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Berlioz and the *Prix de Rome* of 1830

By PETER BLOOM

Dom Juan, mon maître, le plus grand scélérat que la terre ait jamais porté, un enragé, un chien, un diable, un Turc, un hérétique . . . *un vrai Sardanapale* . . . —Molière, *Dom Juan*, I, 1

AT THE END of July 1830 there was a violent revolution in Paris that changed the course of nineteenth-century French history. As the fighting spread through the streets of the capital, Hector Berlioz completed the cantata that won First Grand Prize in the annual competition sponsored by the Académie des Beaux-Arts of the Institut de France. Like the revolution, that competition, and that victory, colored much of Berlioz's subsequent career, we now realize, as the leading composer and the leading critic of his generation. Indeed Berlioz used the several works he composed for the competition (in 1830, and for those of earlier years, in 1827, 1828, and 1829) as sources for a number of later pieces; and he used the competition itself as the subject of a number of later critical essays.¹ With one exception

¹ Berlioz's main writings on the competition are as follows: "Académie des Beaux-Arts. Concours annuel de composition musicale," *L'Europe littéraire*, No. 45 (12 June 1833), 70–73; "Revue musicale," *Le Rénovateur*, II/185 (9 July 1833), 1–2, "Concours annuel de composition musicale," *L'Europe littéraire*, No. 61 (19 July 1833), 326–29; "Institut. Concours de Musique," *Gazette musicale de Paris*, I (2 February 1834), 35–38; "Concours annuel de composition musicale à l'Institut," *Revue et Gazette musicale*, III (19 June 1836), 203–206; "Séance publique de l'Institut," *Revue et Gazette musicale*, III (16 October 1836), 362–63; "Encore un mot sur le concours de composition musicale à l'Institut," *Revue et Gazette musicale*, III (23 October 1836), 370–73; *Voyage musicale en Allemagne et en Italie* (Paris, 1844), Chaps. 1–3; *Mémoires* (Paris, 1870), Chaps. 22, 23, 25, 29, 30.

The competition furthermore runs throughout Berlioz's critical writings as a kind of *idée fixe*. To give one example that must stand for many, in criticizing a symphony by Weber (and thus establishing the impartiality of his judgment about one of his favorite composers), Berlioz writes that its style "is flabby, its phraseology commonplace, its harmony vulgar, its instrumentation flat—so much so that on listening to it one would think that it had won the Grand Prize in composition in the competition at the Institute" (*Journal des débats*, 23 June 1835).

these essays are by no means identical, nor is there any reason they should have been: Berlioz often constructed parts of his books (and his compositions) from previously written material, and as a five-time participant in the annual ordeal, he was an expert on the contest and could have written several more articles about it without fear of repetition.

Berlioz's victory in the 1830 competition had great practical significance: it put him in favor with his family and—albeit momentarily—with his would-be in-laws, the family of Camille Moke; and it provided him with a “diploma, a certificate of ability, and it meant a degree of financial independence, almost affluence, for the next five years.”² Nevertheless the composer was skeptical of the whole enterprise: he thought the rules were absurdly narrow, that the texts were hopelessly old-fashioned, that the judges were monstrously incompetent, and that the manner of judgment was patently ridiculous.³ He therefore asserts that he eventually won a unanimous victory in the competition by writing a piece that was intentionally mediocre. Part of that piece, *Sardanapale* (never published, said to have been destroyed by Berlioz, and thus presumed lost), was discovered by Julien Tiersot, longtime librarian at the Conservatoire, in 1906. The fragmentary fourteen-page manuscript, containing only the final scene of the cantata—essentially a coda, which Berlioz added after the competition, for the public performance of the piece—had been hidden innocuously, unmarked and uncatalogued, at the back of the bound fragments of Berlioz's unfinished opera, *La Nonne sanglante*, and that is where the manuscript remains today.⁴

² *The Memoirs of Hector Berlioz*, trans. and ed. David Cairns (New York, 1975), p. 134. (This volume is hereafter cited as Cairns, *The Memoirs*.) Winners were exempted from military service, received a gold medal, travel expenses to Rome, and a stipend of 1200 francs per year while in Rome (for two years) and 3000 francs per year for the next three years. Winners in music also received free passes to the lyric theaters of Paris during their final two years in the French capital. See *Institut de France. Académie Royale des Beaux-Arts* (Paris, 1835), pp. 97–115.

³ The scribal copy of Berlioz's own 1827 cantata, *La Mort d'Orphée*, bears the often quoted, ironic inscription “Ouvrage déclaré *inexécutable* par la Section de Musique de l'Institut et exécuté à l'école royale de musique le 22 juillet 1828”—ironic because of the play on words, but also false, because the work was never performed in public. It should be pointed out that what the members of the music section actually said was that because Berlioz's piece was not susceptible to performance with piano accompaniment, it was withdrawn from the competition *by the author*, with the agreement of the Academy (“Le 4^e cantate [Berlioz's], n'étant pas susceptible d'être exécutée avec accompagnement de piano, a été retirée du concours par l'auteur, avec l'agrément de l'académie”). Archives de l'Académie des Beaux-Arts (henceforth “Beaux-Arts”), 1 H 2, 1 September 1827.

⁴ Bibliothèque nationale (henceforth B.N.), Musique, Rés. Vm² 178. On the

Because of Berlioz's extensive writings on the prize competition, many have been led to believe that our picture of it is complete. In fact there is a bit more to be said about the nature of the competition, the nature of the piece Berlioz wrote to win it, and the nature of the public reception that piece received, for in this case we have a blend of source materials, including the scores of Berlioz's competitors and some previously unpublished archival documents, that allows us to present a version not more amusing, but perhaps more complete, than those Berlioz has given us.

I

Entrants in the annual competition had only to be native-born or naturalized Frenchmen; they did not have to be students at the Conservatoire, nor was Berlioz enrolled there in the summer of 1826, when he entered the preliminary competition for the first time.⁵ In July of 1830 ten aspiring young composers signed up for the contest: Hector Berlioz, Ernest Déjazet, Antoine Elwart, Hypolite Gasse, Alphonse Gilbert, Pierre Lagrave, Victor Lefebure, Edouard Millaut, Alexandre Montfort, and Eugène-Prosper Prévost—all present or former students at the Conservatoire.⁶ That contest, which was officially supposed to consist of a counterpoint exercise at the twelfth in two and four parts, an exercise in quadruple counterpoint at the octave, and a four-voice vocal fugue with three subjects,⁷ led to the

music of the 1830 cantata, see Julien Tiersot, "Berlioziana," *Le Ménestrel*, LXXII, Nos. 34–39 (August–September, 1906), 263, 270–71, 278–79, 287, 295, 302–303; Tom Wotton, "An Unknown Score of Berlioz," *Music Review*, IV (1943), 224–28; A. E. F. Dickinson, "Berlioz' Rome Prize Works," *Music Review*, XXV (1964), 163–85; and Hugh Macdonald, "Berlioz's Self-Borrowings," *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association*, XCII (1965/66), 27–44.

⁵ Berlioz was inscribed as a student in Lesueur's composition class at the Conservatoire on 26 August 1826; he was inscribed as a student in Reicha's counterpoint class on 2 October 1826. The registers of the Conservatoire are preserved in Archives Nationales de la France (henceforth A.N.): see AJ³⁷ 10 (4); AJ³⁷ 150 (1) and (2); AJ³⁷ 352 (1).

Berlioz's qualifying fugue from 1826 is preserved in the Bibliothèque nationale, Mus., W 33 (10), along with those by C.-J. Paris (W. 33 [13]), P.-E. Bienaimé (11), J.-B. Guiraud (12), and A. Gilbert (2). These fugues are all built on the same subject, thus supplying us—since Paris won the prize in 1826 and did not compete again—with a date for all of them. Tiersot's date for Berlioz's fugue ("Berlioziana," p. 263) is thus in error.

⁶ Beaux-Arts, 5 E 20.

