lovers.

Berlioz was quite aware of the mixed Virgilian and Shakespearean influences in *Les Troyens*. On 11 June 1856 he wrote a letter to A. M. Bennet, the father of the pianist Theodore Ritter, in which he discussed the recently completed love duet:

Yesterday I completed the words and the music of the great duet of the fourth act, a scene stolen from Shakespeare and Virgilianized, which puts me into ridiculous states.

I have only had to bother with the editing of this immortal raving of love, which makes the last act of the *Merchant of Venice* the worthy pendant of the sublime hymns of *Romeo and Juliet*. It is Shakespeare who is the veritable author of the words and the music. It is strange that he should have intervened, he, the poet of the north, into the masterpiece of the Roman poet. Virgil had overlooked this scene. What singers these two are!!!

Mercury descends at the end of this exquisite duet just as the lovers pass offstage. He goes to the armor that Aeneas left behind and, striking it three times, intones the word "Italy" with each stroke. Berlioz thus ended the fourth act with an impressive contrast of love and duty, and yet another reminder to the audience of the inevitable destiny of Dido's Trojan lover.
Act V of Les Troyens, true to its Virgilian model with the exception of two changes, contains many Shakespearean influences as well: Although Berlioz's only direct borrowing from the English playwright was the love duet of Act IV, many of the dramatic techniques found in the last act of the opera reflect the spirit of Shakespeare. The influence of the bard will be discussed in detail in Chapter III.

Berlioz opened Act V with a piece in which the homesick sailor Hylas sings himself to sleep. The number was included for the purpose of contrast, a primary Shakespearean device. The composer described his intentions in a letter to his son Louis on 9 February 1858:

... Once again I have altered this act: I have made a large cut, and added a character piece which is intended to contrast with the epic, passionate style of the rest. It's a sailor's song... 29

Colin Davis has suggested a parallel between the nostalgic sailor Hylas and the pantomime in Act I that presents the grieving Andromache. Davis notes that Hylas's song "balances the mute appearance of Andromache in the first act: both pieces are interludes which show us the sacrifice of ordinary individuals caught up in destinies greater than their own." 30 As Hylas sings of his longing for his homeland and his mother's arms, the listener cannot help but remember the other grieving mother. This image of the mother-child relationship also
serves as preparation for Dido's later comments about Aeneas's son Ascanius.

In a brief recitative and chorus, Panthus assuredly remarks that although Aeneas is distraught over Dido's agony at his departure, "glory and duty will be able to break his chain." Berlioz then turns to the concerns of the common man in a duet of two sentries. This scene (No. 40) depicts two sentries on duty who complain about having to leave Carthage, where they are happy and comfortable, to continue their tedious and disagreeable sea journey. It is derived from an incident in Book V in which the disheartened Trojan women bemoan the interminable voyage that still remains before them. Virgil represented the Trojan warriors' reception of the news quite differently than Berlioz did. In Book IV, when Aeneas's men are told to equip the fleet for departure, "all are glad. They race to carry out / the orders of Aeneas, his commands." In the sentries' duet, Berlioz intentionally juxtaposed emotions, another Shakespearean technique. In a letter to the Princess on 3 September 1856, the composer described the sentries' scene and told her, "The contrast of the soldiers' low instincts with the heroic aspirations of the royal characters is perhaps effective." In the early nineteenth century, the Parisian public disapproved strongly of Shakespeare's
methods, considering them barbaric. This unfortunate attitude was shared by Carvalho, who cut the sentries' duet from his premiere production of Les Troyens à Carthage because, in the words of Berlioz, the duet's "homely style he found out of place in an epic work."\textsuperscript{34}

The second change that Berlioz made in this part of Virgil's epic poem was the use of the ghosts of Priam, Corebus, Hector, and Cassandra to convince Aeneas to leave Carthage. Virgil had used Mercury to spur Aeneas on. Although no explanation of the reasons for this alteration exist, Berlioz may have intended to evoke in the viewer's mind the earlier tragedy of Troy and possibly the tragic fate of Cassandra, in order to lay the groundwork for the more personal fate of Dido later in the act.\textsuperscript{35}

The duet between Dido and Aeneas that closes the first tableau of Act V (No. 44) is drawn from the corresponding scene in Book IV, in which Dido discovers that Aeneas is preparing to abandon her. In paraphrasing this scene of bitter denunciation, Berlioz demonstrates the economy of means by which he is capable of capturing and projecting the deepest emotions of the drama. Dido's lines

\begin{quote}
No it was not Venus who bore you,
Some hideous she-wolf in the forest gave you suck\textsuperscript{36}
\end{quote}

are his compact translation of lines 497-510 of Book IV. More poignantly, Berlioz captures the very essence of
Dido's disgrace with his masterful translation of lines 412-432, her exclamation of humiliation:

Silence! Nothing can stop you;
Not death hovering over me,
My shame, my love, our wedded life begun,
My name wiped this day from the book of honor. 37

Also closely based on the latter part of Virgil's Book IV are the events depicted in the second tableau of Act V. Dido's soliloquy, "Dieux immortels" (No. 46), is drawn from Berlioz's translation of lines 817-37 of Book IV. In this scene, Dido, in her frenzy, briefly contemplates an attack on the departing Trojan fleet before finally regaining her self-control and accepting her fate. The two numbers that follow, "Je vais mourir" and "Adieu, fière cité," seem to be mostly Berlioz's own creation, freely drawn from many different points in the last section of Book IV.

The final tableau of the opera is set around the enormous funeral pyre that Dido has ordered to be erected. In the Aeneid Dido invokes curses on the fleeing Trojans; Berlioz, however, has given these imprecations, again freely translated from Virgil, to Anna and Narbal (No. 49). In the next scene Dido, in an act derived directly from Virgil, mounts the funeral pyre and stabs herself with Aeneas's sword. Her dying line, "From my ashes a glorious avenger will be born," 38 is taken from line 862 of Book IV, but in Les Troyens Berlioz also has Dido specify Hannibal
as the avenging conquerer.

In the last number of the opera, Dido sings her final words, "Rome . . . Rome . . . eternal," and dies. In the background the audience sees the word "Rome" shining on the distant Capitol. The maledictions of the chorus close the opera. Berlioz leaves the audience with yet another reminder of the heroic destiny of Aeneas and his Trojans and with a glimmer of unrequited love avenged.

Most of Berlioz's libretto of *Les Troyens* is a relatively strict adaptation of the *Aeneid*. While some of the text approaches direct translation of Virgil's Latin, it usually consists of either free paraphrase of the original poetry or of completely new text inspired by the events that Virgil narrated. Although only one number in the opera was taken directly from Shakespeare, the influence of the English bard can be found throughout. Berlioz's adaptation of certain characteristic Shakespearean techniques to the unique medium of grand opera is the focus of the next chapter.
Notes: Chapter II


2Ibid., p. 35.

3The line numbers in this and all subsequent references to the Aeneid pertain to an English translation by Allen Mandelbaum, The Aeneid of Virgil (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971).

4In his article "Les Troyens and the Aeneid," David Cairns asserts that Berlioz went to Virgil for the basis of the material used in this scene. Cairns proposes that it "springs from two different sources, one in Book II, where Aeneas, getting out onto the palace roof through a postern gate during the sack of the city, remembers that through this gate Andromache used to bring her child to see his grandfather Priam, the other in Book III where Aeneas meets Andromache in the Epiran city of Buthrotum, performing the rites of the dead at an altar dedicated to the ashes of Hector" (Responses [London: Secker and Warburg, 1973], p. 95).


6Aeneid, Book II, lines 335-43.

7In his Ph.D. dissertation "The Operas of Hector Berlioz: Their Relationship to the French Operatic Tradition of the Early Nineteenth Century" (University of Pennsylvania, 1978), Jeffrey Alan Langford justifies and explains the additional scenes in Les Troyens on the basis of Berlioz’s adherence to the French grand operatic tradition.

8This characteristic has its basis in Berlioz’s interpretation of Shakespeare’s literary style. For a further discussion of Shakespeare’s influence on Berlioz’s style, see Chapter III of this paper.

9"Le salut des vaincus est de n'en plus attendre."

11 "It was really Rossini, in The Siege of Corinth, who first introduced noisy orchestration into France" (p. 481).

12 Virgil states only that treasures had been "snatched from the wreck of Troy" (Book I, line 905).

13 Libretto, III/24/16. All references to the libretto of Les Troyens are to the French libretto and its English translation reproduced in the booklet for Berlioz, Les Troyens (Philips 6709 002). Citations refer to Act/Number/Page; page numbers are the author's and begin with the first page of the libretto (Side 1;ACT ONE).

14 See below, p. 29.

15 See above, Chapter I, pp. 7-8, n. 10.

16 Libretto, IV/30/21.

17 Berlioz's alteration of Virgil's sequence of events has created much confusion in the publication format of the opera. In 1899 Choudens published a complete edition of the piano-vocal score of La Prise de Troie and Les Troyens à Carthage in an arrangement by L. Narici (see Cecil Hopkinson, A Bibliography of the Musical and Literary Works of Hector Berlioz, 1803-1869: With Histories of the French Music Publishers Concerned, ed. Richard MacNutt [Tunbridge Wells: MacNutt, 1980], p. 144). In this edition the Chasse Royale et Orage was placed after instead of before Act IV. This incorrect sequence, with the Royal Hunt and Storm scene after the feast, actually agrees with the sequence of events as narrated by Virgil. Louise Goldberg, however, in her Ph.D. dissertation "Les Troyens of Hector Berlioz: A Century of Productions and Critical Reviews" (University of Rochester, 1973), p. 26, explains the placement of the Royal Hunt and Storm scene at the beginning of Act IV, as Berlioz intended it, as the only dramatically valid location for the scene. Her hypothesis is that the entire opera can be analyzed as existing in a tripartite structure, as well as in the two- and five-part structures that are readily apparent. Goldberg asserts that the storm scene forms the end, and the dramatic climax, of the second part of this tripartite structure and that the storm parallels the suggestion of a storm at the end of Act II, the first part of the structure. Because of this
parallelism, the storm scene could not be placed elsewhere than at the beginning of Act IV, as Berlioz indicated.

