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Berlioz and the Fugue

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BERLIOZ**AND**

Edward Cone has observed in his recent edition of the *Symphonie fantastique*: "What is remarkable is the extent to which Berlioz has remained controversial up to our own time. Although his champions may now seem to have carried the day, they nevertheless seem unwilling to let down their guard — no doubt with good reason."*1 There have been controversies around everything connected with Berlioz, from evaluations of his character to arguments about all aspects of his compositional technique. One of the most controversial points has been that of Berlioz's ability in using contrapuntal devices in general, and fugues in particular. Opinions varied to an incredible extent. For example, Peter Cornelius praised "the specific polyphonic musician in Berlioz"*2 and Richard Strauss commented on "Ber-

THE

FUGUE

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lioz's hatred for counterpoint."*3 Donald Tovey angrily criticized the superposition of themes in *Roméo et Juliette**4 while Walter Piston introduced an excerpt from *Harold en Italie* as an example for good superposition of themes in two-part counterpoint.*5 It appears that Jacques Barzun felt himself compelled to collate all evidence in favor of Berlioz's alleged mastery of counterpoint and to devote to it a special entry in an index.*6 Before reopening the subject, it might be useful to quote Piston's observation in the introduction to his textbook on counterpoint: "The student is cautioned not to make a fetish of counterpoint or to look upon the term contrapuntal as synonymous with good. Much of the world's great music is but slightly contrapuntal."*7

The only attempt to isolate the question of Berlioz and the fugue and to approach it objectively was that of Georges Favre in his essay "Berlioz et la fugue,"*8 which is especially valuable in that it contains a description (but unfortunately no edition) of the only fugue preserved of Berlioz's attempts at winning the Rome Prize. Yet Favre's essay is limited in scope and by no means covers the whole subject. Much evidence with regard to Berlioz's attitude toward counterpoint, and especially toward fugue, can be derived from his critical reviews and his *Mémoires*. It should, however, be noted that not all such sources are equally reliable. Berlioz was often emotional or cynical in his writing, and he seems to have enjoyed the use of exaggerated expressions in many cases. Unfortunately, many of his passing comments on fugue have been quoted out of context and magnified beyond the right proportions.

Berlioz's most extensive discussion of fugue appeared in his early article "Considérations sur la musique religieuse." Favre's quotation of one paragraph from Berlioz's essay is incomplete and consequently misleading. Since neither the original prints of the *Correspondant* nor the reprint in *Prod'homme's* old book are always available to the reader, it would appear helpful to quote the whole relevant section:

All the ancient productions of Italy and of Germany are infected by the fugal style; barbaric, ridiculous, absurd, and yet preached by the generality of artists and presented by masters to the admiration of pupils. I can see the admirers of fugue directing their enraged looks at me, but I am not writing for them. I am addressing myself only to reason disengaged from prejudice of the real friends of art.

They are going to tell me: is it due to you, then, that fugue is taught at the schools? Of course not; it is a highly useful exercise which familiarizes the pupils with many harmonic difficulties and instructs them how to derive all possibilities from a melodic idea. It is likewise proper to add that the fugal style can be sometimes used in a modified manner in slow movements with good results; but the way in which it has been employed until now is in my opinion an incredible aberration of the intellect of the composers.

They should, at least, seek the way to unite this genre of music with words whose meaning would make it possible to tolerate, as done by Jomelli in his piece *Movendi sunt coeli et terra*. Yet, common practice requires that the

composer of a Mass would set fugues to the words Amen, Kyrie, or Agnus dei. Let the people who have never heard it figure out the religious effect which must result from fifty voices brawling with rage in a very fast tempo, repeating the word Amen four or five hundred times, vocalizing on the syllable A in a manner of imitation of violent bursts of laughter, and they would form an idea of the vocal fugue, which very likely would not be favorable. I challenge anyone who is endowed with musical feeling and who listens without bias to an Amen fugue not to consider the chorus as a legion of incarnated devils turning the sacred sacrifice into ridicule rather than as a reunion of the faithful assembled to sing in praise of God.

It is not less shocking to see the same practice applied to the two prayers, Kyrie and Agnus. Still, there is nothing more common than that; it is a style adopted by musicians, and, even more inconceivable, this is what they call religious style, indeed, which substitutes the expression of frantic rage and infernal joy for the humble sentiment of prayer. Beethoven himself, the giant among giants, was not immune to the infection. He who in his other compositions smashed and crushed the barriers of routine, he who followed the impulse of his genius and of high reasons, he himself descended in several sections of the *Missa Solemnis* to the level of the contrapuntists.

Some people use a peculiar reason to justify the introduction of fugal style into church music: A Mass does not have to be moving, they say; and a fugue is not moving, it is interesting; the intellect follows with pleasure the various combinations made by the composer; one likes to see how he overcomes the difficulties imposed on him by the genre; such sensations are enough for 'religious music'.*9

It is obvious that Berlioz in his essay joined the long line of critics of text-music relationship in religious music which dates back many years in the history of Western music. In no way does he express any hatred for fugue. On the contrary, he even approves of the study of fugue as an academic discipline, which is quite significant if one remembers that Berlioz had enough reasons to feel certain hostility toward the formal fugue in 1829. He is opposed to fugue only when its use is not justified by the text. There is no need to quote the well-known lengthy paragraph from the *Treatise on Instrumentation*.*10 Again, Berlioz directs his criticism against a certain type of organ fugue, the poor standard of which was acknowledged by

Richard Strauss in his revision of the Treatise.*11 A similar comment in the *Mémoires* makes it clear that he always objects to specific compositions and not to fugal style in general: "...there must have been some grave reason, which I have forgotten, for my apparent indifference in the matter of sacred music, or I must have been entirely overwhelmed by the terror of giges for the organ and fugues on the word Amen."*12 On the other hand, in his discussion of a fugue by Lesueur he indirectly indicates his criteria for good fugues: "... [the Lesueur piece] is a masterpiece of expression to which the fugal form is here conducive. . . . This fugue in its glorious beauty is justified by the meaning of the words and wholly worthy of them. It is the work of a musician who is inspired by his subject and of an artist who understands his art."*13 Indeed, it seems that Berlioz's opinions were shared by Reicha and by Lesueur, although the two old masters had no motivation to become involved in heated debates on the subject.*14

Berlioz's comments on Bach are also related to the subject of Berlioz's attitude to fugue. Besides some whimsical statements*15 there are several significant critiques. In a letter to Desmaret*16 Berlioz described the first full performance of the St. Matthew Passion he had ever heard. His penetrating discussion concentrates on matters of special interest for him, like sonority, volume, diversity of sound, and the placing of the performers on the stage. It would appear that if he had felt any real hatred for counterpoint, he would have made some unfavorable comments on the music, which he does not.