⁷ The regulations are printed in the program for the public prize-giving ceremony: "Séance publique annuelle du Samedi 30 Octobre 1830" (B.N., Mus., 4° B.816 [6]). I have located only two separate publications of the contest regulations: one, preserved

elimination of four of the original ten competitors (Déjazet, Elwart, Gasse, and Lagrave). The six who remained proceeded to the main event, the composition of a cantata for solo voice and orchestra based on Jean-François Gail's poem, *Sardanapale*.

The minutes of the meetings of the music section of the Académie des Beaux-Arts taken during the period of the *concours* modify and supplement Berlioz's various accounts of this part of the competition.⁸ On 14 July 1830 the music section (Boieldieu, Cherubini, Auber, Catel, Berton, Lesueur) met at the Institute and decided first, as always, that a competition would indeed take place; second, that six finalists would be chosen (in recent years there had been only four);⁹ and finally, that those six would be, in order, Montfort, Berlioz, Gilbert, Prévost, Lefebure, and Millaut. This ordering, one presumes, was based on the evaluation of the exercises from the preliminary competition.

Three days later, on 17 July, the music section met again and selected Gail's text, *Sardanapale*, for the cantata competition.¹⁰ This text was then inscribed by hand in the official register of the minutes of the music section. At that point the six final competitors were led into the assembly room: the text was read to them, and each, "under the eyes of the Academy and staff," as the minutes specify, then

with no call number in the Archives of the Académie des Beaux-Arts, is cited above in n. 2; another (from 1822) is preserved in B.N., Imprimés, V 117778. The 1822 publication specifies the three parts of the preliminary competition as printed in the text above. The 1835 publication requires a four-part fugue on a given subject and an accompaniment for a short given text. In his article on the competition of 23 October 1836 (see above, n. 1), Berlioz says quite definitely that these requirements were not fulfilled: "Je suis témoin que de 1826 à 1830 il n'en était même pas question. On n'exigeait de nous que la fugue pure et simple" (p. 371).

If the three-part preliminary examination was not administered in the late 1820s, it was in earlier periods. The four-voice fugue by Pierre-Guillaume Bouteiller, who won Premier Grand Prix in 1806, is preserved in B.N., Mus., W 33 (7), along with a "contrepoint quadruple à l'8ve," and a "contrepoint double à la 12^{ième}."

⁸ Beaux-Arts, Registre des procès verbaux des concours, 1 H 2.

⁹ In 1826 the finalists were Bienaimé, Guiraud, Paris, and Simon (Berlioz and Gilbert, among others, were eliminated in the preliminary competition); in 1827, Berlioz, Despréaux, Gilbert, and Guiraud; in 1828, Berlioz, Gilbert, Nargeot, and Despréaux; in 1829, Berlioz, Gilbert, Montfort, Prévost.

The music section thought that six finalists were too many, considering the time necessary to judge each cantata. They thus proposed to the Academy as a whole, at its meeting of 17 July 1830, that a composer who had won a second prize could present himself only twice more in the effort to obtain a first prize (Beaux-Arts, 2 E 8).

¹⁰ Jean-François Gail (1795–1845) was a Hellenist specializing in the geography of ancient Greece, and an amateur poet and musician. In 1832 he published *Réflexions sur le goût musical en France*, advocating the regeneration of French music by native-born French composers.

copied the text for himself. This procedure is to be noted with some care, for in fact the official text as it is preserved in the printed program of the *Séance publique annuelle* (see n. 7) is not entirely in accord with the official text as it is inscribed in the minutes of the music section. Furthermore, the text that is found in the three complete cantatas that have been preserved (by Alphonse Gilbert and Victor Lefebure, whose cantatas have not previously been examined, and by Edouard Millaut, whose work has been known for some time) agrees essentially with the printed text, while the text in the surviving fragment of Berlioz's cantata is based on the hand-written version in the minutes.¹¹ Since it is not readily available—previous writers on the subject were unaware of both the printed version and the manuscript version in the minutes of the Académie des Beaux-Arts, and knew only the version found in Millaut's score—the text is printed in full in the Appendix, along with a reconstruction of Berlioz's setting. Most important to note is that of the four competitors, only Berlioz set the third stanza of the final aria, "Qu'un beau trépas."¹²

Jean-François Gail, as a reader of the classic Greek texts, may well have taken the story of Sardanapalus from some of its original sources—Book II of the *Library of History* of Diodorus of Sicily, and Book XII of the *Deipnosophists* of Athenaeus.¹³ Both of these accounts were based on Ctesias' *Persian History*, and both served as sources for the tale of Sardanapalus best known in France in the 1820s—the drama, first published in 1821, by Lord Byron. Byron's drama served in turn as a source of inspiration for one of the most notable paintings of the decade, Eugène Delacroix's *Mort de Sardanapale*.¹⁴

¹¹ The *Sardanapalus* cantatas of these four composers are found in B.N., Mus., MS 7603 (Lefebure), MS 7858 (Millaut), MS 8025 (Gilbert), and Rés. Vm² 178 (Berlioz).

¹² A close comparison of the texts of the four cantatas that have been preserved reveals that the competitors, perhaps in haste, made a number of slight changes in wording: Millaut writes "larmes" in place of "pleurs," Gilbert uses "point" in place of "pas," and so on. We must nevertheless assume that it was against the rules to alter the official text. Only after the competition of 1832, for example, did Antoine Elwart learn of this regulation. He thus wrote a letter to the permanent secretary of the Academy (Beaux-Arts, 5 E 22) and asked that he not be penalized for his infraction of this rule. It appears, however, that he was nevertheless disqualified.

¹³ Diodorus, *Library of History*, I, trans. C. H. Oldfather (London, 1933), esp. pp. 425–41; Athenaeus, *Deipnosophists*, V, trans. Charles Burton Gulick (London, 1933), esp. pp. 387–93. (These are volumes 279 and 274 of the Loeb Classical Library.)

¹⁴ Byron's works were published in Paris, in English, starting in 1818. *Sardanapalus* first appeared in volume 4 of *The Complete Works of Lord Byron*, ed. J. W. Lake (Paris: Baudry and Amyot, 1825). The first edition of Byron's works in French translation—*Oeuvres complètes de Lord Byron*, trans. Amédée Pichot and Eusèbe de Salle

Sardanapalus, the last king of Assyria, led a remarkably dissolute life, so much so that he became an inviting target for rebellion. His love of luxury, his feminine demeanor, and his sybaritic excess with both sexes were open and unabashed. Disapproving of Sardanapalus's practices, the Medes, under Arbaces, and the Babylonians, under Belesys, determined to attack the Assyrian kingdom. Sardanapalus rose to the occasion and led his forces heroically, but the rebels persisted, and eventually gained the upper hand. When all seemed lost, Sardanapalus ordered the construction of a huge funeral pyre, heaped his royal wealth and wardrobe upon it, and consigned his concubines, his eunuchs, and himself to the flames. "And so Sardanapalus," says Athenaeus, "after he had enjoyed pleasure in strange ways, died as nobly as he could."¹⁵

This scenario is followed literally by neither Byron nor Delacroix.¹⁶ Furthermore, Delacroix's painting—most particularly by depicting the destruction of the concubines—does not follow Byron, whose hero dies alone with his favorite, Myrrha, who joins her beloved after igniting the fire. Gail's text opens with Sardanapalus contemplating yet another night of debauchery, untroubled by the sounds of combat from without the walls of Nineveh.¹⁷ He asks his

(Paris: Ladvoat, 1819–21)—did not contain *Sardanapalus*. That drama is found in volume 10 of Ladvoat's "troisième édition" (Paris, 1822). The translation, though complete, is in prose, and reflects nothing of the flavor of Byron's blank verse. (Ladvoat's French translation of 1822 must have been based on the first edition of the drama, published in London by John Murray in 1821.)