18 Libretto, IV/35/22-23.

19 Ibid., IV/35/23.

20 A color photograph of the painting can be found in Berlioz and the Romantic Imagination: An exhibition organized by the Arts Council and the Victoria and Albert Museum on Behalf of the Berlioz Centenary Committee in Cooperation with the French Government: 17 October to 14 December ([London]: The Arts Council, 1969), facing p. 130.

21 In her dissertation, p. 31, Goldberg points out the parallel placement in the tripartite structure of the two numbers involving Andromache—the pantomime in which she mourns Hector's death (No. 6) and the reference to her remarriage (No. 35).

22 Libretto, V/44/30.

23 Ibid., V/46/31.

24 The definite indication of summer is Berlioz's invention. Virgil is much less precise in indicating the season during which these events take place.


26 Act V, Scene i, line 11, The Merchant of Venice, The Complete Works of William Shakespeare, ed. William Aldis Wright (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1936). Shakespeare's text continues: "In such a night / Stood Dido with a willow in her hand / Upon the wild sea banks, and waft her love / To come again to Carthage."

27 Quoted in Turner, Berlioz, the Man and His Work, p. 292.

28 In the Aeneid Mercury reminds Aeneas of his duty face-to-face. Berlioz instead has the ghosts in Act V perform that task.


31 Libretto, V/39/25.

32 Aeneid, Book IV, lines 394-95.


34 Berlioz, Memoirs, p. 491.

35 Jacques Barzun asserts that this ghost scene was "doubtless inspired by the scene in Richard III" (Berlioz and the Romantic Century, 3rd rev. ed., 2 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), II:132, n. 1. Goldberg, p. 31, notes that this appearance of Hector's ghost is closely parallel to the scene in Act I (No. 12) where Hector urges Aeneas to flee Troy. In the tripartite dramatic structure which she sets forth, the two scenes, while not in exactly parallel places, do occur in similar relative positions in sections one and three.

36 Libretto, V/44/30.

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid., V/50/33.

39 These visions of the future were common in earlier French operas that ended with apotheosis finales like this one. Patrick Smith discusses two important examples in this lineage in The Tenth Muse: A Historical Study of the Opera Libretto (New York: A. Knopf, 1970), p. 152.
CHAPTER III

SHAKESPEAREAN INFLUENCES

"I come now to the supreme drama of my life" is the introduction that Berlioz chose to give the chapter of his Memoirs that recounts his discovery of Shakespeare. On 11 September 1827 he attended the opening night performance of Hamlet at the Odéon Theatre, a presentation at which Harriet Smithson, his future wife, played the part of Ophelia. He related the life-long impact Shakespeare had on him:

Shakespeare, coming upon me unawares, struck me like a thunderbolt. The lightning flash of that discovery revealed to me at a stroke the whole heaven of art, illuminating it to its remotest corners. I recognized the meaning of grandeur, beauty, dramatic truth. I saw, I understood, I felt. . . . that I was alive and that I must arise and walk.

Four days later Berlioz saw Romeo and Juliet and was again so overwhelmed that he resolved to stay away from future productions of the English company, fearing another traumatic emotional ordeal. The "raging hatreds, the wild, ecstatic kisses, the desperate strife of love and death contending for mastery" were too much for him.

Because at the time of these performances he knew no English, Berlioz was able to glean only an approximation

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of Shakespeare's art through the existing French translations. He was aware that he was unable to experience the effect of Shakespeare's poetry, but through the potency of the acting, particularly that of Harriet Smithson, he felt that he was able to see into the soul of Shakespeare:

The power of the acting, especially that of Juliet herself, the rapid flow of the scenes, the play of expression and voice and gesture, told me more and gave me a far richer awareness of the ideas and passions of the original than the words of my pale and garbled translation could do.  

The significance that Berlioz placed on Shakespeare's influence in the realm of music is evident in a letter he wrote to The Morning Post of London on 10 July 1848. In it, the composer spoke of Shakespeare as "the greatest of poets," and, in discussing the poetic quality of music, asserted that

... on the same liberty which Shakespeare used in his immortal conceptions depends the entire development of the music of the future.

As he matured, Berlioz's Shakespearean interests expanded continuously. He read the playwright's works voraciously, learned the English language, and attended performances of Shakespeare all over Europe. Plays he came to admire, other than the ones in which he first met his beloved Harriet Smithson, were King Lear, Othello, The Tempest, Richard III, The Merchant of Venice, and Much Ado About Nothing. He quoted the bard frequently in his writings and attributed to the playwright much of the
dramatic structure of *Les Troyens*. In order to fully appreciate the pervasive influence that Shakespeare had on Berlioz, however, one must first examine the bard's effect on the French Romantic artists of the nineteenth century. The impact of Shakespeare on the artistic community was considerable, but it was predominantly confined to the literary figures who were to borrow so freely from him—among them Hugo, Deschamps, and Dumas.

By 1828 the French Romantics exercised a new freedom in their art. To their minds they were liberated, thanks to the supremacy of an unexpected prophet from Elizabethan England. Both contemporary and retrospective documents dealing with French Romanticism point to a single event that crystallized the ideals of the French Romantic movement: the performances at the Odéon in September 1827 of the plays of William Shakespeare.

In the journals of Delécluze can be found descriptions of the events of those days. He identified a battle between the Romantics, who "value greatly the dramatic methods [système] of the English, as exemplified by Shakespeare," and the Classicists, who maintained the traditional observance of the rules of the Unities. The scenes in Shakespeare that Delécluze designated as having made a particularly strong impression were scenes in which the Unities were most readily defied.

The concept of the Unities was first introduced
into France by Jean de la Taille's *Art de la tragédie* of 1572. The Unities became an institution in the French drama of the seventeenth century and called for the constant observance, during the course of a drama, of three rules. The Unity of Time dictated that the stage- and plot-times be roughly the same. The Unity of Place was achieved by restricting geographical area. Finally, Unity of Action, or Plot, was maintained by not mixing or confusing the genres, e.g., tragedy or comedy.

The French Romantics, for whom art was now free, subscribed to what they saw as Shakespearean ideals, namely, well-defined, independent sections; abrupt contrasts; strong characters; antithetical situations, personalities, or genres; and, most importantly, total disregard of the Unities.

Like his fellow Romantics, Berlioz, too, adopted the dramatic principles attributed to Shakespeare, applying them in his formation of *Les Troyens*. As he explained in a memo to Léon Carvalho, the manager of the Théâtre-Lyrique:

We're not putting on Abbé Delille but Virgil—and Virgil Shakespeareianized. All my excuses for this long word. 7

Although the love duet of Dido and Aeneas in Act IV is the only clearly visible part of the opera to be borrowed from Shakespeare, 8 the composer was quite frank about the fact that the bard was a major source of
inspiration for the work. In a letter to the Princess Carolyne of 1856, Berlioz suggested that
... you will find many borrowings from Shakespeare in the middle of Virgilian poetry; I cut my Cyprian wine with brandy. 

In another letter to Princess Carolyne dated 12 August 1856, the composer again referred to his indebtedness to Shakespeare:

But you wanted to cheer me along and I shall not be deluded by your words. You go so far as to credit me with the beauty of Virgil's poetry and praise me for my thefts from Shakespeare! Do not fear: I have the courage to carry on to the end; it was not necessary to try and lure me on with eulogies that I do not deserve—it is beautiful because it is Virgil; it is striking because it is Shakespeare. I know it. I am only an interloper; I have ransacked the gardens of two geniuses, and cut a swathe of flowers to make a couch for music, where God grant she may not perish overcome by the fragrance.

In the last section of his Memoirs, Berlioz discussed the inspiration and composition of Les Troyens.

Four years earlier [c. 1854], in Weimar, while talking with the Princess Wittgenstein—Liszt's devoted friend, a woman of great sympathy and intelligence who has often sustained me in my darkest hours—I was drawn on to speak of my admiration for Virgil and of the idea I had conceived of a vast opera on the Shakespearean plan, based on the second and fourth books of the Aeneid.

From this statement one can infer that Berlioz visualized a form, evolved from Shakespearean literary models, that he applied to the musical score of Les Troyens. An analysis of certain key elements in Berlioz's fashioning of the libretto will reveal the influence of Shakespeare's methods of dramatic construction, as perceived by the
composer, on the broad outline of his epic opera.

Only as Berlioz began the composition of *Les Troyens* do we recognize from his writings that he had a definite understanding of Shakespearean form. This evidence is found in a letter to his long-time friend, Humbert Ferrand, dated 9 May 1863; the composer answered a question concerning the setting of the opera.

No, not everything takes place at Troy. It is written in the system of Shakespeare's histories... 12

It is very likely that Berlioz meant that he did not confine himself to a single locale--locale changes in the histories frequently involve considerable distance, thus totally eschewing the Unity of Place.

That Berlioz consciously eluded the Unity of Place in *Les Troyens* can be seen in the diverse geographical locations represented in the opera--Troy, Carthage, and imperial Rome. In the setting of the second part of his epic opera, after the long sea voyage of Aeneas and his men from Troy to Carthage, the composer also shunned the Unity of Time. This avoidance of the Unities occurs only within the broad literary dimensions of the work.

Within the smaller segments of the opera, however, Berlioz adhered quite closely to the classical Unities--time and space assume their normal progression. By preserving the sense of time and space within each segment despite the diversity of the broader structural elements,
he maintained a sense of unity within the course of the work. This type of framework has been termed "tableau" construction or "open" form. The action is carried forward by a cumulative series of apparently unconnected scenes or tableaux joined not by narrative transitions—recitative in the case of opera—but simply by their relation to a common theme. Within a single tableau, a number of elements may be interjected, all of which relate to, but are secondary to, the dominant strong emotion or action. Berlioz's tableau construction is similar to Shakespeare's method of scene unification.