Even more revealing are Berlioz's essays on Beethoven's symphonies.*17 It is remarkable that Berlioz ignores Beethoven's fugues and fugatos almost completely in his thorough analyses. In his study of Symphony No. 3 he defines the subject of the finale simply as a "thème fugué,"*18 but he ignores the two fugal expositions which are of great significance in the movement. The trio section of the scherzo of Symphony No. 5 strikes him on account of the unusual sonority of the double basses, but he fails to mention the fact that the double basses are exposed as a result of the fugato texture.

Fugal procedures are used in three of the four movements of Symphony No. 9, but Berlioz ignores the fugato in the first movement (mm.218ff.) and dismisses the five-part fugue at the beginning of the scherzo as a "réponse fugué".*19 As to the fugue in 6/8 in the finale (mm.431ff.) he indeed mentions the fugal theme, but his description of the fugue is purely pictorial: "...these are the diverse movements of an active

crowd. . . .”^{*20} He ignores the majestic double fugue in 6/4, though he does point out the superposition of themes: “. . . a grand allegro in 6/4, where the beginning of the first theme, which has already been reproduced often and with much diversity, and the chorale of the preceding andante are united. The contrast between those two ideas is rendered more striking by means of a light variation of the joyful melody executed over the sustained notes of the chorale. . . .”^{*21} It is clear that the idea of superposition of contrasting themes interests Berlioz more than the technique of double fugue.

Berlioz's most abstract essay is “La Musique,” which was selected by him to open his most serious compilation, *A Travers Chants*.^{*22} The central section of the essay is devoted to the “modes of action” of modern music, which include melody, harmony, rhythm, and modulation, as well as less technical concepts like expression and acoustical matters of space and intensity. The list is probably not systematic in the scientific sense, but it represents all factors which concerned Berlioz as a musician. Counterpoint and fugue are nowhere to be found. Calvocoressi noticed the conspicuous absence of those terms, but his conclusions are a striking non sequitur:

Berlioz, for instance, in the first chapter of *A Travers Chants* (Paris, 1862), tells us exactly what he contrives music to be and in what way he responds to music. His confession is not quite full: for instance, he has a rooted objection to contrapuntal treatment — a bias which he unmistakably reveals elsewhere, and which accounts for his incapacity to respond to Bach's music, for example. . . .

^{*23}

As indicated in the foregoing discussion, Berlioz had no rooted objection to contrapuntal writing. He only objected to music which he considered bad, and this included the use of procedures which were not justified by the text, or, as will be shown later, by the dramatic situation in non-vocal compositions. He had no special interest in counterpoint, and he ignored fugues and contrapuntal textures whenever they did not provoke his anger as critic and as composer.

There seems to be certain confusion with regard to the very existence of fugues in the works of Berlioz. Favre wrote that “Berlioz never wrote a genuine fugue in his scores. Nevertheless, he did not reject the fugal style and he used it with intelligence, liberty and moderation.”^{*24} Favre ignores Schumann's comment in his celebrated essay on the *Symphonie fantastique*

with regard to a section in the finale, which is entitled *fugato* in Liszt's piano transcription used by Schumann for his analysis: "The following double fugue which Berlioz modestly calls only a *fugato* is certainly not by Bach but is nevertheless clearly constructed according to the rules."*25 There are certainly many more fugal sections in Berlioz's works which would qualify as fugues according to Schumann's criteria.

It seems that the somewhat vague distinction between fugue and *fugato* caused confusion with regard to Berlioz's music. Jan LaRue's definition can be used as a useful guideline: "Fugal beginnings that do not progress beyond the exposition to genuine development of the subject are often called *fugatos*, a useful distinction for style analysis. Thus, if we encounter a series of fugal entries in the development of a sonata form, we would refer to this as a *fugato* rather than a fugue, unless it actually progressed to further development of the fugal subject."*26 Even LaRue's standard cannot be invariably applied. In certain cases even a single exposition will qualify as fugue, taking into consideration its function and proportionate length in the movement of which it is part.

The present study of Berlioz's fugues and *fugatos* is an attempt to provide a systematic description of his fugal procedures as well as to determine his reasons for using fugues in his compositions. The fugues are discussed in chronological order of their composition. Besides a brief consideration of basic factors, special attention is given to several questions which seem to be of special significance in Berlioz's fugues:

1. Is there a countersubject and how is it treated?
2. Are the entries spaced at regular distances (the spacing is marked by the number of measures which separate the entries from one another)?*27
3. What is the extent of harmonic development in the fugue.
4. Does the fugue have a cumulative power? The importance of this aspect has been discussed by Jan LaRue, who points out that "the composer's efforts to pyramid a series of events with rising intensity becomes a major focus for analytical observation."*28

Symphonie fantastique (1830)

First movement. Measures 313-324 — a fugato with seven entries in stretto (4+2+2+1+1). A countersubject is retained in the first violin. The stretto effects a change in the countersubject in that the material presented in m.316 is eliminated in subsequent repetitions of the countersubject and the syncopated motive alone is repeated. The counterpoint of the first violin thus becomes a continuous melody, as we see in Example 1.

Harmonically the fugato is static, since it unfolds above a pedal and reaches the same chord it departs from, though in a different inversion, so that m.324 is a postponed resolution of m.312 with the sonority of mm.306-312 resumed at m.324. The fugato is located after the extensive presentation of the first subject of the movement on the dominant and the long cadential passage (mm.293-312), which leads toward the powerful cadence on the tonic in m.331. The fugato increases the tension toward the cadence on C by means of the pedal on the mediant on which it is built and by the sudden change of texture. Schumann emphasized the importance of this passage: "Later the composer takes it [i.e., the second subject] once more and outlines it most ingeniously; this example shows his method of development at its clearest."²⁹ The harmonic significance of the passage has been stressed by Cone: "This time the key of G, in spite of its persistence, has been broken up by the contrapuntal passage, with its emphasis on E and A. These harmonies, related equally to G (VI and II) and to C (III and VI) create an ambiguous area that is resolved in favor of C by the vigorous I-II-V-I hammered home in the bass."³⁰

The cadence on C leads to another fugato passage (mm.331-359) which contains four entries with imitation at the octave. The spacing of the entries is irregular (9+6+8+6). This passage is the antithesis of the preceding fugato, since it serves as an abatement of the tension and sonority. The avoidance of regularity in the spacing of entries eliminates the danger of mechanical repetition of pitches at different octaves. Moreover, the third and the fourth entries introduce subtle harmonic changes which gradually weaken the powerful effect of the cadence in m.331 and lead to the modulation to A major.