Visual representations of Sardanapalus in the 19th century include the one by George Cruikshank, "The Self-Destruction of Sardanapalus," in George Clinton's *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Lord Byron* (London, 1825); the one by Achille Devéria, "The Death of Sardanapalus," in the 1825 French edition; and the great painting by John Martin, "The Fall of Nineveh" (1827–28). For more on the sources for representations of Sardanapalus, see Jack J. Spector, *Delacroix: The Death of Sardanapalus* (New York, 1974), Chap. 3.

¹⁵ Athenaeus, *Deipnosophists*, p. 389.

¹⁶ An extensive interpretation of Byron's *Sardanapalus* is given by Jerome J. McGann in *Fiery Dust: Byron's Poetic Development* (Chicago, 1968). Delacroix's *Mort de Sardanapale* has been treated in detail most recently by Beatrice Farwell, "Sources for Delacroix's *Death of Sardanapalus*," *Art Bulletin*, XL (1958), 66–71; Frank Trapp, *The Attainment of Delacroix* (Baltimore, 1971); and Jack J. Spector (see above, n. 14).

¹⁷ In Chap. 22 of the *Memoirs* and in several prior articles Berlioz parodies the typical opening lines of the prize cantatas, which inevitably seemed to begin with daybreak or nightfall. A heretofore unnoticed parody of these openings occurs later in Berlioz's *oeuvre*, in the "Chanson d'étudiants" of the *Damnation de Faust*: the first line (in Berlioz's own Latin), "Jam nox stellata velamina pandit" ("Already night draws its starry veil") has been rendered into French as "Déjà la nuit étend ses voiles étoilés"; but it might have been rendered, more loosely, as "Déjà la nuit a voilé la nature"—the first line of the text of *Sardanapale*.

mistress—here named Néhalá and not Myrrha, as in Byron (no chief concubine is named by the Greek authors)—to take up her lyre and arouse him with sensuous song. The proceedings are interrupted by a messenger carrying word from Arbaces, governor of the Medes, that the Assyrian people have joined the rebels, that the Assyrian army is in disarray, and that only upon surrender of the crown will Sardanapalus be permitted to live. Sardanapalus replies that he will never accept such a condition. He thus has the funeral pyre readied and prays to Mithra (goddess of fire) as he awaits his end.

It can be seen that Gail's version does not literally follow any of its predecessors, though it clearly presents the central images of nature (important in Byron), of the hedonist king, and of his radiant demise. Berlioz, who had, of course, nothing to do with the choice of the text for the cantata, may well have known Byron's drama, since he once suggested that Byron was one of the poets who had influenced him most¹⁸ (and in 1828 his friend Hébert Turbry called him "le Byron de la Musique").¹⁹ And if we assume that Berlioz knew Byron's drama, we may also assume that he knew Delacroix's painting. The canvas had been unanimously condemned by the critics as soon as it went on view in February of 1828 (always a recommendation for Berlioz), and among those critics was the Director of Fine Arts for the government of Charles X, Vicomte Sosthène de La Rochefoucauld, one of Berlioz's official protectors in the late 1820s.²⁰ *La Mort de Sardanapale*, with its overt sensuality, theatrical stance, sadistic action, and apparently incoherent space, was in fact the first major salon painting by Delacroix that was not purchased by the state. One of its few defenders was Victor Hugo, who lamented only that the funeral pyre was not yet in flames (an idea Delacroix had contemplated, as one of his sketches shows, but then rejected).²¹ Berlioz does not mention having met Delacroix at the time, though they were fellow avid Shakespeareans when the English company came to Paris in 1827; he did know and admire Hugo, and was perverse enough to take Hugo's remark as sufficient reason to set the pyre aflame, as he did in the coda added to his cantata after the official judging had taken place.²² (One

¹⁸ See Cairns, *The Memoirs*, p. 532.

¹⁹ Hector Berlioz, *Correspondance générale*, I, ed. Pierre Citron (Paris, 1972), p. 199. (This volume is hereafter cited as *CG I*.)

²⁰ See Eugène Delacroix, *Correspondance générale*, ed. André Joubin (Paris, 1936), I, 217.

²¹ Victor Hugo, *Correspondance*, cited in Raymond Escholier, *Delacroix* (Paris, 1926–29), I, 192.

²² The Sardanapalus theme was well known at the time. And the name was in use as a common expression. In Balzac's short story "Gobseck," for example (published

of the other contestants, by the way, Alphonse Gilbert, most assuredly knew the Delacroix. Gilbert, unique among the competitors, added several stage directions to his score, and the first of these refers specifically to Sardanapalus reclining calmly and softly ["mollement"] on a bed, next to his women. In all representations prior to the Delacroix, including Byron's, Sardanapalus is immolated on his throne.)²³

These remarks on the text suggest that the theme was not an inappropriate one for the period, couched though it may have been in a cliché-ridden and self-consciously neoclassical poem. Naturally, with only a fragment of his cantata preserved, we can say almost nothing about Berlioz's interpretation of the theme, though one would think, as he said of the subject of Cleopatra for the 1829 competition, that here, too, "was an idea worth expressing in music."²⁴

II

We are well informed about Berlioz's activities in July of 1830. On the 14th he carried out the exercises of the preliminary competition, at the Institute. On the basis of these, as I have indicated, a preliminary order of merit was established. Berlioz then entered *en loge* on the 17th, and completed his cantata twelve days later, on the 29th. He was the first to finish, and did so long before the allotted time-period of twenty-five days had expired.²⁵ He rushed out to join the fighting in the streets, and to find his beloved Camille Moke. (On the last page of the manuscript of his *Sardanapale*, Berlioz—like Mahler scrawling "Almschi" at the end of the short score of his tenth symphony—wrote "fin [!] Camille [!]"

originally in 1830 as "Les Dangers de l'inconduite"), the narrator swears on two occasions with the word "Sardanapale!" The invocation was probably a stronger version of "Jiminy Cricket!" The adjective "Sardanapalesque" was in vogue during the Restoration, and was used, along with words like "pyramidal" and "babylonien," to mean "énorme," and "étonnant." (Paul Robert, *Dictionnaire de la langue française* [Paris, 1964], VI, 328.)

²³ The calm and objective expression given by Delacroix to Sardanapalus, considering the carnage surrounding him, is in fact one of the most remarkable features of the painting.

²⁴ Cairns, *The Memoirs*, p. 122.

²⁵ See CG I, p. 345, and the *Règlements* of 1822 and 1835 (mentioned above). Berlioz's letter to Ferrand of 24 July (CG I, p. 344) suggests that he was nearly finished on that day, and had only to orchestrate the last aria. (All contestants were supplied with a piano, rented for the occasion from Rollet and Blanchet. *Beaux-Arts*, 2 D 43.)

The revolution delayed the adjudication of the prizes, but they were finally decided on 19 and 21 August. This two-stage process is explained by Berlioz in several of his articles on the prize competition, and in Chapter 22 of the *Memoirs*. On the 19th, eight members of the Institute (presumably the six composers plus two of the “membres libres” of the Academy) assembled to listen to the six cantatas, in voice-and-piano rendition, to make a preliminary judgment.²⁶ The first vote taken on that day—whether to award a prize at all—produced the result of seven for and one against. The next vote awarded the prize to Berlioz by a majority of six to two. The final vote awarded the second prize unanimously to Millaut.²⁷ (In the minutes of the music section from this first voting session, no mention is made of the cantata by Alexandre Montfort.)