As Shakespeare practised it, the methods also involved balancing different kinds of scenes against each other through ironic contrast. The attractiveness of the method for Berlioz lay in the equilibrium it maintained between conflicting ideas in the story; "Shakespearean" construction furnished him with the ideal dramatic framework for the series of contrasting musical moods through which he sought to convey the basic conflict in The Trojans.

Tableau construction allowed Berlioz to exploit the techniques of contrast and antithesis, methods identified by the French Romantics as Shakespearean. The composer was also very aware of the practice of abrupt contrasts found in the music of Beethoven, a musician he greatly admired. In a letter to Eugène Scribe, in which he outlined his instructions for the production of a libretto, Berlioz clearly indicated his taste for opposition.

I should dearly love an antique subject, but I fear the costumes, and the prosy literalness of our audiences.
Perhaps a simple love plot--passionate love--varied with scenes of violent action involving crowds and set either in the Middle Ages or the last century would be most suitable. Of course there is no question of keeping to a heroic or elevated style throughout. On the contrary, I strongly prefer contrasts. 14

Berlioz's penchant for ironic juxtaposition can be seen throughout Les Troyens. At the largest level, the opera is the story of the conflict between love and duty, between personal happiness and the epic destiny of a people. In his presentation of the three primary players in the drama, Berlioz most eloquently epitomized the contrasting forces of love and duty. His characterizations are deep and, true to the Shakespearean ideal of strong and realistic personification, elicit a sympathetic response from the audience.

The first part of the opera is devoted to the story of Cassandra. The virgin prophetess tries in vain to warn the rejoicing Trojans that their city is fated to be destroyed. Like Aeneas, Cassandra has been charged with a duty she cannot escape. She can predict the future of her people and must try to warn them, even though she knows that her words are destined to go unheeded.

This public mission of Cassandra's contrasts poignantly with her private sorrow. Her love for her betrothed, Corebus, is doomed. For Cassandra, to stay in Troy means the death of her love; to flee with Corebus signifies the renunciation of her duty. By providing, in
the first part of the drama, a major role for the characters of Cassandra and Corebus, Berlioz succeeded in magnifying the epic Trojan destiny while intensifying the individual characters' personal grief. The music vividly underscores this polarity of theme. Every action, gesture, verbal phrase, and musical idea contributes to the communication of the opposition of these basic, compelling forces.

Cassandra is the only Trojan in Act I who is able to express the conflict of love and duty. With the exception of Laocoön, she is the only Trojan blessed and cursed with the ability to foresee the future. Her love collides with her clairvoyance to produce a shrill and frenzied character in Act I. Her love prompts her warnings, her prescience reveals her duty, while her agony contrasts vividly with the complacency and hollow joy of her fellow Trojans.

Twice in the first act, conscious of the fact that her warnings are being unheeded, Cassandra proceeds to her duty. The first occasion is when, after failing to persuade her affianced Corebus to flee Troy before the disaster, she succumbs to his desire for marriage (No. 3).

Then take my hand,
And my chaste bride's kiss,
And stay! Death makes ready
Our nuptial bed for tomorrow.15

Cassandra thus bows to the will of Corebus. But in setting the last syllable on a high B, prepared by the upward leap
of a diminished fifth and supported by a fully orchestrated fortissimo B major chord, Berlioz communicated a hint of hysteria in her acquiescence.

The second time Cassandra bows to her duty is found at the very end of Act I. Horror-struck, she watches as the Trojans triumphantly drag the wooden horse into Troy. She ends the act with a declaration of her duty:

They enter, it is done; fate has seized its victim!  
Sister of Hector, go, die beneath the ruins of Troy!¹⁶

Again the last syllable is sung to a high note (G), reached by an upward leap of a major sixth and supported by a suddenly full, fortissimo orchestra. Cassandra's premonition ends the first act.

Berlioz chose to open Act II with another primary character--Aeneas--being made aware of his duty. The ghost of Hector tells him:

Go . . . seek Italy,  
Where for your people reborn,  
After long wanderings over the sea,  
You are to found a mighty empire,  
Destined in the future to rule the world,  
And where a hero's death awaits you.¹⁷

As Corebus and Cassandra both go to their deaths, Aeneas, warned just in time by the shade of Hector, escapes with a small group of survivors of the fall of Troy.

By the opening of Act III, Berlioz has succeeded in making the audience acutely aware of the importance of Aeneas's public duty and of the personal sacrifice it is
likely to exact. The shade of Hector gave Aeneas his mission, his nation's fate, and his own fate. This knowledge has a great bearing upon the viewer's perception of the remainder of the opera, because, from this point, every development must be measured against the inviolate truth of Hector's words.

In Act III, even before Aeneas's arrival in Carthage, Berlioz introduced the tension between love and duty in his initial portrait of Dido. The Queen is first seen at a large public ceremony where she is presiding over a festival of thanksgiving for seven prosperous years in Carthage. The initial impression is of a strong woman who is in control and is complete in her duties. She is what Aeneas is destined to become: a great ruler of a strong people, a victim of difficult times who wandered over the seas to found a new homeland for her subjects. With choruses, ballets, and processions, Berlioz shows her celebrating the many years of peace and prosperity that followed. But Dido has paid a great price for her success, the same price that Aeneas will ultimately be called upon to pay for his. She has gained her outward triumph and stability at the expense of her individual happiness. She vowed never to marry any man who might threaten her people's freedom, which consequently ruled out every possible candidate. This elimination of the potential for personal joy has made it increasingly
difficult for her to honor her pledge of duty to her people.

In a duet with her sister Anna (No. 24) that follows the exit of the festive chorus, Dido verbalizes the importance of her duty to her subjects. She also confesses, however, the anguish that lies beneath her calm, regal exterior:

A strange sadness,
Without cause, as you know, sometimes overwhelms me.
A sense of weakness that I am powerless to resist;
A vague unrest troubles my breast, a chill of fear,
My cheeks burn, and hot tears scald them.\footnote{18}

Anna's reassurance that Dido will indeed love again kindles in Dido's heart a "dangerous delight" and a "vague hope" that she tries in vain to suppress. Unlike Virgil's Dido, Berlioz's heroine needs no scheming goddesses or chance opportunities with dashing strangers to break down her defenses. She is ready for love.

It is into this emotionally volatile situation that Aeneas steps, bringing with him his own burden of public duty and private frustration. In following the path of his assigned mission, he has thus far encountered only storms and tempests, and he comes to Dido seeking shelter and aid. Even here his duty pursues him. No sooner does he present himself to Dido than he is again called upon to be a hero, this time by leading his troops in a battle against the Numidian hordes invading Carthage.

The love that forms between Dido and Aeneas is of
course at the center of the remainder of the opera. The necessity to love is placed on an equal footing with the Virgilian theme of the moral imperative of duty. The irreconcilable conflict between these two motivating forces produces the tragedy that Berlioz saw at the heart of the great love story.

The love/duty dichotomy is generated by the epic theme of the Trojan destiny, allusions to which pervade the opera. Fate drives the Trojans from Troy to Carthage and then on to Italy.\(^{19}\) Hector's warning to Aeneas in Act II (No. 12) is very clear, detailing Italy as the site of the Trojans' new empire and the country in which Aeneas would meet his hero's death. Cassandra, after the death of Corebus, reveals to the Trojan women at the altar of Vesta-Cybèle the destiny of their people:

Soon, in Italy, where destiny calls them,  
They will see a new Troy rise, stronger  
And more beautiful.\(^{20}\)

Act II closes with the women, dying on the altar, uttering a final cry of "Italy! Italy!"

In Carthage, too, reminders of destiny occur frequently. In Act IV, when Anna tells Narbal of the growing love between Dido and Aeneas, the minister responds:

But fate calls Aeneas,  
Inexorably to Italy.\(^{21}\)

At the end of the duet "Nuit d'ivresse" (No. 37) at the height of the lover's ecstasy, Mercury appears and
solemnly reminds the audience of the Trojans' and Aeneas's destiny. Tension accumulates as Panthus tells the Trojan chieftains to prepare the ships to set sail because a chorus of shades the previous night called out "Italy" three times. After a final visit from the ghosts, Aeneas gives the orders to set sail, decisively uttering a final cry of "Italy!" He has reconciled himself to follow the monumental path of his destiny, forsaking his love in order to perform his duty.

The last iteration of the epic Trojan destiny is spoken by Dido, who is awarded the power of clairvoyance in the final moments preceding her death. As she lies dying on her funeral pyre, she sees the Roman capitol in the distance. Her last words clarify and personalize the precise destination of Aeneas and his men. To the distant sounds of the Trojan March, she utters the words, "Rome . . . Rome . . . eternal," and dies.

Berlioz also utilized ghosts, a technique found likewise in Shakespeare, as purveyors of the Trojan destiny. Their reminders of duty in the second and fifth acts play an important part in the development of the drama, and their representation in the opera is more authentic than the participation of gods acting as supernatural forces in the Aeneid.

The use of supernatural beings to reveal certain plot details is a technique that can be found in
Shakespeare's works, particularly in *Hamlet*, a play with which we know Berlioz was familiar. The first ghost to appear in *Les Troyens* is the shade of Hector, whose mission is to inform Aeneas—and, not incidentally, the audience—of the tragic events occurring at Troy at that moment. The ghost then proceeds to divulge Aeneas's destiny. This revelation is primarily responsible for creating the tensions that, in turn, generate the structure of the second part of the opera. The viewer, being thus informed of Aeneas's duty and destiny, must now wonder how Aeneas will reconcile his responsibilities, as revealed by the shade of Hector, with his love and emotional attachment to Dido.