The subsequent contrapuntal passage (mm.360-411) is not fugal, but it employs characteristically fugal devices. The first motive alternates between viola and cello and a countersubject appears in the oboe. Edward Cone has pointed out that according

to the manuscript the countersubject was "a later addition to the otherwise complete texture."³¹ The imitative motive undergoes diminution, with entries spaced at distances of four, then two, and finally one measure from one another. The passage is chromatic and harmonically ambiguous, and it leads to the recapitulation in m.412. It thus follows that the second part of the development section of the movement is contrapuntal, with fugato and imitation used by Berlioz to increase tension.

Fifth movement. Measures 241-305 — a double fugue, consisting of a four-part exposition with regularly-spaced entries (seven measures each) and a countersubject, followed by an episode (mm.269-288) and a counterexposition (mm.289-305) including two entries. The subsequent development section contains a modification of the fugue subject (mm.364-385). The countersubject is left out and the entries are spaced at irregular distances (4+5+6). The fugato is followed by a two-part canon at the distance of one measure (mm.386-394). In addition to fugal procedures Berlioz also introduces a superposition of the fugue subject and the *Dies irae* melody (mm.414-435) so that the fifth movement of the symphony can be described as being fundamentally contrapuntal.

Harold en Italie (1834)

First movement. Measures 1-12 — a four-part exposition with regular entries (3 measures each). The answer is partially real, since the fifth G-D is answered by the fifth D-A, but the stepwise progression in the third measure is modified in the answer, effecting a corresponding modification in the countersubject (Example 2).

As in the fugue in the fifth movement of the *Symphonie fantastique*, Berlioz introduces the countersubject already with the dux. Yet, its introduction toward the end of the subject forms an overlap with the countersubject extending over the comes. The overlap of the countersubject conceals the entry of the comes to a certain extent, so that the regularity of the entries becomes less obvious. The whole exposition serves as preparation for the first statement of the principal theme of *Harold* which appears in the woodwinds in mm.14ff. The countersubject leads smoothly toward this statement in that it establishes the texture of a lyrical melody in the winds above the undulating motion in the strings.

EXAMPLE 1

SYMPHONIE FANTASTIQUE: I

vln. 1
 313
 vlc.
 vla.
 vln. 2
 vla.
 vln. 2
 vla. vlc.

2

HAROLD EN ITALIE: I

3 bsn.
 vlc.
 6 ob.
 vln. 1

A partial exposition appears in mm.30-34. The comes enters after two measures instead of three, resulting in the elimination of the head motive of the countersubject (Example 3). The same technique has been described above with regard to the fugato in the first movement of *Symphonie fantastique* (mm. 313-324).

Measures 328-357 — a fugato, with three entries I-V-I, and two entries on the dominant. The principal subject of the composition serves as the fugato subject, with the head motive of the second subject of the movement used as countersubject. The derivation of the second subject from the first is nowhere more evident than in this passage. The fugato has the function of a build-up of texture, but harmonically it amounts to no more than an extended cadence.

Requiem Mass (1837)

Despite his dislike of conventions and old habits, Berlioz could not ignore the deeply ingrained, traditional relationship between liturgical music and contrapuntal style, since the Requiem contains the largest and most varied selection of contrapuntal devices he ever used. True to his principles, he does not set fugues to the words Amen, Kyrie, and Agnus dei. The Kyrie eleison is set to simple declamation, but the treatment of the Amen is striking. Berlioz obviously felt the need to elaborate the setting of Amen beyond a mere plagal cadence, while avoiding the traditional melismatic fugue. So he devises a harmonic expansion of six cadential formulas which take the place of contrapuntal expansion.*32

The Hosanna is the strictest fugue in the composition. It consists of a three-part exposition with regularly spaced entries (mm.1-22), an episode (mm.22-35), a canonic stretto in two parts (mm.36-43), and a coda (mm.43-65). It is striking that Berlioz does not retain the countersubject throughout the exposition. Strictly speaking, the counterpoint of the comes could not have served in double counterpoint since it contains three fifths (see Example 4), but those fifths could have been avoided through slight alterations had Berlioz wished to retain the countermelody as countersubject.

The Quaerens me is one of Berlioz's most original contrapuntal works, in which he pushes the limits of conventional fugue to their extreme. The movement consists of three sections: a fugal Quaerens me, an imitative Ingemisco, and a modified

EXAMPLE

3

HAROLD EN ITALIE: I

(30)

vlc., vla.

bsn.

vln. 1, 2

4

REQUIEM: Hosanna

5

5

recapitulation of the *Quaerens me*. Contrary to the usual function of a fugal exposition, that of *Quaerens me* does not establish any strong tonal center and it remains harmonically ambiguous. The subject hovers between A major and F# minor and the entry of the comes on the subdominant deprives the exposition of its strongest tonal factor. Moreover, the third entry leads to a cadence on B minor. The counterexposition hesitates between B minor and A major and ends with a cadence in E major. The six-part *Ingemisco* section is followed by a three-part modified recapitulation of the *Quaerens me*. The soprano repeats the opening lines of text (*Quaerens me, sedisti lassus. . .*) while the bass continues directly with *Preces meae* in declamation over a suspended A. The declamation is harmonically of great significance in that it clarifies the tonality as being definitely A major rather than F# minor. The declamation then shifts to the tenor, effecting another modification, since with the third entry of the subject in the bass there is only one contrapuntal voice instead of the two countermelodies in the first exposition. The superposition of texts is abandoned in the recapitulation of the counterexposition (*Qui Mariam absolvisti*), and the declamation establishes the tonality as B minor. The third entry deviates from the exact recapitulation of the counterexposition, and A major is finally reached, with a strong plagal cadence at the end. The harmonic process is outlined in Example 5.

In the *Quaerens me* Berlioz contrasts the linear with the chordal, the former effecting harmonic ambiguity, the latter solving the ambiguity. In its 19th-century modal flavor the *Quaerens me* already foreshadows the deliberately modal writing in *L'Enfance du Christ*.