Two days later, on the 21st—a Saturday, the usual day for meetings of the Institute—a larger group of twenty-five members assembled for the definitive judgment. First the results of the preliminary judgment were read out. Then the performers were introduced. (They are unnamed in the minutes, though subsequent reviews suggest that Adolphe Nourrit sang the Montfort, and Alexis Dupont sang the Berlioz.) After auditioning the six cantatas, the members first decided unanimously to award a grand prize. Next, “l’Académie, procédant au scrutin, l’adjuge à M. Berlioz, élève de M. Lesueur.” The words “à l’unanimité” are not recorded.²⁸ Montfort was awarded Second Grand Prize “à la majorité absolue des voix,” and Millaut was awarded Second Prize “à l’unanimité.” The fact that the vote for Berlioz was recorded without comment on the nature of the majority suggests that there may have been some heated discussion and, perhaps, some notable abstentions. The recording secretary’s notes show that Berlioz received twenty-three Grand-Prize votes, Prévost one, and Montfort one. Montfort received seventeen Second-Grand-Prize votes, Prévost three, and Gilbert three.²⁹ In the

²⁶ In his 1834 article on the competition (see above, n. 1), Berlioz speaks of the *five* members of the music section. But at the time there were six chairs in music.

²⁷ *Beaux-Arts*, 1 H 2, pp. 63–65.

²⁸ Cf. *CG* I, p. 349 (and elsewhere): “j’avais été nommé seul grand prix à l’unanimité.” In the letter Lesueur sent to Berlioz’s father after the judging, he, too, says “Votre fils a remporté à l’unanimité, le 1^{er} grand prix de composition musicale décerné par l’Institut de France.” This letter, dated 25 August 1830, is printed in the Appendix of François Lesueur’s review of *CG* I, *Revue de musicologie*, LVIII (1972), 275–76.

²⁹ *Beaux-Arts*, 5 E 20. These notes may be those of the permanent secretary of the Academy, Quatremère de Quincy. A note here says of Berlioz’s cantata: “Le dernier air. Beaucoup de verve.”

end, though we now have some small reason to doubt his claim of unanimous victory, Berlioz's extreme confidence throughout the period of the competition, as demonstrated in his correspondence of July and August, was well-founded.

The prize-giving ceremony of the Institute was delayed from its traditional date on the first Saturday in October, which in 1830 fell on the 2nd, until the last, which fell on the 30th. The main reason for the delay, of course, was the July Revolution, and the subsequent breakdown of the smooth system of communications that existed under Charles X among the most important musical administrator of the capital, Cherubini, the Director of Fine Arts for the government, Vicomte de la Rochefoucauld, and the permanent secretary of the Institute, Quatremère de Quincy. (The Viscount left his position in August of 1830, and the wheels of the arts, for better or worse, turned more slowly for the next several years.) The specific reason for the delay seems to be that one of the painters, Monsieur Hofeli, was seriously injured in the fighting at the end of July, and thus that the painting competition did not even take place until the end of August. (The Grand-Prize winner in painting, Emile Signol, was later to paint the portrait that has become one of the most famous items of Berlioz iconography.) Two weeks after the decision was made to delay the ceremony, incidentally, it was proposed that copies of the prize cantatas be distributed to members of the Academy before the definitive judgment was to be made. This proposal was adopted,³⁰ but no such copies of Berlioz's cantata—or of anyone else's—have ever come to light.

It is in Chapter 30 of the *Memoirs* that Berlioz gives his famous description of the prize-giving ceremonies of the Institute. Though he says that the 1830 ceremony was the "usual" one, it did feature two notable differences: the permanent secretary, Quatremère de Quincy—a fixture at the Institute from 1816 to 1839—was ill, and had to be replaced by the architect LeBas; and on this occasion, there was more music than had previously been the custom. The program on 30 October 1830 was as follows:³¹

- (1) Performance of the cantata awarded "Second Premier Grand Prix de composition musicale"—*Sardanapale*, by Alexandre Montfort.
- (2) Report on the work of the pensioners of the king at the Académie de France in Rome, read by Monsieur LeBas.

³⁰ *Beaux-Arts*, 2 E 8.

³¹ "Séance publique" (see above, n. 7).

- (3) Performance of the cantata awarded “Premier Grand Prix de composition musicale”—*Sardanapale*, by Berlioz.
- (4) Distribution of the prize medals to the winners in painting (Emile Signol), sculpture (H.-J.-A. Husson), architecture (P.-J. Garrez), engraving (A.-L. Martinet), and musical composition.
- (5) Performance of Scenes 3, 4, and 5 from Act II of Albert Guillon’s opera, *Maria di Brabante*.³²

Berlioz points out that a full orchestra was engaged by the Institute for the performance of the cantatas—an orchestra that included what he calls a clarinet and a half, “the old man who had done duty as first clarinet since time immemorial having lost nearly all his teeth and being in consequence unable to sound more than half the notes of his aristocratic instrument.”³³ In fact we know the name of that clarinet player—Charles Duvernoy (1766–1845); he had been principal clarinetist in several Parisian theaters until his retirement in 1824. Fétis, too, says that Duvernoy’s playing sometimes lacked elegance, and by 1830, when he was in his mid-sixties and in retirement, it must have lacked more essential ingredients as well.³⁴ We know all the names of the performers on that day because the payment records are preserved in the archives of the Académie des Beaux-Arts—and among them are some of the finest musicians of the capital:³⁵ at least half, for example, were members of the Société des Concerts du Conservatoire. A tiny chorus of nine included three first tenors, three seconds, and three basses.³⁶ The tenor soloist for the Berlioz, we learn from a review, was Alexis Dupont (who sang the work three years later, at Berlioz’s concert of 24 November 1833). The director of the orchestra was Jean-Jacques Grasset, former principal conductor at the Théâtre Italien, and first violinist of the Musique du Roi. The member of the Institute who acted as impresario for the occasion was Henri Berton.

³² Guillon had won the Rome Prize in 1825. Edouard Millaut’s Second-Prize-winning cantata, not played here, was performed at one of the Concerts d’Émulation—the student-run concert series organized by Antoine Elwart at the Conservatoire—in November, 1830. See Fétis, *Revue musicale*, X (20 November 1830), 56.

³³ Cairns, *The Memoirs*, p. 136. In Berlioz’s cantata the clarinet plays an especially important role.

³⁴ In his review of the Séance publique annuelle, when Berlioz’s cantata was first performed, Fétis remarked specifically on the “feeble and unsonorous” playing of the first clarinet, which was “painful to listen to” (*Le Temps*, 4 November 1830).

³⁵ Beaux-Arts, 2 D 43.

³⁶ Thus Dickinson’s hypothesis about a women’s chorus in Berlioz’s cantata (“Berlioz’ Rome Prize Works”) is untenable.

Berlioz says that the solid gold medal he received on that day was worth 150 francs. In fact the rules prescribed that it be worth 200 francs, and in 1830 the retail price of the fifteen gold medals awarded was 3600 francs, or 240 francs apiece.³⁷ Nevertheless the prize was his, and the gate to the future, he thought (so did his teacher), was unlocked. Like the other prize winners, Berlioz received the sum of 600 francs to cover his travel expenses to Italy. That amount is signalled in an unpublished letter which Berlioz would have received from the Minister of the Interior, Comte de Montalivet, sometime in December. (The draft of this letter, telling the composer that he will receive payment at the controller's office of the Ministry of the Interior, and all necessary passports at the Ministry's office of fine arts, is preserved in the Archives nationales.)³⁸

III

Although all had gone well in rehearsal, at the public performance of Berlioz's prize-winning cantata, the conflagration scene at the end failed to catch fire. The only thing that was excited was the composer's considerable ire. (It is no wonder that fourteen years later, writing a proposal for the development of a second Opéra Comique, Berlioz incorporated an article suggesting that works crowned by the Institute be performed at this new professional theater.)³⁹ There were a number of critics in the audience on 30 October 1830 because the Séance Annuelle of the Académie des Beaux-Arts was a significant event on the cultural calendar of Paris in the nineteenth century. Even in those immediately post-revolutionary days of the fall of 1830, when Louis Philippe's government was far from securely established, and when the fate of Charles X's chief ministers was on everyone's mind, at least ten newspapers and journals sent correspondents to the Palais de l'Institut on the appointed day.⁴⁰

³⁷ The Institute got a discount price, however, of 2595.60 francs. Berlioz should still have received at least 174 francs for his medal.