Hector's ghost, first encountered in "Ô lumière de Troie" (No. 12), appears with an accompaniment of muted horns, muffled timpani, pizzicato strings, and viola tremolos, all of which combine to produce an exceptionally ethereal atmosphere. Aeneas reacts to Hector's materialization in a short recitative in which Berlioz uses a particular rhythm found throughout *Les Troyens* in passages associated with fate. Hector's communication unfolds in a melody consisting of a gradual semitonal descent that encompasses an octave. This chromatic passage is echoed by four muted horns that appear consecutively to play an independent syncopated rhythm in which the initial notes of each bar invariably fall on either the second
beat or the weak second half of the first beat, thus creating the effect of a shadow moving ponderously in the background, always one step behind. Muted cellos and double basses support this mournful utterance.

The ghost of Hector reappears in Act V, this time accompanied by the shades of Priam, Corebus, and Cassandra. The shades reiterate Aeneas's duty and urge him to delay not a moment longer. In this scene (No. 42), every word of the spirits is delivered on a single note, D, the timbre of which is exploited to extremes by different groups of instruments. A sense of infinity is effected by the great range of tessitura created by the juxtaposition of the extremely high diminished-seventh chords of the violins and the lowest D of the double basses doubled by horns and bassoons at the octave. The "fate-rhythm" is present again briefly.

Berlioz also applied the Shakespearean technique of contrasts at a deeper structural level. He established in each tableau a pattern of disparate scenes that oppose the epic and the personal in order to convey the story of humans caught in a destiny they cannot control. A splendid example of such a dramatic sequence can be found in his design of the first tableau of Act V.

The act opens on a scene at night, with Trojan ships peacefully floating in the harbor. The sailor Hylas, from his post in the crow's nest of one of the ships, sings
a wistful song for his homeland, a "character piece which is intended to contrast with the epic, passionate style of the rest." During Hylas's melancholy song, Berlioz shifts the focus to two sentinels, who comment sympathetically that he is dreaming of the homeland that he will never see again. Hylas falls asleep before finishing his song, and immediately the nostalgic calm is interrupted by the call to prepare for departure to Italy (No. 39). The Trojan chiefs, on stage to reiterate the necessity of immediate departure, hear the shades call "Italy!" The focus shifts back to the sentries, who have not heard the shades. As they march back and forth, the sentries express their displeasure at the thought of leaving Carthage, where they can speak the language and can enjoy wine, women, and meat. Life in Carthage is easy for them, and they are unhappy at the thought of exchanging their current situation for a long sea voyage full of difficulties. The overall effect of the sentries' duet (No. 40) is one of simple desires and simple joys. This spirit contrasts vividly with Aeneas's succeeding scene, "Inutiles regrets," in which he reluctantly bows to his duty.

The inclusion of the sentries' duet is a master stroke. It gives the scene—and the opera—the added dimension of disparity among men. The sentries, common men, have not heard the voices and know nothing about the epic yearnings that drive the great and powerful. They
only wish to live as tranquilly as possible.

Berlioz thus provides us with the background–Hylas and the two sentries–against which Aeneas must wrestle to resolve his dilemma. That the composer intended this dramatic effect is shown by the contents of a letter he wrote while at work on the libretto.

And I have added two scenes at the beginning of the fifth act—short scenes, but I think they are striking and serve a purpose... In one of them, two Trojan soldiers are on guard outside the tents at night, one marching from right to left, the other from left to right, and chatting as they cross in the middle of the stage, about their leaders' insistence on going to conquer this wretched Italy, when they're getting on so well in Carthage... The contrast between the base instincts of the common soldier and the heroic preoccupations of the royal characters is, I think, a good idea.25

"Shakespearean" construction also furnished Berlioz with the ideal scaffolding upon which to create a variety of disparate musical moods. In fashioning the contrasting moods by which he develops the drama, his handling of tempo is of paramount importance. A skillful arrangement of diverse tempi varies the pacing and the tension levels in the opera.

Berlioz's tempo indications, taken as a whole, produce a wonderful sense of equilibrium. They form a centrifugal pattern, which wavers between slow and fast, each balancing the other. Acts I and V generally convey a sense of energy due to a preponderance of faster tempi. Act II is filled with a morose undercurrent of foreboding,
ending with a great climax that closes the Troy section of the opera. Act III is pompous and majestic and, in its display of a joyous Carthage in the midst of a festival of celebration, provides a welcome oasis after the emotional turmoil of the previous two acts. Act IV, inclined to be rather static, is lyrical and contains some of the most beautiful music in the opera.

The following chart summarizes the key musical moods that contribute most readily to the dramatic development in the opera.

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<th>Act</th>
<th>Mood</th>
<th>Observations</th>
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<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>energetic</td>
<td>Alternating tempi increase tension.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>foreboding</td>
<td>Both tableaux build to patriotic conclusions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>majestic</td>
<td>Moderate tempi flow evenly until rousing finale.</td>
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<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>static</td>
<td>Tableau i&lt;br&gt;Alternation of slow and fast tempi builds to passionate climax.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tableau ii&lt;br&gt;Emphasizes the sensual.</td>
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<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>volatile</td>
<td>Tableau i&lt;br&gt;Builds from melancholy opening to emotionally volatile climax (Aeneas's departure).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tableau ii&lt;br&gt;Progresses from pleading to acceptance.</td>
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<td>Tableau iii&lt;br&gt;Ritualistic beginning moves to juxtaposition of revenge and triumph at final climax (Dido's death).</td>
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In Act I, the opening chorus of the Trojan people, executed in an Allegro vivo tempo, imparts a feeling of great excitement from the outset. The vigorous tempo depicts the joy of the Trojans—they assume that they are free at last. The act also concludes with a sense of agitation. This time the Allegro agitato assai indicates that the Trojans are provoked by the thought of the wooden horse that was left by the Greeks.

Between these two lively tempi, the music also moves briskly in Numbers 5, 7, and 10. The ballet (No. 5, "Combat de Césto") is a robust display of physical energy. Aeneas's disconcerted narrative about the hideous death of Laocoön (No. 7) and Cassandra's aria "Non je ne verrai pas" (No. 10), in which she laments that no one will listen to her predictions about the dangers of the wooden horse, both communicate impassioned outpourings of horror and frustration.

Between the fast tempi, slower numbers create balance and effect a slight lessening of tension. The greatest disparity in tempo is between the first two numbers.

Cassandra's opening recitative and aria, "Les Grecs ont disparu" (No. 2), provides a stunning contrast to the opening chorus. It commences with a slow, ominous tempo marked Adagio molto sostenuto, which personifies the concept of premonition. After an Andante aria, a brief
Allegro recitative forms a transition to the ensuing number. In this duet between Cassandra and Corebus (No. 3), the tempi oscillate from section to section, symbolizing the contrasting attitudes of the two lovers.

The two numbers that encompass the lively ballet also have dissimilar tempi. The Allegro moderato e pomposo of the "Marche et Hymne" (No. 4) creates an imposing effect. The quiet, mournful atmosphere that pervades Andromache's pantomime (No. 6) is induced in part by the Andante non troppo lento tempo. This mood of tragic calm is cruelly shattered by Aeneas's sudden flustered narrative in Allegro.

The octet and double chorus, "Châtiment effroyable" (No. 8), returns to a slower tempo, Andante sostenuto, to depict the fear of the Trojans when they realize what has happened to the priest; it aptly conveys almost speechless, paralyzed terror. The finale, "Marche Troyenne" (No. 11), commences in a lively tempo, and the growing excitement of the Trojan mob brings about an agitated conclusion.

Act II opens with a contrasting, rather slow and majestic, tempo. In the succeeding number, however, the pendulum swings to an Allegro assai agitato to symbolize the anticipation of Aeneas and his officers who are "Prêts à mourir" (No. 13). The Andante non troppo lento indication of "Choeur Prière" (No. 14) signals a return to a slower tempo. The effect is a vivid contrast between the despondent feelings of the women in the temple and the previous
concerned yet militant exhibition of energy. The penultimate number, which begins in a moderate tempo, becomes increasingly animated when Cassandra threatens and reproaches the "frightened doves" who are considering submitting to the Greeks.

The finale unfolds at double speed: one bar equals a beat of the previous number, effectively symbolizing the delirious excitement of the women who have been thoroughly convinced by Cassandra that their only honorable recourse is to commit mass suicide to avoid being taken captive, hence spoiling the victory of the Greeks.

It is thus clear that in the Trojan acts, the repeated opposition of fast and slow tempi furnish the impetus for the dramatic development that culminates in the destruction of Troy. The climax of intensity and agitation is reached in the finale of Act II.

Act III provides a joyous contrast to the tragedy and tension of the previous two acts. It constitutes a revelation of a new world, and the majority of its numbers are devoted to orienting the viewer to the prosperity of Carthage and the majesty of Queen Dido. The feeling of uncomplicated happiness that is present in the prosperous nation at peace is put in high relief because of its juxtaposition to the atmosphere of siege and battle of the two Trojan acts. With the exception of the militaristic finale, the tempi in this act generally keep to a moderate
pattern, as befits a peaceful setting.

The opening number is rather lively but is succeeded by the "Chant National," which is specified *Maestoso non troppo lento*. The three processional dances maintain the majestic, stately tone. Similarly, the three succeeding numbers are at a moderate tempo, the third one being the "Marche Troyenne" (No. 26), which, in its pathetic unfolding in the minor mode and at a slower pace than the original, gives us a glimpse of the sadness yet to come.

In the finale (No. 28), a burst of energy at an *Allegro assai et agitato* tempo provides contrast to the rest of the act and allows for a rousing conclusion to the act. The military incitement of Aeneas vitalizes the Carthaginians and, joined by the band of Trojans, they request arms to help Aeneas fight the Numidian invaders.