As in the *Quaerens me*, the *Offertorium* is based on a free application of fugal procedure as means for clear articulation of the formal structure, as illustrated in Figure 1. Despite the seemingly symmetrical structure with regard to formal and tonal organization, the movement is based on the process of progressive contraction, made possible by the extreme length of the original subject as well as by its divisibility into separate motivic units.

The use of the monotone (unison repetition of the motive A-Bb-A) in the chorus against the orchestral fugue occurs also in the *Convoi funèbre* in *Roméo et Juliette*. Its aesthetic significance will be discussed presently.

The subject of the *Dies irae* is similar in structure and char-

EXAMPLE

5

REQUIEM: Quaerens me

EXPOSITION

Musical score for the Exposition of the Requiem, 'Quaerens me'. The score is written for three staves (Treble, Alto, and Bass) in D major (two sharps). The Treble staff contains a vocal melody with various note values and rests. The Alto and Bass staves provide harmonic support with sustained notes and some rhythmic patterns. The section is marked with a double bar line at the end.

RECAPITULATION

Musical score for the Recapitulation of the Requiem, 'Quaerens me'. The score is written for three staves (Treble, Alto, and Bass) in D major (two sharps). The Treble staff contains a vocal melody that repeats the material from the Exposition. The Alto and Bass staves provide harmonic support. The section is marked with a double bar line at the end.

FIGURE

1

THE STRUCTURE OF THE OFFERTORIUM

mm. 1-52 — A four-part exposition in D minor.

mm. 98-105 — a partial counterexposition in D minor.

mm. 53-66 — A bridge, based on a new theme, modulating to F major.

mm. 106-111 — A bridge, modulating to F major.

mm. 67-77 — A partial exposition in F major, one entry only.

mm. 112-130 — A quasi-exposition in F major, with the subject fragmented and dissolved.

mm. 78-84 — A bridge, based on the material of the first bridge, modulating to B \flat major.

mm. 131-154 — A coda in D major.

mm. 85-97 — An episode in B \flat major, new theme with the head motive of the subject serving as counterpoint.

acter to that of the Offertorium. Yet the *Dies irae* is a non-imitative contrapuntal movement. The archaic sound of the movement is not only a result of the use of the Dorian mode (that is, D minor with B \sharp and without leading tone), but especially of the layer technique of superposition of themes and motives. Example 6 illustrates some of the contrapuntal combinations in which the principal subject is used as a *cantus firmus*. It is remarkable that Berlioz arrived at such fundamentally medieval technique with no deliberate intention of imitating old techniques and despite his contempt for "old" music.

*33

The *Requiem aeternam* is an imitative (but not fugal) movement. The use of a countersubject is a device borrowed from fugal technique.

Benvenuto Cellini (1837)

It is noteworthy that the opera begins with a fugato. The first scene consists of two sections, the first of which is a light fugato which accompanies Balducci's frantic search for Teresa. The fugato, which might also be called a tiny fugue, includes an exposition with three entries in C major (I-V-I) and a fourth entry in E minor. Following an episode a counterexposition in C minor appears, but instead of the usual tonic-dominant-tonic pattern there is a piling of imitations at the fifth: C minor, G minor, D minor, A minor, with a cadence in C major which opens the second section of the scene. The organization of the section reflects Berlioz's careful consideration of the dramatic situation. The first exposition accompanies Balducci's search in the room, the episode articulates his discovery of Teresa, and the counterexposition is a picturesque depiction of the piling up of his requests for his walkingstick, his gloves, his dagger, and his case.

The finale of the first act begins with a fugato (Ah, *Maître drole*) of the three groups of women, with two entries in B \flat major (I-V) and a third entry in G minor.

The overture *Carnaval romain* (1843) is based on the love duet from the first act (*O Teresa, vous que j'aime*) and the carnival scene from the second act (*Venez, venez, peuple de Rome*). In the process of converting the operatic finale into a symphonic allegro, Berlioz made a few changes in the original operatic score, the most significant of which is placing the second theme of the operatic scene at the beginning of the overture, where it

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EXAMPLE

6

REQUIEM: Dies irae

countersubject, m. 53

countersubject, mm. 25 & 53

cantus firmus etc.

m. 68

etc.

m. 104

becomes a principal motive. Immediately after the recapitulation has begun Berlioz introduces a seven-measures fugato on the principal motive, which does not appear in the original score. The fugato precedes a surprising modulation to $E\flat$ major, indicating that the fugato is not harmonic but textural, in that it breaks the full and brilliant texture of the beginning of the recapitulation in preparation for the long and chromatic passage which follows.

Roméo et Juliette (1839)

Introduction. The first section (mm. 1-65) qualifies as a short fugue, since the material presented in the exposition is further developed. The only deviation from the conventions of fugue is that the first exposition does not introduce all four voices in successive entries. The structure of the section is illustrated in Figure 2.

In m. 44 a new theme is superposed over the exposition in D major. The new theme corresponds to the fugue subject in its length, but the exact correspondence is immediately abandoned and a more contrapuntal relationship between the two themes is established, as shown in Example 7.

One can draw a parallel between the introduction of the superposed theme here and the introduction of the principal subject in the slow introduction of *Harold en Italie*. In both cases the fugue prepares for the entrance of a new theme. The superposition itself has already been mentioned as one of Berlioz's most characteristic contrapuntal devices.

The *Convoi funèbre* which was entitled "Marche fuguée" by Berlioz himself is extremely simple in structure, as outlined in Figure 3. The close relationship between the *Convoi funèbre* and the *Offertorium* of the *Requiem* has been mentioned above. Both introduce a "monotone" (here a unison repetition of the pitch E) against a fugue, and the fugue subjects of both are very long. The use of the monotone raises an interesting aesthetic question. A monotone is the opposite of a cumulative development, which, as indicated above, is an important trait of fugue writing in general. It follows that Berlioz makes use of fugal writing to counterbalance the completely static effect of the monotone.*³⁴ The long subject is contracted in the second exposition, but, unlike the progressive contraction in the *Offertorium* of the *Requiem*, the full length is resumed in the choral exposition. The countermelody of the comes is not retained as

FIGURE

2

THE STRUCTURE OF THE COMBAT SCENE:
ROMÉO ET JULIETTE

mm. 1-8 — An exposition in B minor, two entries with a tonal answer.

mm. 9-19 — An episode based on entries of first and second violin in imitations of the head motive.

mm. 19/20-27 — A counterexposition, two entries with a real answer.

