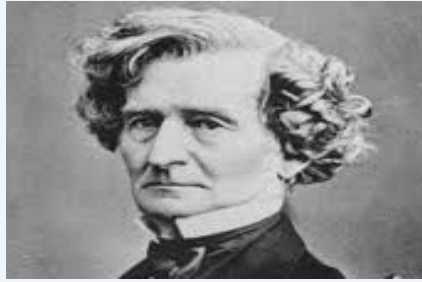




KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER: KEY COMPOSER 3

HECTOR
BERLIOZ
1803-1869



- Berlioz was a French, Romantic composer
- Berlioz should have trained as a doctor like his father but he went against his family's wishes and studied music instead
- At the age of 22, Berlioz fell hopelessly in love with an actress. She inspired one of his most significant works (see below)

Other notable French Composers

Saint-Saens—See key pieces 3

Dukas—See key pieces 5

Suggested listening:

Debussy—Clair de Lune

Chopin—Romance from Piano Concerto No. 1

In England at this time...

*Charles Dickens had written A Christmas Carol in 1843

*Queen Victoria was our queen. Her husband, Prince Albert died in 1861

*We were in the middle of the Industrial Revolution - people were making goods in large factories and business was growing

*Robert Stephenson designed and built the Rocket in 1829 - one of the first steam trains

*Charles Darwin published his theory in a book called the Origin of Species in 1859 - Darwin was the great uncle of composer Vaughan Williams (see English composer 2)

Berlioz' most **SIGNIFICANT WORK** is the **SYMPHONIE FANTASTIQUE**

Berlioz fell in love with actress, Harriet Smithson, after watching her on stage. He sent her love letters but she refused to answer them. Berlioz wrote Symphonie Fantastique as a way of showing her how much he loved her. When she heard the work, she realised he was a genius. They finally met and decided to get married. Sadly they separated several years later.

This is a programme symphony in 5 movements. Berlioz wrote notes describing each of the 5 movements. He described the main theme as a *Idee Fixe*. The main theme describes the woman he loves every time he thinks of her. We hear the theme a lot because he is constantly thinking of her! Unfortunately, she doesn't always appear so beautiful... The music in Movement 5 was used in a film called Sleeping with the Enemy to describe the 'baddy.'

Romantic composer	A composer that write music that is expressive and beautiful
Programme symphony	A symphony that describes a story and evokes emotions
Idee Fixe	A musical theme that keeps repeating like a repeated idea
Texture	How many orchestral instruments are playing. A thin texture means few instruments are playing
Legato	The music is smooth and not jumpy
Adagio	The music is played slowly

Movement 1: Passions—We hear a beautiful love theme on strings. It is legato and simple. This introduces the woman he loves.

Movement 2: A Ball—This is a dance. He watches his beloved as she dances at a party. He doesn't get to dance with her and becomes jealous. He leaves the party.

Movement 3: Walk in the Countryside—He is sad and thoughtful as he walks in the countryside. We hear two shepherds playing their pipes. The music is an adagio and the texture is thin.

Movement 4: A March to the Scaffold—He is now desperate and decides to take a drug that makes him hallucinate. He imagines he kills the woman he loves and is sentenced to death. He has a vision of his own death. The music is forte and we hear drum rolls on percussion.

Movement 5: A Witches' Sabbath—His beloved is now a witch. The music is unusual. We hear bells and the instruments sound like witches laughing. The bassoons play a really low, slow and sinister tune.