³⁸ A.N., F²¹ 608, No. 128 (draft). The head of the Bureau des passeports in the fall of 1830 was M. de Mareste.

³⁹ Hector Berlioz, *Correspondance générale*, III, ed. Pierre Citron (Paris, 1978), p. 760.

⁴⁰ Reviews appeared in the *Journal du commerce* (31 October); *Le Courier français* (31 October); *Journal des débats* (1 November); *Le National* (1 November); *Moniteur universel* (3 November); *Le Temps* (4 November); *La Quotidienne* (4 November); *Revue musicale* (6 November [IX, 390–92]); *Journal des artistes* (7 November [IV, 335]); *Revue de Paris* (November [XX, 64]).

The report of the Séance Annuelle in the *Journal du commerce* does confirm the account of his behavior Berlioz gives in the *Memoirs*, when out of irritation with the players he hurled his score into the middle of the orchestra.⁴¹ This outburst is also mentioned in *Le Courrier français*, whose reviewer, after reporting that Montfort's cantata was sung by Adolphe Nourrit, says of the Berlioz simply that the allegro setting of the verse "Venez, bayadères charmantes" was marked by a particularly catchy rhythm. The rather full report in the distinguished *Journal des débats* (signed "D."—probably E. Delécleuze) applauded the Institute's decision to give seats on a first-come, first-served basis (women comprised two thirds of the audience), and to give several musical selections instead of only one (as had sometimes been the custom in prior years). The reviewer (who mentions that the ceremony began at 3 p.m.—in Chapter 30 Berlioz says 4) points out that Berlioz's cantata was more warmly received than Montfort's, though it "bristled with bizarre melodies that hardly delighted the ear or touched the soul." In passing he says that Lesueur was in attendance, though elsewhere Berlioz states explicitly that his teacher was ill, and unable to attend.

The anonymous reviewer for *Le National* also comments on the audience, which he says was immense and distinguished by a number of artists, French and foreign. He then fills out his article with what is in fact an encomium to Berlioz, mentioning his daring originality and its adverse effect on his conservative teachers, and mentioning his adherence to the purposeful seriousness of Gluck and Beethoven (which leads to failure among the dilettantes of the public). Of *Sardanapale* he says: "The *cantabile* was warmly applauded. The two arias, particularly the second, appear to be of broad structure and elevated style. Several graceful phrases, alternating in the last stanza with others of a more energetic character, produced the greatest effect. This was the best part of Monsieur Berlioz's composition: it revealed a profound knowledge of all the resources of art." The reviewer is not without adverse criticism, both for the performers (Dupont sang out of tune, and the musicians played arrhythmically and without finesse) and for the composer (who attempted too literally to imitate flying birds, murmuring brooks, and gentle breezes—the very things Berlioz ridicules in his 1834 essay on the prize competitions—and whose vocal melodies were sometimes ungraceful and unidiomatic). But his overall view is quite positive: "The nature of this young musician's talent may be appreciated from this day onward."

⁴¹ See *CG* I, p. 381, n. 2 and Cairns, *The Memoirs*, p. 138.

The *Moniteur universel* simply recorded the event for official purposes, but *Le Temps* printed a lengthy unsigned article by its regular music critic, François-Joseph Fétis. It is from Fétis that we learn anything at all about Montfort's cantata: the learned professor was Montfort's teacher at the Conservatoire, and wished to sing the praises of one of his own. Montfort's style was "pure," his melody "suave," his instrumentation "elegant." Fétis found Montfort's conclusion ineffective (particularly in comparison with Berlioz's, no doubt), and seemingly hurried. He then turned to Berlioz's *Sardanapale*: "Monsieur Berlioz is a man apart; his vivid imagination rejects the beaten track and carves out new paths. He sometimes loses his way, but his rapid progress shows that he will eventually find his goal. . . . With the persistent effort and devotion to art that distinguish the work of Monsieur Berlioz, his place in a few years will be secure among those who have enlarged the domains of music."⁴² A few days later Fétis modified this review for publication in the *Revue musicale*.

The anonymous reviewer for *La Quotidienne* was less impressed than others with the musical innovations of the 1830 ceremony: the only thing that has changed since 1829, he remarked dryly, is the portrait of the king. He also commented (as did Berlioz himself) on the absurdity of the thirty-year-old laureats with their side whiskers and moustaches kissing their teachers on both cheeks while artificial wreaths were placed upon their heads. The *Journal de Paris* was also unimpressed: "a number of little academic scores were played; all of this resembled an evening at the *Opéra comique*."

As to the appropriateness of the subject matter, the story of Sardanapalus, the reviewers were divided. The *Journal des débats*, thinking of the fall of Charles X, took the choice to have been "prophetic." So, too, did the *Annuaire* for 1830, particularly with the inclusion of the message from Arbaces (in the second recitative), which speaks of the ire of the people, the disarray of the army, and the tottering of the king's throne.⁴³ On the other hand, the reviewer for *La Quotidienne* found it ironic that the best part of Berlioz's cantata, in his opinion, was the beginning of the last aria ("The King of Kings

⁴² Parts of this review are quoted, without attribution to Fétis, in *CG* I, p. 381, n. 2. Earlier, Fétis had made a plea for sympathetic understanding of the 1830 competitors, whose cantatas were being completed as the Institute was fired upon during the revolution: "If their genius was not as inspired as one might have hoped, we must never forget, in judging them, that genius is sterile when the heart is oppressed" (*Revue musicale*, VII [7 August 1830], 388).

⁴³ *Annuaire historique universelle pour 1830* (Paris, 1832).

imposes slavery, His noble brow will never submit to it"): here was a celebration of imperial dignity at a moment in history when one heard talk not of royalty, but rather more of liberty.

IV

It is plain that Berlioz did not think highly of his *Sardanapalus* cantata, though in some instances I believe he exaggerated the stale academic qualities of his score out of a kind of embarrassment at having been rewarded by some of the old fogies whose judgment he had made it a principle to detest.⁴⁴ He might have been grateful to them for selecting an obviously Byronic subject for the competition, and it is difficult to believe that his finished work, were we able to hear it in its entirety, would not have at least some of the *contrastes et oppositions*, to use Berlioz's own phrase, that lend such originality to his early music. His teacher, Lesueur, was thrilled with the cantata, "dans le ravissement,"⁴⁵ and Berlioz did, after all, take some of its better ideas and use them in other works. *Sardanapale* is the only one of his four prize cantatas that Berlioz performed in later concerts: at the Conservatoire, on 5 December 1830, on a program that featured the première of the *Symphonie fantastique*; at the Théâtre Italien on 24 November 1833 (the ill-fated affair that Berlioz describes in Chapter 45 of the *Memoirs*); and at the Conservatoire, on 14 December 1834, on a program that featured the second performance of his newly completed *Harold en Italie*. (He might have performed the others, though significant self-borrowings from them, most notably for the *Symphonie fantastique* and its sequel, *Le Retour à la vie*, no doubt made him reluctant to do so.) Feeling at any rate that *Sardanapale* reeked of a kind of "official classicism," Berlioz set it aside after 1834, and at a later date, it would appear, destroyed the parts and most of his copy of the score.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ See, for example, the letter to his mother of 23 August 1830 (*CG* I, p. 349). The most deprecatory description of the cantata occurs in Berlioz's letter to Adolphe Adam of 25 October 1830 (*CG* I, p. 375): "If the desire to hear my scene moves you to attend the séance, I cannot help but warn you, Monsieur, that it is a very mediocre work which hardly represents my real musical conceptions; it contains few things that I acknowledge as my own. The score is not indicative of the present state of music. It is full of commonplaces and trivial orchestral effects that I was forced to write in order to win the prize."

⁴⁵ *CG* I, p. 348.

⁴⁶ Of his earlier prize cantata, *La Mort d'Orphée*, Berlioz later wrote, "I am sorry now that I destroyed the score of the cantata; the final pages ought to have made me keep it" (Cairns, *The Memoirs*, p. 102). Berlioz *did* keep the final pages of *Sardanapale*; one wonders if he regretted destroying the rest.