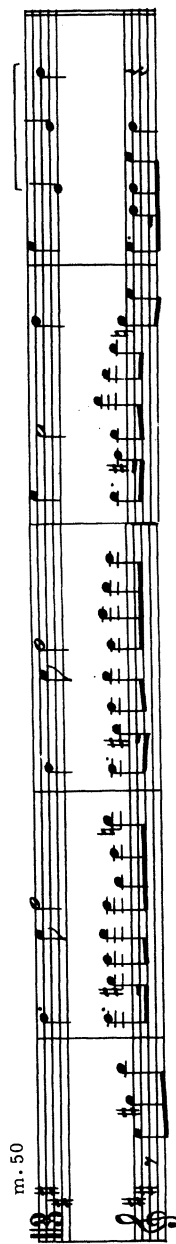
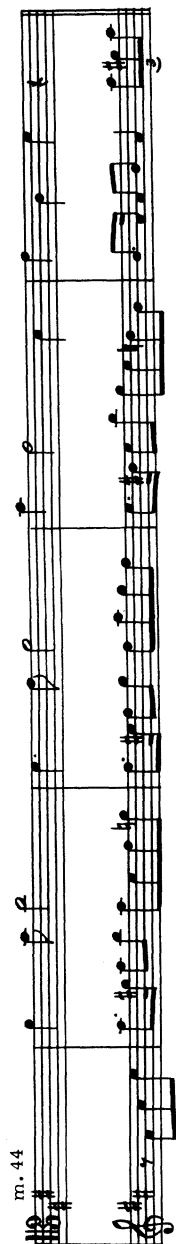
mm. 28-43 — An episode based on imitations of the second motive of the subject.

mm. 43/44-57 — An exposition in D major, five irregularly spaced entries (4+2+4+3+4).

EXAMPLE

7

ROMÉO ET JULIETTE: Introduction



FIGURE

3

THE STRUCTURE OF THE CONVOI FUNÈBRE

First Section (Orchestral Fugue in E minor)

mm.1-40 — An exposition, four parts with regularly-spaced entries (10 measures each).

mm.41-53 — An episode, with a modulation to C major.

mm.54-61 — An exposition in E minor, four entries in gradual stretto (3+2+1+2).

mm.62-66 — A bridge.

Second Section (Choral Fugue in E major)

mm.67-94 — An exposition, three parts with regularly-spaced entries (10 measures each).

mm.95-113 — A coda of the chorus.

mm.114-142 — An orchestral code, based on a gradual dissolution of the subject.

countersubject in subsequent entries, and the reason for the avoidance of a countersubject appears to be the constant harmonic modification. The two-part counterpoint in the second entry supports the tonality of the comes, that is, the dominant B minor, which is naturally stressed by the real answer. On the other hand, the four-part writing in the fourth entry obscures the dominant and directs the harmony toward the tonic, E minor (Example 8).

La Damnation de Faust (1846)

The grotesque Amen fugue has been extensively discussed in previous studies, and Berlioz's own descriptions of contemporary Amen fugues mentioned in the foregoing discussion would clarify any possible doubt with regard to its parodistic character. Alfred Einstein pointed out that Mozart's *Ein musikalischer Spass* "provides, in fact, a negative key to Mozart's whole esthetics."³⁵ The same can be said about the Amen fugue with regard to Berlioz. Its structure is that of a "school fugue": an exposition, a counterexposition, and a stretto.

Part II (scene four) begins with a fugue which belongs to the large group of Berlioz's slow fugues. Yet the subject, unlike those of the *Offertorium* from the *Requiem* and the *Convoi funèbre* from *Roméo et Juliette*, is not longer than any conventional fugue subject. The fugue consists of an exposition (mm. 1-14), an episode (mm. 15-17), and a counterexposition (mm. 23-30), with a recitative which precedes the counterexposition (mm. 18-23). The recitative modulates to the dominant, but the tonic is resumed in the counterexposition, so that the fugue itself is harmonically stable. There is no countersubject so that the contrapuntal material is continuously varied with each entry, reaching an excited climax with the syncopated counter-melody of the counterexposition (Example 9).

Te Deum (1850)

The *Te Deum* begins with Berlioz's longest and harmonically most complex fugue. The movement consists of three principal sections separated from one another by strong cadences. The architectonic structure is further articulated by means of recurring passages. Figure 4 and Example 10 outline the formal organization of the *Te Deum* fugue.

As indicated by the horizontal alignment of sections and pas-

EXAMPLE

8

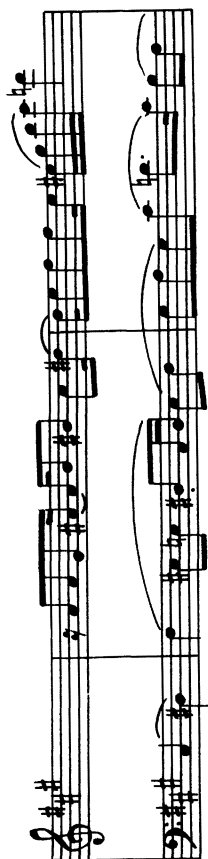
ROMÉO ET JULIETTE: Convoi funèbre

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system, starting at measure 11, features a piano introduction in D major with a 3/4 time signature. It consists of two staves: a treble staff with a melody of eighth and sixteenth notes, and a bass staff with a harmonic accompaniment of eighth and sixteenth notes. The second system, starting at measure 30, continues the piece with a more complex texture. It includes a treble staff with a melodic line, a middle staff with a rhythmic accompaniment, and a bass staff with a harmonic line. The key signature changes to D minor, indicated by the natural sign on the F# in the bass staff. The score is marked with measure numbers 11 and 30 in circles.

EXAMPLE

9

LA DAMNATION DE FAUST: II, iv



FIGURE

4

THE STRUCTURE OF THE TE DEUM

First Section *36	Second Section	Third Section (Coda)
mm. 17-37 - A four-part exposition in F major with regularly-spaced entries and with a countersubject.	mm. 95-122 - An exposition in B \flat major in stretto, modulating back to F major.	
mm. 38-43 - An imitative episode in C major, based on a motive from the subject.	mm. 123-126 - A recapitulation of the imitative episode in F major.	
mm. 45-55 - An episode in A minor, based on the head motive of the fugue subject, modulating back to the tonic.	mm. 127-135 - An episode based on the head motive, modulating toward G minor, halting on the dominant of G.	mm. 136-145 - An episode in G minor, based on the head motive of the fugue subject.
mm. 56-78 - A counterexposition which acts as development of the material. The entry in m. 63 deviates from previous harmonization and modulates to G minor (see Example 10), and finally to C minor. The countersubject is not used.		
mm. 79-87 - An episode based on the head motive of the countersubject in imitations.		
mm. 88-94 - A pedal on F with chordal declamation, leading to a hold on the dominant of B \flat major.		mm. 146-156 - A pedal on F with chordal declamation, leading chromatically to the dominant of B major, which is the key of Tibi omnes.