Act IV, the heart of the love story, is dominated by sensuous music that achieves a slowing down of the flow of energy. The central number, the third ballet, is the only exception.

The first four numbers of the act are rather slow, although the opening tableau, "Chasse Royale et Orage" (No. 29), contains fast passages as well, resulting in striking differences of tempi being created within the piece itself. The tempi of the three ballets increase successively, with the third one, an *Allegro vivace*, 
constituting the contrast in the otherwise gentle flow of the tempo of this lyrical act.

The four final numbers unfold in rather slow tempi, and all but the first embody a sensual atmosphere. Here the dramatic development has become almost static, with an undertone of uncertain expectation. Although the audience is aware that the idyllic state cannot last indefinitely, Mercury's sudden appearance at the conclusion of the act rudely shatters the stillness and peace of the night.

Act V begins quietly, but soon the opera begins hurtling towards its great climax. Two succeeding lines of development, culminating in Aeneas's departure and in Dido's suicide, conclude in this act. Each of the climactic points unfolds from an unhurried beginning to peak in a very fast tempo. The mood of the act becomes increasingly excited, with the concentration of emotions and tempo reaching breakneck speed in the penultimate number (No. 51), in which the Carthaginians register confusion and despair about the self-inflicted wound of their Queen.

The act opens with Hylas's nostalgic song of homesickness, sung in a moderate tempo. This is followed by Panthus's recitative, "Preparez tout" (No. 39); the excitement grows as the Trojan officers express alarm that each succeeding day the gods grow angrier. The tempo
subsides to a moderate speed for the contrasting depiction of two sentries complaining that they have to leave Carthage. This mundane repartee brings relief for a moment, but the tension increases at Aeneas’s expression of consternation and display of irresoluteness. He realizes that Dido knows that he plans to abandon her, and he is torn by conflicting emotions. When his thoughts about the Queen become tender, the tempo slows down, but the number concludes Allegro agitato with his decision to meet her just once more. The fast tempo depicts his highly emotional state of mind, as he experiences both great excitement and self-reproach for what he is about to do.

A sudden contrast is effected by the slow, ominous tempo of the succeeding number (No. 42), in which the spirits issue their final terrifying warning. This dreadful communication shocks Aeneas into remorse, and he decides to pursue his duty. In the ensuing number, a tempo of Allegro assai reflects his firmness, resolution, and haste to depart for Italy to accomplish his mission.

Dido’s emotional confrontation with Aeneas (No. 44) is also taken in a fast tempo, Allegro agitato, and his only resistance is a passionate declaration of love, delivered Allegro con fuoco. The Trojans’ cries of “Italy!” as Aeneas boards the ship are designated Allegro assai. The Trojan March, in its original tempo, constitutes the first climax.
The high tension and overwhelming display of emotions of the first tableau need relief, and the tempo slows to *Andante non troppo lento* in the first number of the second tableau, the scene in which Dido entreats her sister to beg Aeneas to stay (No. 45). Dido has been trampled down and, devoid of any remaining vestiges of pride, has been reduced to a servile creature begging for a few days' respite.

The two numbers that follow this sad demonstration of human frailty are written in an *Allegro assai* tempo and are charged with feeling. The report that the Trojan fleet is at sea causes divergent reactions in Dido. Her varied responses of astonishment, fury, revenge and, finally, submission are expressed through many changes of tempo. Her decision to die crystallizes in the final measures of "En mer, voyez!" (No. 46), and in the monologue "Je vais mourir" (No. 47), she expresses her intention. After the fast instrumental introduction, the monologue progresses through constantly changing tempi, depicting a mind struggling with the enormity and finality of the decision just reached. The tempo, which oscillates between *Andante* and *Moderato*, is so unstable that some of the changes occur after a single measure. In the final number of this tableau, the tempo subsides to *Adagio, avec solennité*. In a bittersweet song, Dido revives the past by recalling the happy moments she shared with Aeneas.
The suspense builds again in the third and final tableau. The dignified "Cérémonie funèbre" (No. 49) is given in a moderate tempo, and the tension gains momentum in the succeeding number, Dido's final scene, "Pluton semble" (No. 50). The climax is reached in the penultimate number, the chorus "Au secours" (No. 51). With shock, the Carthaginians comprehend the enormity of Dido's deed. Their utter confusion is signified by the Allegro vivace tempo and by a profusion of dissonances. The opera is brought to a close with the resounding strains of the dignified, majestic, and energetic Trojan March, combined in the finale with the Carthaginian imprecation on the Trojan people.

Berlioz organized the dramatic structure of Les Troyens with great care. He intentionally utilized Shakespearean techniques of dramatic construction, such as contrasts of mood and pace, and rapid shifts of scene at moments of strong action. His application of the Shakespearean method of balancing disparate scenes against each other can be seen at all levels of the opera, in both the libretto and the music.

Berlioz was aware that application of the bard's techniques might create obstacles to production of his opera. Despite recognized dangers, he remained true to his ideals. Upon completion of the opera, Berlioz wrote
with unerring certainty: "It is grand and powerful and, for all the apparent complexity of means, quite straightforward." 26
Notes: Chapter III


2 Ibid., p. 97.

3 Ibid.


6 The Unities, based on a misreading of Aristotle, were initially defined by the Italian critic Castelvetro in his *Poetica* (1570):

The time of the representation and that of the action represented must be exactly coincident . . . and the scene of the action must be constant, being not merely restricted to one city or house, but indeed to that one place alone which could be visible to one person. . . .

It was Aristotle's opinion that the plot of tragedy and comedy ought to comprise one action only, or two whose interdependence makes them one, and ought rather to concern one person than a race of people.


8 See above, Chapter II, pp. 32-33.


14 Berlioz, *A Selection from His Letters*, p. 79.

15 Libretto, I/3/4. All references to the libretto of *Les Troyens* are to the French libretto and its English translation reproduced in the booklet for Berlioz, *Les Troyens* (Philips 6709 002). Citations refer to Act/Number/Scene; page numbers are the author's and begin with the first page of the libretto (Side 1: ACT ONE).

16 Ibid., I/11/8.

17 Ibid., II/12/9.

18 Ibid., III/24/16.

19 The "drive to Italy" theme that pervades the opera can be seen as a metaphor for one trend in early Romanticism. The early Romantics, from Goethe onward, considered Italy a cultural mecca and a prime goal of their pursuits.

20 Ibid., II/15/11.

21 Ibid., IV/30/21.

22 Ibid., V/52/34.

23 See Chapter V for a detailed discussion of this rhythm and its various appearances.


CHAPTER IV

CHARACTERIZATION

Upon completion of Les Troyens, Berlioz wrote a letter to the Princess Sayn-Wittgenstein in which he related his extraordinary identification with his characters:

... As for the principal object of the work, the musical rendering of the characters and the expression of their feelings and passions, this was from the beginning the easiest part of my task. I have passed my life with this race of demi-gods; it seems to me that they must have known me, so well do I know them...

Berlioz identified particularly with his two heroines, who fired his love and inspiration: the clairvoyant Cassandra and the regal Dido, women of both heroic despair and grand passions. Jacques Barzun notes that Berlioz's "Cassandra and Dido rank with the greatest of poetic creations, distinct from all models and from each other in the constant play of mood within passion. Their words modulate as swiftly and aptly as the music, and Berlioz emerges as a dramatic psychologist who equals Mozart and holds his own with every first-rate librettist."^2

The unity and continuity of Les Troyens can be found first in Berlioz's music, the topic of the following
chapter, and next in the coherence and dramatic truthfulness of the major characters' roles. Three stand out: Aeneas, who is present throughout the opera; Cassandra, who dominates the first two acts; and Dido, Berlioz's favorite, whose tragic love for Aeneas dominates the final three acts and the opera as a whole.

The character of Cassandra was fashioned by Berlioz from the merest hint in the *Aeneid*. Blessed and cursed with the ability to foresee the future, she tries in vain to warn the rejoicing Trojans that their city is destined to be destroyed. Cassandra, like Aeneas, has been charged with a public duty that she cannot escape, even though she knows that she is destined to fail. Berlioz strengthened the parallel with Aeneas by adding love to Cassandra's dilemma, a dimension that is not present in Virgil's portrait. Cassandra introduces the conflict of love and duty in the opera, a conflict experienced by each of the other two major characters as well.

Berlioz dramatized Cassandra's first appearance in the opera through the use of special orchestration. The opening chorus of the Trojan mob is scored for only wind instruments, thus allowing the striking contrast of bowed strings in "Les Grecs ont disparu" (No. 2) to enhance Cassandra's entrance. The composer wrote no overture to *Les Troyens* because he felt that the use of
strings before Cassandra's entrance would ruin the effect he wanted.

The reason that prevented me writing an overture is an orchestrator's reason. During the crowd scenes at the beginning, the Trojan mob is accompanied solely by the wind (woodwind); the strings remain idle and do not make an entry until the moment when Cassandra first speaks. It is a special effect which would have been ruined by an overture; because I would not have been able to do without the strings. And then there is so much music already!  

Berlioz's use of orchestration is ingenious. The high pitch of the opening chorus, in its scoring for winds, portrays the Trojans' hollow joy. Against this hectic lightness, Cassandra's rapidly rising scale motif (Ex. 1A) is introduced by the contrasting heaviness of the strings. Her upward rushing scale is the closest thing to a personal motive in the opera, and its introduction by the strings gives it the sense of being an ominous commentary on Cassandra's sense of impending doom.

Ex. 1A. Act I, No. 2, mm. 1-2, p. 35.  

Later in the same number (No. 2), the scale returns in c\textsuperscript{b} and is played by the winds one beat after the strings, thus intensifying the feeling of impending disaster (Ex. 1B).