On the first page of the fragmentary manuscript of *Sardanapale*, Berlioz wrote "Fragment à brûler," perhaps at the same time that he changed the inscription on the fragmentary score of *La Nonne sanglante* (which Berlioz worked on intermittently between 1839 and 1847, and which appears to have been bound together with *Sardanapale* for about one hundred years) from "à consulter et non à brûler" to "à consulter [‘et non’ crossed out] à brûler après ma mort." It seems logical to presume that Berlioz kept the fragment of *Sardanapale* "à consulter," and that it was "à brûler" after his death.⁴⁷

Julien Tiersot assumed that the fragment of *Sardanapale* that we have is from the final version of the score. But Tom Wotton, followed by A. E. F. Dickinson,⁴⁸ thought that what is preserved is only a sketch, primarily because the description found in the *Memoirs* of the orchestral explosion in the coda (which says that the percussion instruments were to be cued by the horns) does not fit the facts: in our fragmentary score, the horns and percussion enter simultaneously. Wotton also pointed out that on the last page of the score, instead of writing out the wind, brass, and percussion parts, Berlioz wrote only the flute and oboe parts (on two staves) with the note: "Flûtes et oboï et cuivre et timb." Such abbreviations, said Wotton, suggest a hasty sketch. But here, as a glance at the final page of the manuscript indicates, in order simply to score fully the last two chords of the piece—the only moment that calls for full orchestra, given the very delicate *calando* closing, for clarinet and strings, that precedes the conventional and seemingly tacked-on V–I orchestra cadence—Berlioz would have had to begin a whole new page, and this was simply not necessary under the circumstances. As to the simultaneous rather than successive entrances of the horns and percussion at the climactic

⁴⁷ See B.N., Mus., Rés. Vm²178, p. 41^r. Mlle Simone Wallon of the Bibliothèque nationale graciously informs me that the manuscripts of *Sardanapale* and *La Nonne sanglante* were given to the library by Olgar Thierry-Poux, in November, 1881. (See also D. Kern Holoman, "Les fragments de l'opéra 'perdu' de Berlioz: *Les Francs Juges*," *Revue de musicologie*, LXIII [1977] 80, n. 9.) On the basis of the proximity of these two manuscripts, we might assume that the first part of the cantata was destroyed (along with some of the materials for *La Nonne sanglante*) sometime after 1847. However, the two themes in the coda of the cantata that were borrowed for use in *Roméo et Juliette* are crossed out in pencil, while the big theme later used in *L'Impérial* is not. If Berlioz crossed out these two themes as a reminder to himself that they had now (i.e., 1839—the date of *Roméo et Juliette*) found another resting place, then he probably destroyed the first part of the score *before* 1839: had he had the whole score of the cantata in 1839, he would have crossed out these themes, one supposes, at their earlier, fuller appearance. (This crossing-out is not in Berlioz's typically careful cross-hatching; it was obviously for a purpose other than deletion.)

⁴⁸ See above, n. 8.

moment, perhaps the cue that the horns failed to give was not the sounding of their notes but rather the lifting of their bells: the horns here are given the unusual (though not unprecedented) marking, "Pavillons en l'air."⁴⁹

What I believe we have of Berlioz's score, therefore, is from the copy he made for himself, while sequestered at the Institute, after completing the fair copy he would soon turn in to the judges. In the article about the prize competition that he wrote for the *Revue et Gazette musicale*, Berlioz says explicitly: "Since no one is allowed to see the cantatas after they have been deposited at the secretariat of the Institute, each composer—before leaving—must himself make a second copy of his work; otherwise his performers would be obliged somehow or other to read it at sight."⁵⁰ Berlioz thus took this second copy with him when he left the Institute on 29 July 1830. He no doubt used it to coach the piano-and-voice team that performed the cantata at the trials of 19 and 21 August, and he used it himself, after learning of his victory, to make certain additions for the public performance. If Grasset conducted the performance of 30 October from a violin part, as is quite probable, then our score would be part of the one Berlioz hurled into the orchestra when the horns missed their cue!⁵¹

V

A week after Berlioz gave a concert in Lyon on 20 July 1845, a review appeared in the musical journal of that city offering a capsule biography of the composer, in all probability prepared by Berlioz's old friend, Georges Hainl, then conductor of the orchestra at the Grand Théâtre de Lyon. Hainl had won the Premier Prix du

⁴⁹ This marking occurs (by coincidence) in C.-J. Paris's *Herminie*, the cantata that won the Rome Prize in 1826 (B.N., Mus., MSS 6540 and 7495). In his chapter on the horn in the *Traité d'instrumentation*, Berlioz mentions its use in Méhul's opera *Euphrosine et Coradin* (1790), at the end of the duet "Gardez-vous de la jalousie!" Elizabeth Bartlet, whose University of Chicago dissertation on Méhul is forthcoming at this writing, kindly informs me that if Méhul was the first to use the marking "pavillons en l'air," he was only noting what was common practice among horn players at the time, when increased volume was called for.

⁵⁰ *Revue et Gazette musicale*, III (19 June 1836), 205. On what may have happened to the official copy of the score, see the Appendix.

⁵¹ Copying out a full score after a pressure-filled period *en loge* was no doubt doubly difficult for the exhausted competitors. In 1839 the six finalists (including Charles Gounod, who won the prize that year) requested that they be allowed to employ a copyist for the purpose, but their request was denied (Beaux-Arts, 5 E 28).

Conservatoire as a cellist in 1830, and had been in attendance—though not as a performer—at the Séance Annuelle of the Institute on 30 October 1830. In his 1845 review, Hainl recalled Berlioz's victory of fifteen years earlier:

[Berlioz] had many prejudices to overcome in order to obtain the prize. His innovative spirit was already apparent, and his audacity appalled the members of the music section. The subject given was *Sardanapalus*. We heard this cantata, and were able even then to predict the attacks a man would have to withstand who was bold enough to try to open a new era in music.⁵²

For Georges Hainl, *Sardanapale* stood out as the first shot of the salvo Berlioz would continue to fire throughout his “period of externalization,” as the composer's years during the reign of Louis Philippe might be called. It is in a way fitting that the only pages of the *Sardanapalus* cantata that have been preserved are those incorporating the final incendiary scene, for that music must have symbolized for Berlioz himself something larger than the end of his student days and the beginning of his public career. Indeed it was with the image of a grand and mighty blaze that Berlioz chose to describe the full majestic powers of the large instrumental ensemble. He closed his orchestration treatise with a poetic passage that celebrates the unbounded melodic and rhythmic force of his own real instrument—the symphony orchestra:

In the thousands of combinations that are possible with the monumental orchestra I have just described there would reside a harmonic richness, a variety of timbres, and a series of contrasts comparable to nothing that has been accomplished in the art of music up to the present day. Above all, this orchestra would have an incalculable melodic, expressive, and rhythmic power, a penetrating force that has no equal, a prodigious sensitivity to nuances of ensemble and detail. Its repose would be majestic, like the calm of the sea; its fury would resemble the hurricanes of the tropics; its explosivity, the eruptions of a volcano. Here would be heard the cries and murmurs and mysterious noises of a virgin forest, the shouts and prayers and songs of triumph or grief of a people with expansive minds, ardent hearts, and fiery emotions. Its solemn silence would be awe-inspiring, and the most fearless souls would tremble on feeling its swelling crescendo roar forth like a sublime and immense conflagration.⁵³

⁵² *La Clochette*, II/99 (27 July 1845), 2–3.