EXAMPLE

10

TE DEUM: Hymne

Exposition (38)

Counterexposition (56)

The image displays two musical staves, each with three systems of staves (treble, alto, and bass clefs). The top system is labeled 'Exposition (38)' and the bottom system is labeled 'Counterexposition (56)'. Both systems feature complex melodic lines with various note values, rests, and dynamic markings. The 'Exposition' system includes a large, sweeping melodic line in the bass staff that spans across the first two systems. The 'Counterexposition' system features a more intricate melodic line in the bass staff, with a large, sweeping melodic line in the alto staff that spans across the first two systems. The notation is in a standard musical style, with notes, rests, and dynamic markings clearly visible.

sages, there are elements of sonata form fused into the fugue. The exposition on the subdominant (mm. 95-122) substitutes for a full recapitulation on the tonic, but the cadential passage which follows acts as a recapitulation and forms a dominant-tonic relationship with the parallel passage in mm. 38-43. The treatment of the countersubject also reflects the influence of sonata form in that it joins the fugue subject only in the first exposition and reappears afterwards only as a contrasting theme in the episode, mm. 79-87.

L'Enfance du Christ (1850-54)

Each of the three parts of the composition begins with a fugue, the third of which is closely derived from the second. The complex history of the composition of *L'Enfance du Christ* is significant in studying those fugues. Berlioz composed *La Fuite en Egypte* in 1850 as an independent cantata. It took him four years to decide to add a sequel, *L'Arrivée à Saïfs*, and the derivation of its opening movement from the overture of *La Fuite en Egypte* served as a device for unification, which probably also helped him to revive in himself the particular mood in which *La Fuite en Egypte* had originated.^{*37} A few months later Berlioz decided to add another part as an introduction to *La Fuite en Egypte*, and it was only natural that he would relate it to the existing parts by turning once more to fugue.

Berlioz described the overture to *La Fuite en Egypte* as a "little fugal overture, for a small orchestra, in an innocent style, in F# minor without the leading tone; a mode which is no longer a mode, which resembles plainchant, and which the scholars will describe as being a derivative of some Phrygian or Lydian mode of ancient Greece, which is absolutely not the case, but in which resides the melancholic and somewhat simple character of the old folk ballads."^{*38} The third part begins with an abbreviated version of that overture with the rhythm modified, a vocal part superposed over the instrumental fugue in the manner of the fugue from *La Damnation de Faust*, and with a transposition to G# minor. Figure 5 and Examples 11 and 12 illustrate the structural relationship between the two fugues.

The absence of the leading tone places a strong stress on the subdominant which appears as a long pedal sustained through most of the episode in the two versions of the fugue. In both movements the climax is reached not through a progressive cumulation of contrapuntal activity, but, on the contrary, following an abatement of such activity and the presentation of the

FIGURE 5

La Fuite en Egypte

Rhythmic Modification in
L'Arivée à Saïs

(mm. 1-4 — Introduction).

mm. 1-23 — An exposition — four regularly spaced entries (four measures each) and a modified fifth entry extended through spinning out of its second motive. (See Example 11).

mm. 5-43

mm. 24-36 — A non-imitative episode.

mm. 43-56.

mm. 37-55 — A counterexposition — four entries instead of five, the fourth being an exact repetition of the fifth entry from the exposition.

mm. 56-68 — a repeat of the episode with a modulation to A major.

mm. 68-83 — A modulatory exposition consisting of four entries at ascending fifths. (A-E-B-F \sharp). At that point the contrapuntal writing subsides.

mm. 84-100 — An episode, based on a new motive, leading to a hold on the dominant.

mm. 56-82 — A bridge and a far-reaching modification of the episode (Example 12).

mm. 101-110 — a quasi-exposition. The subject is introduced by each of the four voices but without contrapuntal accompaniment.

mm. 83-97.

mm. 111-164 — A non-contrapuntal coda.

mm. 98-106 — A cadential phrase.

subject in pure and transparent unison. Even the stretto exposition does not result in increasing density of the texture.

The Marche nocturne which follows the introductory recitative of *Le Songe d'Hérode* approaches the *Te Deum* fugue in its elaborate harmonic structure. The fugue is divided into two principal sections by the intervening recitative of the Roman soldiers. The structure of the Marche nocturne can be summarized as follows:

mm. 1-19 — An introductory ostinato passage.

mm. 20-50 — A five-part exposition with tonal answers. Berlioz avoids regularity by a subtle change in the third entry which comes in after five measures instead of the space of five measures and a half which separate the other entries from one another. The fifth entry presents an augmentation of the trunk of the subject which consequently takes ten measures instead of five and a half. There is no countersubject, and the contrapuntal development reaches a climax with the introduction of a syncopated counterpoint above the augmented subject.

mm. 51-65 — An episode leading to the dominant.

mm. 66-76 — A partial repetition of the ostinato passage on the dominant (G minor).

mm. 77-96 — A counterexposition with five entries again, but with a gradual stretto (4+4+3+2 1/2). The fifth entry is in the soprano, and, unlike the augmented entry in the first exposition, it consists of the head motive only, reaching an inverted pedal on the dominant.

mm. 96-127 — An episode based on material from the first exposition combined with the head motive of the fugue subject, modulating to the mediant (E^b major) and back to C minor.

mm. 128-138 — An exposition with dense stretto entries.

mm. 139-171 — A recitative section.

mm. 172-195 — An episode based on entries of the head motive of the subject in stretto and at various intervals resulting in ambiguous harmony.

mm. 195-220 — An episode based on material of the first episode, modulating to A^b major.

EXAMPLE 11

L'ENFANCE DU CHRIST: Part III



12

L'ENFANCE DU CHRIST: Part II and III (variant)



mm.221-229 – An exposition in F minor with two entries in stretto and an inverted pedal on the tonic (mm.224-229) which is related to the inverted pedal in mm.91-96.

mm.230-258 – A coda, based on a gradual dissolution of the subject.