Near the end of Act II, the scale appears again
as Cassandra enters the Temple of Vesta-Cybele (No. 15, m. 1, p. 245). Subsequently, as Cassandra tries to convince the Trojan women to uphold their honor by committing suicide, a similar scale is heard (Ex. 1C).

Cassandra's scale occurs also in the Carthaginian portion of the opera. At an early stage of composition, Berlioz had the ghosts of Cassandra and Hector appear at the end of the love duet. Although Cassandra and Hector were later replaced by Mercury, Berlioz left the upward rushing scale (Ex. 1D). 5

The Cassandra of Act I is a frantic, hysterical creature, driven almost insane by her clairvoyance—even
in her long scene with Corebus her mood never softens. Corebus sings of the peace of nature, but after Cassandra's horrifying vision of a river of blood, all of his words are ineffective. Corebus's music, almost all in triple meter, is lyrical and soothing. Cassandra's replies, however, are tense and emotional, built out of dotted rhythms, leaps, and predominantly descending scale passages encompassing fourths and diminished fifths, all of which are accompanied by dotted rhythms and rapidly rising scales.

By the end of Act II, Cassandra has become a very different character--her hysteria has been replaced by a resigned commitment to her duty. She is the assured leader of the Trojan women, and her heroism in this act is starkly underscored by her mania in the first act. Her dedication to her obligation triumphs over the heart-rending losses of her city and her beloved. Cassandra's new composed demeanor is reflected musically by a flowing, lyrical melodic line and an accompaniment of quarter- and eighth-note rhythms.

Dido, in contrast, experiences the same dilemma, and suffers the same fate, but her character development reverses the pattern set by Cassandra. Dido's melodies best reflect her changes of outlook during the course of the last three acts. Five numbers may be presented as typical of different stages of the evolution of her character.
Dido's first aria, "Chers Tyriens" (No. 19), unfolds in a diatonic and florid melody. It is lyrical and full of movement, evoking a feeling of tranquillity following the tragedy of Cassandra. Berlioz amplified Dido's opening lines with warm expressiveness in the violins, thus depicting Dido as a proud, confident queen, complete in the fulfillment of her duties.

Ex. 2. Act III, No. 19, mm. 32-36, p. 518.

The second melody, which introduces the quintet "Tout conspire" (No. 35), reveals Dido as a woman in love. The range is only a major tenth, and few leaps disturb the stepwise motion and reiterated sustained notes. The legato melodic line of the central section, with its long note values and hovering shape, creates the image of a
woman happily in love and completely absorbed with Aeneas.

Ex. 3. Act IV, No. 35, mm. 56-75, pp. 558-59.

The duet of the fifth act, "Errante sur tes pas" (No. 44), provides the third illustration of the development of Dido's character. A changed woman is portrayed, and the entire melodic line reflects the metamorphosis. In the opening section the many reiterated notes alternate with great leaps, and the melody is interspersed with rests, creating a breathless effect (Ex. 4A). Dido's shocked disbelief is graphically depicted in her stunned questioning of Aeneas (Ex. 4B). The melody becomes increasingly chromatic, and the large leaps of the opening are replaced in the middle section with repeated notes gradually rising in semitones as Dido struggles to gain Aeneas's sympathy. Dido's part ends with a terrible curse expressed in a descending $B^b$ minor scale (Ex. 4C).
Dido's monologue, "Je vais mourir" (No. 47), embodies her resolution to die. Her determination is reflected in a melody that has become chordal, with many of the notes outlining triads (Ex. 5A). Dido's overwhelming grief is depicted musically by a sharp melodic descent at her admission that her soul is being forced down to "everlasting night," immediately followed by an upward leap of a minor ninth at her cry of anguish, "Vénus! rends-moi ton fils!" (Venus, give me back your son). Her final acquiescence is portrayed by a downward leap of a major ninth followed by descending chordal tones outlining a diminished fifth triad that rises a
semitone to the tonic, thus ending the monologue (Ex. 5B).

Ex. 5A. Act V, No. 47, mm. 21-22, p. 706.
5B. Act V, No. 47, mm. 37-54, pp. 707-708.

In this number, the semi-chromatic language progresses to an almost completely chromatic one, with rapid stepwise motion and repeated notes alternating with sharp stepwise descents and great leaps. Berlioz writes of this monologue:

Of all the passionately sad music that I have ever written, I know of none to compare with Dido's in this passage and the aria which follows, except for Cassandra's in parts of The Capture of Troy . . .

Dido's final scene, "Pluton semble" (No. 50),
embodies the disintegration of her personality when she loses her self-control near the end of the number. The scene opens with Dido’s reconciliation with her death, conveyed in a descending chromatic line interspersed with rests and supported by diminished harmonies. The final measures of this number, however, display a change of disposition. Dido’s slightly hysterical persona is conveyed by a slowly rising chromatic melody filled with rapid reiterations and succeeded by descending lines interspersed with rests. Large ascending leaps precede each of the descending lines, resulting in a melodic contour filled with quick changes of direction (Ex. 6).

Ex. 6. Act V, No. 50, mm. 55-62, pp. 734-36.

Dido has seen into the future and foretells the coming of an avenger, Hannibal. Until this number, she was the only one of the three main characters who was not encumbered with a vision of what was to be. She was therefore free to express her spontaneous emotions rather than having to pattern her behavior according to a perception of destiny.
Given the choice of love and duty, she alone, of the three primary characters, chose love.

In the *Aeneid*, Dido and Aeneas are both tools of the gods. Aeneas is destined to found Rome, and Dido is a pawn used by Juno and Venus to thwart that fate. Although Virgil develops his portrait of Dido with deep insight and human sympathy, he criticizes her for what he views as her weakness of the flesh. According to the poet, Aeneas's virtue lies in his ability to resist the passion that destroys Dido and to pursue his destiny in Italy.

Berlioz's Dido and Aeneas are different, more deeply human, creatures. No gods or goddesses are necessary to trick them into love; and when they do fall in love, it is not shameful but is tender and pure. Aeneas is aware of his destiny, but he is also much more aware than Virgil's hero of the resultant cost in human suffering.

Virgil's Aeneas often appears to suffer more from bad memory than from actual uncertainty. The Trojan hero falls in love with Dido but is still fully capable of discarding his personal attachment without remorse when Mercury reminds him of his destiny. In the *Aeneid*, Aeneas is a man of public destiny, who is more than willing to move ahead to conquer politically at the expense of his humanity.
Berlioz's Aeneas, however, faces a much more well-defined predicament. Of all the characters in *Les Troyens*, Aeneas most explicitly suffers from the dilemma of love and duty. Even after Mercury's command—which Virgil's hero promptly obeys—Berlioz gives his Aeneas an introspective monologue in which to consider his fate. Here, at Aeneas's greatest moment of indecision, is the merging of the contrasting lines of force, represented by Cassandra on one side and Dido on the other.

Aeneas's solo scene, "Inutiles regrets!" (No. 41), presents the classic conflict of love and duty. The number opens with the Trojan's realization that he must leave Carthage—short phrases interspersed with long pauses give the impression of a man still stunned with disbelief. As he justifies to himself the noble reasons for his departure, his lines become more expansive. The melodic line frequently moves chromatically and triadically as he reviews his promised heroic fate (Ex. 7A).

His dread of saying farewell to Dido is portrayed in a tender but intense *Andante* section. Filled with remorse, his anguish is musically conveyed by means of diminished and minor harmonies (Ex. 7B). The section ends with a disarming major cadence, and the *Allegro* tempo returns to seal his determination to see her once again. A firm major cadence concludes the number, but immediately, in an extreme and sudden contrast of tonality
and sonority, the shades of Priam, Corebus, Hector, and Cassandra materialize to remind Aeneas of his heroic destiny (No. 42). From this point onward, he no longer wavers. To the sound of the Trojan March in dotted rhythms, Aeneas awakens his men and prepares to leave Carthage (No. 43). Even a subsequent encounter with Dido, "Errante sur tes pas" (No. 44), cannot convince him to delay any longer. At the sound of the Trojan March he trembles and, after a curse from Dido, departs with his fleet for Italy.

Berlioz's Aeneas, in his decision to leave Dido, suffers much more than Virgil's hero. Berlioz emphasizes
the irony of Aeneas's public glory to the very end of
the opera. In the last tableau of Les Troyens, Berlioz
has us listen, not to Aeneas, but to Dido, who in the
midst of her agony, as she remembers the lover whom she
will never see again, sings once more the haunting melody
of the love duet she sang with Aeneas in Act IV. In
his musical and dramatic portraits, Berlioz shows us
the cost required for a noble destiny to be fulfilled.
Notes: Chapter IV


4 All music references are to *Les Troyens*, New Berlioz Edition (Bärenreiter), vol. II.


CHAPTER V

MUSICAL UNITY

Discussion of primarily musical factors in Les Troyens will cover only one aspect: the unifying properties of certain melodic or rhythmic themes. Although many other musical aspects of the opera could be discussed—such as harmony, form, tonality, orchestration—melodic and rhythmic unifying elements contribute most directly to the dramatic impetus of the opera. These devices are of two types: recurring themes and motifs, such as the Trojan March and cries of "Italy!"; and musical reminders, both melodic and rhythmic, associated with the primary dramatic unifying idea of the opera, fate.

Dramatic and musical unity is created throughout the opera by thematic relationship and recall. The most important theme is the Trojan March, the musical representation of the epic theme of destiny. The melody of the Trojan March appears four times, and a rhythmic variation of the fanfare appears once.

The first time the Trojan March is played (I/11), it highlights the entry of the Trojan horse into the city. The Trojans, unaware of the Greeks' treachery, are
joyous and proud. The second occurrence of the March, this time in the minor mode, accompanies the arrival of Aeneas and his band of men at Carthage (III/26). The third manifestation, again in major and this time in a rhythmic variation, marks the departure of the Trojans from Carthage (V/43-44). Another rhythmic variation of the fanfare only is encountered in "Tous ne periront" (II/15), when Cassandra sees a vision of the new Troy that will arise in Italy. The fourth and final appearance, again in the major mode, is in the finale of the opera (V/52), as part of the apotheosis of Rome. It is dramatically appropriate that the Trojan March, which represents the theme of destiny, play a large part in this finale, which so poignantly depicts the tragedy of the triumph of duty over love.