⁵³ Berlioz, *Traité d'instrumentation* (Paris: Lemoine, 1855), p. 297. (The same image closes the first edition of the *Traité*, published in 1843.) Tiersot (“Berlioziana,”

In the fall of 1830 Berlioz felt that the July Revolution had been “expressly made for the liberation of the arts”; he asserted to his sister that because of the revolution (to which he paid tribute with an arrangement of the *Marseillaise*) he would succeed ten times sooner than he would have, had the revolution not occurred.⁵⁴ Winning the *Prix de Rome* and hearing the first performances of the *Ouverture de la Tempête* and the *Symphonie fantastique* in the months immediately following the revolution no doubt reinforced Berlioz’s positive feelings toward the political event. It would not be long, however, before Berlioz’s optimism, both about his own musical future and about the future of the new régime, would decline. It would not be long before his cynicism about career and country would flare up—in the era of another revolution—like the fires that consumed Sardanapalus himself.

Smith College

p. 287) says, if you substitute Siegfried for Sardanapalus, the Rhine Maidens for the Bayadères, Valhalla for the king’s palace, and Wagner’s leitmotives for Berlioz’s themes, then you have—forty years prior to its completion—the finale of *Götterdämmerung*.

⁵⁴ CG I, p. 359 (5 September 1830).

APPENDIX I:

SARDANAPALE

Text by Jean-François Gail

RÉCITATIF

Déjà la nuit a voilé la nature:
 Sa fraîcheur à nos sens apporte le réveil,
 L'onde sous ces parvis plus doucement murmure;
 La nuit vient, chassons le sommeil.
 C'est pour l'amour une nouvelle aurore . . .
 Mais que vois-je? . . . vos yeux laissent couler des pleurs!
 O craintives beautés, je vous chéris encore . . .
 Près de moi les plaisirs et jamais les douleurs . . .
 Calmez ce trouble . . . eh! quoi? . . . le bruit des armes
 Dans votre coeur répandrait-il l'effroi?
 Ninive encor debout condamne vos alarmes;
 Depuis deux ans ce bruit expire autour de moi.

CANTABILE

Étoile du matin, Néhala, prends ta lyre;
 Mêle à ses doux accents les accents de ta voix:
 Tes chants, fille du ciel, excitent mon délire;
 Seule, tu sais charmer tous mes sens à la fois.

Vers les plaines d'Assyrie,
 Doux parfums de l'Arabie,
 Apportez vos nuages légers;
 En ces lieux brûlez sans cesse,
 Prolongez pour nous l'ivresse
 Des plaisirs, trop souvent passagers.

Venez, bayadères charmantes,
 Et, par vos danses séduisantes,
 Troublez ma raison et mes yeux:
 Versez, versez, jamais de trêve;
 Que ce nectar m'élève
 Aux délices des dieux.

Étoile du matin [etc.]

RÉCITATIF

Mais quel messenger téméraire
 A-t-on laissé pénétrer en ces lieux?
 M'apportes-tu les dons de quelque tributaire?
 Approche . . . Que veux-tu? Quel orgueil dans tes yeux!
 Un billet . . . et de qui? C'est d'Arbaces, grands dieux! . . .
 (Il lit.)
 "On te laisse ignorer sans doute
 "Que ton peuple indigné s'est partout soulevé:
 "Ton armée est dissoute,

"Ton trône chancelant et ton règne achevé.
 "Tu pourras vivre libre; écoute:
 "Tu dis: Jouir est tout et le reste n'est rien.
 "La volupté te reste, on te laisse ce bien,
 "Le seul que tu voulus devoir à la couronne
 "Quitte un sceptre qui t'abandonne . . ."
 (Il s'interrompt.)
 Non, non, jamais: on ne m'a rien ôté.
 Ainsi que du plaisir il me faut de la gloire;
 Et l'enivrante volupté
 A pu dans le sommeil me ravir la victoire,
 Mais non pas ma fierté.

AIR

Le Roi des Rois impose l'esclavage;
 Son front brillant ne l'acceptera pas.
 Non, du soleil il restera l'image
 Jusqu'à la nuit qu'apporte le trépas.

L'infame me promet la vie
 Et la liberté . . . Je suis roi:
 Aux mortels qu'elle fasse envie,
 Elle n'est pas assez pour moi.

Le Roi des Rois [etc.]

RÉCITATIF

Tout est prévu, que le bûcher s'apprête;
 Son gouffre engloutira la pompe qui me fuit.
 Allons, encore une dernière fête;
 Les feux de mon bûcher dissiperont la nuit.

AIR

Viens, que ta flamme dévorante,
 Mithra, me sauve pour toujours;
 Avec le bonheur qui m'enchanté,
 Prends le dernier de mes beaux jours.

Jadis la gloire et les plaisirs
 Faisaient la douceur de ma vie;
 Un sort cruel me l'a ravie;
 Abandonnons ces souvenirs.

Qu'un beau trépas, digne de moi,
 Dise encore après moi ma gloire
 Et du courage d'un grand Roi
 Célèbre à jamais la mémoire.

Viens, que ta flamme [etc.]

NOTA. Cette Cantate a été remise à l'Académie royale des Beaux-Arts le samedi 17 juillet 1830, dix jours avant les événements.

[B.N., Mus., Thb. 4532 (1830); Beaux-Arts, 1 H 2]

APPENDIX 2

RECONSTRUCTING BERLIOZ'S *SARDANAPALE*

VOCAL SOLOIST

Millaut: tenor (part written in tenor clef)

Lefebure: bass (bass clef)

Gilbert: tenor (tenor clef)

Berlioz: tenor (or soprano?) (G clef)

[A soprano soloist would not be entirely inappropriate, considering the effeminate character traditionally ascribed to Sardanapalus. It is more likely, however, that the G clef was used for its versatility: it appears that the competitors could not be certain about the range of their singers, and that transposition was not uncommon, as Berlioz himself later reported in the *Revue et Gazette musicale*, III (16 October 1836), p. 362.]

INSTRUMENTATION

Millaut: 2 fl., 2 ob., 2 cl., 2 bsn., 2 hn., 2 trp., 2 trb., strings.

Lefebure: 2 fl. (second alternates with picc.), 2 cl., 2 bsn., 4 hn., 2 trp., 3 trb., strings.

Gilbert: 2 fl. (first alternates with picc.), 2 ob., 2 cl., 2 bsn., 4 hn., 2 trp., ophicleide, timp., harp, strings.

Berlioz: 2 fl. (first alternates with picc.), 2 ob., 2 cl., 2 bsn., 4 hn., 2 trp., 3 trb., timp., strings.

[In the coda added by Berlioz after the official competition, the score calls additionally for harp, second timp., bass drum, cymbals, 2 harmonicas (keyboard instruments in which hammers strike plates of glass), and male chorus. However, it is doubtful that the harmonicas were heard in the public performance of *Sardanapale* at the Institute, for no harmonica players are listed among those employed for the occasion.]

ORCHESTRAL INTRODUCTION

Millaut: *Introduction. Adagio Maestoso*. C; D Major.

Lefebure: *Introduction. Allegretto poco Andantino*. C; B-flat Major.

Gilbert: *Andante quasi Allegretto*. 6/8; D Major.

Berlioz: [*Introduction. Allegro?*]

[We may assume that Berlioz's cantata opened with an Allegro on the basis of the story Berlioz tells, in the *Memoirs*, of his first meeting with Felix Mendelssohn. Alexandre Montfort had played parts of Berlioz's *Sardanapale* to Mendelssohn, and the latter disliked "the opening allegro." When Berlioz confessed that he, too, was not fond of the opening, Mendelssohn congratulated him on his good taste. (The orchestral introduction gave Berlioz great difficulty in one of his first attempts at conducting in public.) See Cairns, *The Memoirs*, pp. 223, 292.

This anecdote suggests the possibility that none of the music contained in the existing fragmentary score is based on the opening Allegro. It also suggests the possibility that the official score of Berlioz's *Sardanapale*, which should have been preserved at the Institut de France, was for a time in Montfort's hands, and subsequently disappeared with Montfort's *Nachlass*.]

RECITATIVE I: "Déjà la nuit":

Millaut, Lefebure, Gilbert, and presumably Berlioz write recitatives that lead without pause to Aria I.