Despite the use of traditional fugal devices, like strettos, fragmentation of the subject in the episodes, augmentation, and especially the harmonic progression through related keys (C minor, G minor, E \flat major, A \flat major, and F minor) there is no progressive cumulation of power in the fugue. The climax is reached with the fifth entry in the first exposition. The repeat of the austere ostinato before the counterexposition breaks the continuity and prevents any cumulation of energy. The counterexposition is indeed more concentrated than the exposition because of the stretto, but its texture is thinner and the energetic syncopated counterpoint from the exposition is missing. The resumption of the fugue after the recitative has the effect of a gradual waning, leading to the final dissolution of the thematic material.

The choral ensemble *Que leur pieds meurtris* is an elaborate fugato which, unlike the three fugues discussed above, is based on the idea of a constant build-up. The fugato deviates from the conventions of fugal writing in that the four-part exposition in C major is preceded by an entry in D minor and an answer in A minor, both of which lack a leading tone and are tonally ambiguous. The exposition is followed by two entries of pairs of voices in parallel thirds and a long episode, which contains one entry of the subject on the subdominant which leads to the half cadence which concludes the fugato.

Les Troyens (1858)

There are no fugues in the opera, but the powerful ensemble *Châtiment effroyable* is based on fugal principles, though not on direct fugal procedures. The ensemble of eight soloists and a four-part chorus is divided into three groups of soloists with the chorus acting as a fourth group. The material is presented as follows:

1. The subject (*Châtiment. . .*) in F \sharp minor presented by Enée, Hellenus, and Chorèbe.
2. The subject in E minor presented by Ascane, Cassandre,

and Hécube, with a countersubject (*Un frisson*) sung by Enée and Hellenus.

3. The subject in D minor presented by Chorèbe, Panthé, and Priam, with the countersubject sung by Ascane, Cassandre, and Hécube, with counterpoint sung by Enée and Hellenus.

Elaborate contrapuntal treatment continues in the next section, in which a modified version of the countersubject prevails. The contrapuntal division of the ensemble is used by Berlioz to produce the monumental effect, which, as pointed out by Berlioz himself more than ten years before the completion of *Les Troyens*, cannot be achieved by merely employing a large group of performers.

No doubt grand music like the oratorios of Handel, Bach, Haydn, and Beethoven gains very much by being thus performed; but after all, in this case it is only a question of more or less doubling the parts, whereas a composer writing for such a colossal orchestra and choir, and acquainted with their manifold resources, would inevitably produce something as novel in detail as it would be grand in its entirety. This has never yet been done. In all works considered as monumental, the form and tissue are alike. They are produced with all pomp in huge halls, but would not lose much if heard in a smaller room, with fewer performers.*39

Béatrice et Bénédict (1862)

The wedding cantata in "grotesque style" is the sequel of the Amen fugue in *La Damnation de Faust*. The extremely simple structure requires no special comment. The grotesque elements include the Baroque sign motive on the word "mort," typical Baroque figuration, the clumsy pedal on the dominant, and the ridiculously repetitious coda motive (Example 13).

The last aspect to be discussed in the present study is the reasons which motivated or inspired Berlioz to employ fugal procedures in his music. Unlike his German contemporaries, he felt no respect for contrapuntal tradition and his decision to turn to fugal writing always stemmed from the specific requirements of each individual composition. There are certain dramatic situations which inspired in Berlioz's imagination the musical image of fugue. Somewhat ironically, scenes of crowd and confusion are depicted through the most orderly and tradi-

tional musical procedure. To this group belongs the combat scene from *Roméo et Juliette*, the fugato *Ah, maître drole* from *Benvenuto Cellini*, the fugato *Que leur pieds* from *L'Enfance du Christ*, the fugue from the finale of the *Symphonie fantastique*, and, indirectly, the opening scene from *Benvenuto Cellini*, where the confusion exists in Balducci's mind.

The second principal motivation for using fugue is the idea of slow march or procession, to which the general concept of passage of time can be related. This group includes the *Convoi funèbre* from *Roméo et Juliette* and the three fugues from *L'Enfance du Christ*, one of which is a nocturnal march while the other two depict the wandering through the desert.

The fugue which opens the second part of *La Damnation de Faust* probably stems from the association of fugue with scholarship (Richard Strauss's later association in *Also sprach Zarathustra* naturally springs to mind). The spacious mountainscape which inspired the first movement of *Harold en Italie* is faithfully depicted through a slow fugue.

The programmatic inspiration of each fugue is naturally related to its general character. The fugues of the first group are all based on the idea of a constant build-up, which coincides with the traditional fugal idea of rising intensity. The *Hosanna* fugue from the *Requiem* also belongs to this group. The processional fugues of the second group are based on the idea of crescendo-diminuendo with the climax at the middle or even closer to the beginning of the piece. The first realization of such an idea is the second movement of *Harold en Italie* which is indeed a procession, but not fugal.

Every discussion of program music is likely to raise the old question of the extent of the influence of programmatic inspiration on the shaping of the musical idea. As in other cases no definite answer is possible. For example, the idea of the *Convoi funèbre* could have been suggested by the dramatic situation. Yet the idea of a slow fugue with a choral monotone is already employed in the *Offertorium* from the *Requiem* written two years before *Roméo et Juliette*. One should not exclude the possibility that Berlioz selected the particular scene from the drama in order to work out the same idea once more.

The group of processional fugues, which includes the *Offertorium*, consists of slow fugues only. One of the chief traits of the slow fugues is that they make it possible to sustain long melodic lines much beyond the span of their own melodic drive

EXAMPLE

13

BÉATRICE ET BÉNÉDICT: Épithalame grotesque (No. 6)

Typical Baroque Motives



pour- quoi sur--vi si doux des ins---tants si doux

mou---rez

The image shows two staves of music. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It contains a melodic line with various note values and rests, including a long dash indicating a sustained note. The bottom staff is in bass clef with the same key signature, providing a harmonic accompaniment. The lyrics are written below the notes.