In each of its four iterations, the Trojan March theme is varied, thus effectively emphasizing its dramatic use. Each time it occurs, it is in either Bb major or Bb minor; thus return to the Bb tonality gives the opera a feeling of tonal unity.

The four forms of the March theme are given in Example 8. In addition, the rhythmic variation of the fanfare found in No. 15 is included for comparison (Ex. 8E).

In its original form (Ex. 8A), the March is in the key of Bb major. The theme is characterized by triplets and by the alternation of Db and Bb. This shifting
between major and minor shadings conveys the idea of conflicting forces being brought to bear on the achievement of the majestic and noble Trojan destiny.

Ex. 8A. Act I, No. 11, mm. 8-16, p. 170.
8B. Act III, No. 26, mm. 4-12, pp. 389-90.
8C. Act V, No. 43, mm. 3-15, pp. 645-46.
Ex. 8D. Act V, No. 52, mm. 8-16, pp. 744-76.
8E. Act II, No. 15, mm. 12-14, pp. 246-47.

Chorus: Haïne éternelle à la race d’É-

né-e! Haïne éternelle à la race É-

bre archarné e Pecl-pité à jamais nos fils eme-

Its second appearance, in Act III, is shown in
Example 8B. Here the theme accompanies the arrival of
the remnants of the Trojan army at Dido's court. The dramatic situation is a great contrast to the feeling of jubilation present when the Trojans triumphantly dragged the horse into their city. Berlioz labeled this occurrence of the March "Marche troyenne dans le mode triste." The minor mode reflects the adverse circumstances of the Trojans' arrival in Carthage and emphasizes their sudden change in fortune. In addition, the use of the minor mode alerts the listener to the potential unhappiness for Carthage that may result from the Trojan visit. The composer further emphasizes the forlorn effect of the March by removing the triplets that were present in the original form and using in their place a more severe-sounding dotted rhythm.

Berlioz uses the Trojan March for the third time in the fifth act, in the scene surrounding the events of the Trojan departure from Carthage. A rhythmic variation of the March theme appears first in "Debout Troyens" (V/43), where it is presented in an energetic and determined dotted rhythm (Ex. 86), as Aeneas awakens the Trojans and commands them to prepare to sail. In the succeeding number (No. 44), Dido arrives. Her initial anger turns to sadness, and Aeneas begs her forgiveness. He explains to her that he loves her and that only the divine command of the gods could compel him to leave. At this point (mm. 43-46), the fanfare of the Trojan March, in its original form, is heard.
Berlioz utilizes the theme as the impetus for a dramatic shift. Dido’s anger returns as she sees Aeneas’s reaction to the March, and she curses the gods and Aeneas as she leaves. After her departure, and cries of “Italy!,” the theme is heard in its original form as the Trojans prepare to set sail (mm. 182-91).

The strains of the Trojan March are heard for the last time in the finale of Act V. Here it exists in the original version (see Ex. 8A), but this time it is ironically combined with the Carthaginian people’s song of hatred for the Trojans (Ex. 8D, lower line).

In the fourth number of the opera, “Marche et Hymne,” the music of the March is foreshadowed. This processional music (Ex. 9), during which the Trojans offer thanks to the gods for having saved Troy, suggests the Trojan March in both its melodic contour and in its shift between the major and minor modes.

Ex. 9. Act I, No. 4, mm. 2-10, pp. 95-96.
Also of note is the use of a contrasting motif that is used with the March theme (Ex. 10).

Ex. 10. Act I, No. 11, mm. 88-89, p. 179.

This motif is heard twice in conjunction with the Trojan March—in Act I (No. 11) and in the finale of Act V (No. 52). In addition to its appearances with the March theme, the motif also is found in the opening chorus of Act I in the form shown in Example 10. Its use, even without combination with the March theme, provides an additional level of musical unity by linking the opening and closing numbers of the opera (Nos. 1 and 52).

The Trojan March theme is presented in a variety of treatments: rhythmically varied, combined with other themes or motifs, and separated into segments to be used in a variety of ways. The predominant musical unification of the opera can be found in the musical references to the Trojan March that appear from the very beginning of the opera to the conclusion.

A second theme is closely associated with the Carthaginian half of the opera. Linked with the words "Gloire à Didon," it occurs three times; it appears a fourth time without the words. The melody is first
encountered in Act III (No. 18), immediately after the
opening chorus of that act. The stirring national anthem
("Chant national") accompanies a procession of Queen Dido
and her court and is followed by the people's homage to
her as she praises them for their achievements. The
anthem is in an expansive 3/2 meter with a walking quarter-
ote accompaniment, which gives it a noble and patriotic
grandeur (Ex. 11A).

Ex. 11A. Act III, No. 18, mm. 7-8, p. 308.
11B. Act III, No. 18, mm. 77-79, pp. 326-27.
11C. Act IV, No. 32, mm. 8-9, p. 498.
The theme is found again in the succeeding number, "Chers Tyriens" (No. 19). This aria of Dido's is in ABA form, and the "Gloire à Didon" theme is sung by the Carthaginian people in the middle section of the aria. Here it is almost twice as fast as before. A dotted rhythm has replaced the smooth eighth-note rhythm of the original, and the accompaniment has been changed from even quarter notes to triplets on a monotone B♭ (Ex. 11B).

After the presentation of rewards to the workers, the "Gloire à Didon" theme, in a version similar to the original, is heard a third time (No. 23, m. 20, p. 356). The three manifestations of this theme effectively mold the group of numbers they span (Nos. 18-23) into a musical unit. The original version of the "Gloire à Didon" theme is found in the two outside numbers, Nos. 18 and 23. Both of these appearances are in the key of G major. The theme is sounded again, this time slightly varied and in the key of B♭ major, in the middle section of an aria that is in the middle of the two framing presentations.

The theme occurs one last time, but now without accompanying words; it is played as Dido and Aeneas enter for ballet entertainment (IV/32). Berlioz called this number "Marche pour l'entrée de la Reine, sur le thème du chant national." The change in the dramatic situation since the theme was first heard in No. 18 is reflected in the music, which illustrates the lovesick
Dido's attitude toward her duties to her people. The tempo of the march is roughly the same as it was in its first appearance, but its limpid quality underscores a totally different atmosphere in the court (Ex. 11c). The melody is played by the upper wind instruments--flutes, oboes, and clarinets--and is accompanied by harp harmonics and running eighth-notes in the violins. The music exemplifies the fact that Dido has abandoned her concerns about the progress Carthage was making and is now concerned only about her love for Aeneas.

The most poignant example of melodic recall occurs in Act V, in Dido's aria "Adieu, fière cité" (No. 48). In this aria (Ex. 12A), Dido sings the same melodic line that Aeneas sang in their love duet, "Nuit d'ivresse" (No. 37), which closed Act IV (Ex. 12B).

Ex. 12A. Act V, No. 48, mm. 27-30, pp. 711-12.
12B. Act IV, No. 37, mm. 90-93, p. 584.

\[
\begin{align*}
&Dido: \quad \text{Aux nuits d'ivresse et d'exalta-} \\
&B: \quad \text{se in-fi-ni-e,} \\
&Aeneas: \quad \text{Ô nuit d'ivresse et d'ex-} \\
&\quad \text{ta-se in-fi-ni-e!}
\end{align*}
\]

In the melodic recall in Dido's aria, Berlioz changed the words "Ô nuit" of the duet to "Aux nuits" in order to integrate the line grammatically. Although "Ô nuits" and
"Aux nuits" have different meanings, they are pronounced the same way, so the sound of the two lines of text is the same.

Ô nuit d'ivresse et d'extase infinie!
Oh night of boundless ecstasy and rapture.²

Adieu, beau ciel d'Afrique, astres que j'admirei
Aux nuits d'ivresse et d'extase infinie;

Farewell, fair skies of Africa, stars I gazed on in wonder
On those nights of boundless ecstasy and rapture--³

In Les Troyens Berlioz employed a variety of musical and dramatic means to keep the pervading theme of destiny uppermost in the viewer's mind. Two musical devices are consistently associated with the idea of fate: a recurring pulsating rhythm and melodic chromaticism. In addition, cries of "Italy!," always in a consistent rhythmic pattern, are heard throughout the opera.

The pulsating rhythm occurs in several forms, in part because of the differences inherent in duple and triple meter. The rhythm is found solely in the orchestra, never in the vocal lines. Toward the end of the opera, as Aeneas's inevitable destiny draws nearer, the rhythm becomes more and more insistent.

In its first manifestation, the rhythm accompanies the opening chorus of joyous Trojans (Ex. 13A). Later in the same chorus, in the closing section, the rhythm appears again, this time in a slightly different presentation (Ex.
13B). Both iterations of the rhythm are used as an accompaniment to a syncopated melody and upon first hearing do not carry a strong connotation of fate. Through later repetitions Berlioz builds an association of the pattern with the idea of fate. Perhaps this provides an example of what Jacques Barzun meant when he wrote that "... Les Troyens is emphatically one of those works which have to be thoroughly known to be enjoyed throughout; its beauties do not take possession of the mind all at once but require to be re-cognized [sic]."

The rhythmic pattern is found next in the succeeding number, "Malheureux Roi" (No. 2). The figure is again in its simple form but is notated differently (Ex. 13C). In its occurrence in the middle part of Cassandra's aria, the connection with fate is clear. Cassandra, singing about her fiancé Corebus, is mourning the fact that their marriage will never take place. She knows the Trojan destiny, and she knows that she must submit to her fate.