ARIA I: "Étoile du matin":

Millaut: *Cantabile. Andante*. 3/4; A Major. An ABA structure, leading without pause into Recitative II.

Lefebure: *Cantabile*. 3/4; E-flat Major. An ABA' structure, leading without pause to an *Allegro vivace* that acts as an introduction to Recitative II.

Gilbert: [*Cantabile.*] $\frac{3}{4}$; A Major. For the third verse, “Venez, bayadères charmantes,” Gilbert shifts to *Allegro*, $\frac{6}{8}$. An ABB structure (“Venez” is repeated). The $\frac{6}{8}$ melody, in A Major, is later transformed, in Aria III, into cut time.

Berlioz: [*Cantabile. Andante.* $\frac{3}{4}$. Dickinson (“Berlioz’ Rome Prize Works,” p. 179) suggests that first arias were almost always in A Major. Perhaps Berlioz’s Aria I, like those of Millaut and Lefebure, was also in A major.]

In the letter to his father of 31 October 1830, Berlioz points out that the “chant des Bayadères” returns in the coda, “changed” and “melodically modified.” Because one reviewer wrote, “L’Allegro, ‘Venez, Bayadères charmantes,’ est d’un rythme entraînant” (*Le Courrier français*, 31 October 1830, p. 3), we know that Berlioz, like Gilbert, changed the tempo to *Allegro* at the third stanza of Aria I; and because “le chant des Bayadères”—given the text of the entire cantata—can logically be associated only with Aria I, we may suppose that the following fragment (from the coda of *Sardanapale*) is the altered “chant des Bayadères de la première partie” of the cantata, of which Berlioz speaks in the letter of 31 October:

Example 1

Berlioz, *Sardanapale*, mm. 160–65

This was later used as one of the principal melodies of the *Fête chez Capulet* of *Roméo et Juliette*.

Berlioz may also have borrowed another tune from Aria I for the *Fête chez Capulet*—the C-Major oboe tune that returns at the end of that scene, in the brass:

Example 2

Sardanapale, mm. 150–57

RECITATIVE II: “Mais quel messager”:

Millaut, Lefebure, Gilbert, and presumably Berlioz write recitatives that lead without pause to Aria II.

ARIA II: “Le Roi des Rois”:

Millaut: *Air. Allegro moderato*. C ; D Major. An ABA structure, leading without pause into Recitative III.

Lefebure: *Allegro grandiose*. C; A-flat Major. An ABA structure, leading without pause into Recitative III.

Gilbert: *Maestoso*. C ; C Major. An ABA structure, coming to a full stop, V-I.

Berlioz: [*Allegro?* *Maestoso?* C; E-flat Major?] Tiersot suggests that the principal melody of this aria is the tune sung by the basses at the opening of Berlioz’s cantata *L’Impérial*:

Example 3

Berlioz, *L'Imperiale*, Op. 26 (1855), mm. 8–28, after Tiersot, “Berlioziana”

Du peuple en - tier les â - mes tri - om - phan - tes Ont tres - sail -
 Le roi des rois im - po - se l'es - cla - va - ge; son front bril -
 li Comme au cri du de - stin Quand des ca - nons
 lant ne l'ac - cep - te - ra pas. Non, du so - leil
 les voix re - ten - tis - san - tes Ont an - non - cé le jour qui
 il re - ste - ra l'im - ma - ge Jus - qu'à la nuit qu'ap -
 vient de lui - re - en - fin Ont an - non - cé le jour qui vient de lui - re - en - fin.
 por - te le tré - pas Jus - qu'à la nuit qu'ap - por - te le tré - pas.



Tiersot's assumption is based on Berlioz's remark in the letter to his father of 31 October 1830 that “le morceau de fierté dans lequel Sardanapale refuse d'abdiquer la couronne” (i.e., the music from Aria II) returns in the coda:

Example 4

Sardanapale, mm. 175–86

Brass, bsn.



RECITATIVE III: “Tout est prévu”:

Millaut, Lefebure, Gilbert, and presumably Berlioz write recitatives that lead without pause to Aria III.

ARIA III: “Viens, que ta flamme dévorante”:

Millaut: *Air. Allegro agitato*. ♯; E Minor. An ABA structure, with a coda in E Major.

Lefebure: *Allegro avec énergie et désespoir*. ♯; C Minor. An ABA structure.

Gilbert: *Moderato*. ♯; E Minor. An ABA' structure.

Berlioz: [*Allegro?*] ♯; [opens in E-flat Minor?] E-flat Major.

Berlioz's fragmentary score begins with the words "[ja-]mais la mémoire"—the last three words of the third stanza of the official text of Aria III, the stanza that only Berlioz set. (Perhaps he simply failed to hear a verbal direction to ignore this third stanza. Or perhaps he found its particularly monarchical sentiments, calling for the celebration of the memory of a great king, less inappropriate in that time of political unrest than did the other contestants.) We must presume, since it was against the rules to alter the text, that the pages immediately prior to the first page of Berlioz's fragmentary manuscript contained a setting of the first two stanzas of Aria III.

Following the last three words of the third stanza we have a setting of the last few lines of the text of Recitative II: "l'enivrante volupté / A pu dans le sommeil me ravir la victoire, / Mais non pas ma fierté." The colorful shift from G-flat Major back to E-flat Major is perhaps a harmonic representation of this "enivrante volupté":

Example 5

Sardanapale, mm. 70–78

Example 5 shows two staves of musical notation in E-flat Major. The first staff is a vocal line with lyrics: "L'en-ni-vran - - te vol - lup - té". The second staff is a piano accompaniment. The music features a melodic line with a chromatic descent and a final cadence.

With the quotation in Aria III from Recitative II, a quotation that may be musical as well as textual, Berlioz made an effort at cyclical construction even in the official version of the cantata, before adding the semi-recapitulatory conflagration scene for the public performance. (There are similarly cyclical devices in Berlioz's prize cantatas of 1827 and 1828. And in Gilbert's *Sardanapale* of 1830, a note at the beginning of the second stanza of Aria III says that at this point, as Sardanapalus recalls past pleasures, "les instruments à vent disent le chant de l'*allegro* du cantabile," i.e., the winds play a melody from the *allegro* section of Aria I. Cyclic procedures were thus not uncommon in the cantata competitions of the period.)

At the conclusion of the citation from Recitative II, the orchestra and the solo voice take up the rising theme later used, as Hugh Macdonald has pointed out, for Cassandra's air, "non, je ne verrai pas," in Act I of *Les Troyens* (No. 10, mm. 53–60):

Example 6

Sardanapale, mm. 98–106

Example 6 shows two staves of musical notation in E-flat Major. The first staff is a vocal line with lyrics: "Ja - dis la gloire et - les - plai - sirs". The second staff is a piano accompaniment. The music features a melodic line with a chromatic descent and a final cadence.

It is possible that this music represents a return to the principal thematic material of Aria III, since it nicely fits the opening line of that aria, "Viens, que ta flamme dévorante".

Berlioz's setting of the third stanza served originally as a conventional, grandiloquent conclusion. This is the sort of music that must have occurred immediately prior to the opening of Berlioz's fragmentary score, with a high G-flat on "[mé-] moi[-re]" (m. 66) now replaced by a sustained high B-flat (mm. 131-32):

Example 7

Sardanapale, mm. 116-32

Qu'un beau tré-pas dig-ne de moi dise en-core dise en-core a-pres —

moi ma gloi-re Et du cou-ra-ge d'un grand roi re-

dise à ja-mais re-dise à ja-mais la — mé-moi - - re.

The structure of Berlioz's Aria III, alternating graceful phrases (e.g., Example 6) with melodies of a more energetic character (e.g., Example 7), precisely as the reviewer for *Le National* put it, may therefore have been as follows:

Stanza I]	lost
Stanza II		
Stanza III		
Recitative II]	preserved
Stanza II		
Stanza III		
Coda		
]	added later