In the octet "Châtiment effroyable!" (No. 8), the figure appears again, this time in the sixteenth-note notation shown in Example 13C. This rhythm underscores the Trojans' reaction of horror at the punishment suffered by Laocoön. The figure is found with each iteration of the line "Le sang s'est gelé dans mon coeur" (My blood freezes in my veins). Its first statement is in the violas (m. 11, p. 130), then in the second violins (mm. 21-
Ex. 13A. Act I, No. 1, mm. 170-72, p. 24.
13B. Act I, No. 1, mm. 250-52, p. 33.
13C. Act I, No. 2, m. 78, p. 42.
13D. Act II, No. 12, mm. 84-86, p. 211.

A

B

C

D

22, pp. 132-33), and finally in the cellos and basses (m. 31, p. 135).

A variation of the rhythm is found as the ghost of Hector approaches Aeneas's bed at the beginning of Act II (Ex. 13D). When Aeneas first speaks to Hector (No. 12, mm. 92-105, pp. 213-15), the speed of the figure increases to the sixteenth-note pattern indicated in Example 13C. The references to the Trojan fate in these two instances are obvious.

The next visitation of ghosts (V/42; mm. 16-18, pp. 641-42) is marked by the same rhythm, again in the original form shown in Example 13A. The rhythm is also
heard in its initial form when another supernatural being, the god Cupid disguised as Ascanius, removes Dido's wedding ring from her finger in Act IV (No. 35, m. 75, p. 559).

In Act V, the rhythmic figure occurs several times. It is found at many points during the long scene between Dido and Aeneas and accompanies Dido's exit at the end of "Adieu, fière cité." The ultimate presentation of the pulsating fate rhythm occurs in the final scene before Dido's suicide. It is first observed, in the form shown in Example 13C, accompanying the arrival of the priests carrying the altars (No. 50, mm. 17-21, and m. 24, pp. 728-29). Later in the same number (m. 40, p. 731), when Dido falls sobbing onto the bed at the sight of Aeneas's armor, the figure is heard for the last time. This final manifestation has another dimension. Combined with the rhythm found in the violins is the element of pitch change (Ex. 14), thus elevating the rhythm to the level of a thematic motif.


This pulsating rhythmic pattern, after its initial appearance, occurs throughout the opera as a unifying reminder of the ever-present fate to which everything
and everyone must succumb.

Another means Berlioz used to keep the idea of the Trojan fate uppermost in the mind of the viewer is melodic chromaticism. A segment of a chromatic scale, either ascending or descending, is used in numerous places throughout the opera to represent musically the idea of fate. A few passages will be presented as examples.

In her opening recitative, "Les Grecs ont disparu!" (Ex. 15A), Cassandra relates that she has seen the ghost of Hector on the walls of Troy. Her ascending chromatic passage is balanced in Act II when the shade of Hector sings a long, slow, descending chromatic scale, the most extended chromatic scale in the opera. Hector warns Aeneas to leave Troy, urging him to flee to Italy where he is fated to found a new empire and die a hero's death. This disclosure is sung to twenty-eight measures of descending chromatic scale, covering the range of an octave (Ex. 15B).

The opening of the Royal Hunt and Storm (Ex. 15C),

L'ombre d'Hector: Ah! fui, fils de Vénus! l'ennemi tient nos murs!

De son faîte le Voir en fièvre s'écrase!

Roule des temples au palais ses tombants impairs... Nous

Eux respirer asseoir pour sauver sa patrie... Sans l'arrêt du destin.

Perme te couvrir ses enfants et ses dieux... Va... chercher l'Italie...

Où portez poutre renascent, après avoir longtemps erré sur l'onde, Tu dois fortifier un empire puissant,

Dans l'avenir dominateur du monde Où la mort de héros... L'endure.
although not entirely chromatic, recalls chromatic passages that have been heard earlier. It is impossible for Dido and Aeneas to escape their fate, even for a short time.

After Aeneas leaves Carthage, Dido realizes that her life cannot go on; it is irreversibly entwined with the fate of Aeneas and the Trojans. As she prepares to throw reminders of Aeneas onto the fire, she resigns herself to her fate in a descending chromatic line (Ex. 15D). Throughout the opera, ascending and descending chromatic passages are present to remind the listener that ultimately fate controls what befalls the characters.
The most conspicuous technique deployed to ensure that the audience remain constantly aware of the Trojan destiny is the use throughout of cries of "Italy!" The exclamations usually appear in groups of two or three; and they consist of four-note motifs in a short-short-long-short pattern, which is determined by the accent of the French word Italie. The four notes occur on the same pitch each time, but that pitch varies throughout the opera. The motif, which is not varied like the other themes and patterns in the opera, is distinctive in its constant rhythmic insistence. It, like the call of destiny, does not change. The motif, as sung by Mercury at the end of Act IV, is shown in Example 16.

Ex. 16. Act IV, No. 37, mm. 139-42, p. 589.

Calls of "Italy!" occur only once in the Trojan half of the opera. They are sung by the Trojan women just before they commit suicide at the very end of Act II (No. 16, mm. 263-67, p. 292), and they provide an additional musical link to the Carthaginian acts.

Exclamations end both the first and second tableaux of Act IV. At the end of the Royal Hunt and Storm (No. 29), the chorus sings "Italy!" several times, reminding the listener of Aeneas's destiny at the height of his and
Dido’s passion. Cries of "Italy!" again interrupt a scene dominated by love, when Mercury appears at the end of the love duet with three iterations of Aeneas’s fated destination (No. 37, mm. 139-42, p. 589).

Just before the Trojans leave Carthage, the fateful cry is heard for the final time. It is found early in the scene, sung first by Aeneas and then by the chorus (V/43; mm. 57-77, pp. 651-54). This is the first time that Aeneas has uttered the call; it is evident he plans to continue toward his destiny. He and the chorus repeat it at the end of the scene (No. 44, mm. 174-83, pp. 674-75); the glory to which the Trojans had aspired since the first act at last holds the promise of fulfillment.

It is essential to stress the oneness of Berlioz’s conception of the opera and to view Les Troyens in its entirety as a single, five-act grand opera. The integrity of the work when viewed as a whole is evident both in the libretto and in the music. The dramatic structure and unity of the libretto were shown in Chapter III. With this unity as a foundation, a musical web emerges, into which certain key elements have been woven. The persistence of the dramatic theme of destiny which compels Aeneas onward, driving him to abandon both Troy and Carthage, is represented musically by the insistent cry of "Italy!" that is heard at critical moments of decision in Acts II, IV, and V. The poignant theme of the love duet is recalled
by Dido at an emotionally charged moment later in the opera. Rhythmic and melodic reminders of fate return, sometimes in association with particular characters. Finally, the Trojan March theme, varied according to dramatic requirements, serves as a recurrent musical reminder of the Trojans' epic purpose. Berlioz's masterly efforts at both dramatic and musical unity attest to the conception of Les Troyens as a unified whole.
Notes: Chapter V

1 References are to Act/Number. All musical examples are from Les Troyens, Hector Berlioz: New Edition of the Complete Works, ed. Hugh MacDonald, 9 vols. (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1970), vol. II.

2 Libretto, IV/37/24. Citations refer to Act/Number/ Page; page numbers are the author's and begin with the first page of the libretto (Side 1; ACT ONE). All references to the libretto of Les Troyens are to the French libretto and its English translation reproduced in the booklet for Berlioz, Les Troyens (Philips 6709 002).

3 Ibid., V/48/32.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

Dramatic musical composition is a double art; it results from the association and intimate union of poetry and music. Melodic accents can, no doubt, have a special interest, a charm that is peculiar to themselves, which results from music alone; but their force is doubled if they are combined to express a noble passion, or a beautiful sentiment suggested by a poem worthy of the name; the two arts unified then reinforce each other.¹

In this statement Berlioz conveyed a significant part of his aesthetic doctrine. Within the operatic genre, music is most effective when it faithfully reflects and develops the dramatic ideas that are presented in the libretto. While Berlioz recognized the special quality that music itself possesses, he maintained that the value and impact of this special quality is increased twofold when it combines its direction and force with that of the dramatic expression inherent in a worthwhile libretto.

For Berlioz, opera began with the drama. The libretto provided the events, moods, and emotions that the composer had to illustrate truthfully and enrich musically. The libretto did not merely supply a rather
insignificant text for a predominantly musical experience which combined voices with the orchestra—it controlled the development of the dramatic elements to which the music had to be intimately linked.

Les Troyens is Berlioz's masterpiece. In it one can find the embodiment of his aesthetic beliefs. The opera is the culmination of a lifetime of love for Virgil, the maturity of his understanding of Shakespeare, and the conviction that, above all else, music must be truthful.

Berlioz based his epic masterpiece on the Aeneid. But his tragic conception of the human need for love and his conviction that "nothing is real but feelings and passions"² led him to turn to Shakespeare for the dramatic essence of his opera. Shakespeare provided the motives for the wide array of emotions his characters felt—emotions he expressed convincingly in his music.

Berlioz developed his own unique solution to the problem of dramatic unity. He ignored the authority of the Unities and composed only the parts of the text that he considered suitable. He thus presented a series of tableaux on Shakespearean lines, requiring the audience to make the mental leap from one situation to another. He unified his music through a variety of means and shaped it to suit the words and dramatic action, but he never subordinated it to them.
In a letter to Princess Sayn-Wittgenstein, Berlioz described the challenge confronting him in the composition of his magnum opus:

To find the means to be expressive, true, without ceasing to be a musician, and to give in fact new means of action to the music, that is the problem. ³

In Les Troyens, Berlioz showed us the solution.
1 In a feuilleton of 26 March 1861, later reproduced in *A travers chants*, p. 120. Quoted in Howard Robert Cohen, "Berlioz on the Opera (1829-1849): A Study in Music Criticism" (Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1973), p. 24.


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