Pedal Points



Mou - - - rez tend--res et poux

This block shows a musical example of a pedal point. It consists of two staves. The top staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The bottom staff has a bass clef and the same key signature. The melody in the top staff is relatively simple, while the bass line features a long, sustained note (the pedal point) under the first two measures, indicated by a horizontal line with a dot at the end. The lyrics are written below the notes.



doux pour-quoi sur - - vivre à des ins - tants

This block continues the musical example from the previous one. It shows two staves in the same key signature. The melody continues in the top staff, and the bass line features another sustained note (pedal point) under the first two measures of this section, indicated by a horizontal line with a dot at the end. The lyrics are written below the notes.

by means of imitation. In this respect the slow fugues are closely related to the group of long slow melodies which are highly characteristic of Berlioz's style, like the opening theme of *Roméo seul* and the principal subject of the *Scène d'amour* from *Roméo et Juliette*, the love duet from *Benvenuto Cellini* and its instrumental version in *Carnaval romain*, the theme of the third movement of the *Symphonie fantastique*, and the clarinet solo in the pantomime from the first act of *Les Troyens*.

The *Quaerens me* from the *Requiem* and the *Te Deum* do not belong to either of the groups described above. The unusual merger of linear and harmonic factors in the *Quaerens me* has been discussed above. The *Te Deum* is Berlioz's only attempt at constructing a fugue along the lines of a large sonata form.

Fugue writing is represented in various ways in almost all of Berlioz's major works. He had no special respect for the fugue, nor did he treat it as an obligatory branch of the activity of a professional composer. Yet fugal writing constituted an integral part of his technique and was closely related to his style and to his world of images and sound.



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- 2 Edgar Istel, "Berlioz und Cornelius," *DIE MUSIK*, 5(1903-04), 366-371.
- 3 Richard Strauss, ed. *INSTRUMENTATIONSLEHRE VON HECTOR BERLIOZ* (Leipzig, 1905), p.264.
- 4 Donald F. Tovey, *BEETHOVEN* (London, 1945), p.65, and *A COMPANION TO BEETHOVEN'S PIANO SONATAS* (London, 1951), p.265.
- 5 Walter Piston, *COUNTERPOINT* (New York, 1947), p.80.
- 6 Jacques Barzun, *BERLIOZ AND THE ROMANTIC CENTURY* (Boston, 1950), vol. 2, 455 ("Index of Misconceptions about Berlioz").
- 7 Piston, pp. 11-12.
- 8 Georges Favre, "Berlioz et la fugue," *REVUE MUSICALE*, 233(1956), 34-44.
- 9 Hector Berlioz, "Considérations sur la musique religieuse," *LE CORRESPONDANT*, first year, no. 7 (April 11, 1829), pp.54-55. Reprinted in J.G. Prod'homme, *L'ENFANCE DU CHRIST* (Paris, 1898), pp.287-293.
- 10 Hector Berlioz, *TRAITÉ D'INSTRUMENTATION ET D'ORCHESTRATION MODERNE* (Paris, 1844), trans. Theodore Front (New York, 1948), p.247.
- 11 Strauss, p.264.
- 12 Hector Berlioz, *MÉMOIRES* (Paris, 1870), vol. 2, 250-251, trans. Ernest Newman (New York, 1966), p.412.
- 13 *MÉMOIRES*, vol. 1, p.66, trans. Newman, p.47.
- 14 See *MÉMOIRES*, vol. 1, pp.64-66.
- 15 For example, in a letter to Stephen Heller: "[Is it] true that the creed of all who profess to love high and serious music is: 'There is no god but Bach, and Mendelssohn is his prophet?'" (*MÉMOIRES*, vol. 2, 61, trans. Newman, p. 285).
- 16 *MÉMOIRES*, vol. 2, 119-122.
- 17 Hector Berlioz, "Étude critique des symphonies de Beethoven," *A TRAVERS CHANTS* (Paris, 1862), pp.17-62.
- 18 *Ibid.*, p.25.
- 19 *Ibid.*, p.56.
- 20 *Ibid.*, p.59.
- 21 *Ibid.*, p.60.
- 22 *A TRAVERS CHANTS*, pp.1-16. The essay was derived from the article "Beaux-Arts, Aperçu sur la musique et la musique romantique," *LE CORRESPONDANT*, October 22, 1830.
- 23 M.D. Calvocoressi, *THE PRINCIPLES AND METHODS OF MUSICAL CRITICISM* (London, 1931), p.38.

- 24 Favre, Berlioz et la fugue," pp.42-43.
- 25 Robert Schumann, A review of the *Symphonie fantastique*, NEUE ZEITSCHRIFT FÜR MUSIK, no. 3 (August 11, 1835), trans. Edward Cone, ed., *Fantastic Symphony*, p.241.
- 26 Jan LaRue, GUIDELINES FOR STYLE ANALYSIS (New York, 1970), p.178.
- 27 The spacing of the entries in fugal expositions is a significant rhythmic factor. Irregularly spaced entries break the symmetry and increase the tension inherent in the fugal exposition, whereas regularly spaced entries form balanced and symmetrical expositions. The importance of that factor is demonstrated in Bach's *Die Kunst der Fuge*, where the first and the second contrapuncti begin with regularly spaced entries, with the balance disturbed in the more elaborate third contrapunctus. Bach seems to have preferred the irregular pattern, since, for example, 17 of the fugues of book 1 of the *Well-Tempered Clavier* use the irregular pattern, compared with 6 which are regular (the two-part E minor fugue naturally cannot be considered). In the case of fugues which are part of larger compositions, there are specific factors which influence or determine the choice of pattern. For example, the dance rhythm of four-measure phrases of the scherzo of Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* imposes itself on the fugal exposition which opens the movement, and the meditative style of the first movement of the C# minor quartet (op.131) is further enhanced by the regularly spaced fugal entries.
- 28 LaRue, GUIDELINES, p.179.
- 29 NEUE ZEITSCHRIFT FÜR MUSIK, no. 3 (August 7, 1835), trans. Cone, p.238.
- 30 Cone, p.258.
- 31 Ibid, p.259.
- 32 It is noteworthy that a similar, though much simpler, harmonic extension occurs at the end of the *Lacrymosa* section of the *Requiem* of Cherubini (composed in 1836). Cherubini sets no fugues on *Amen*, *Kyrie*, and *Agnus dei*, and it is remarkable that the *Requiem* of the master of academic counterpoint is on the whole less contrapuntal than that of the "rebel" Berlioz.
- 33 See his comments on the "ancients contrapuntists" in his essay "*La musique à l'église*," *A TRAVERS CHANTS*, p.260.
- 34 Another example of a monotone is the *Judex credere* from the *Te Deum*, in which the static effect is counterbalanced through bold harmonic modulations. The harmonic shifts, however, force Berlioz to change the pitch of the monotone, which is not the case with the two fugues.
- 35 Alfred Einstein, *MOZART* (London, 1946), p.161.
- 36 The fugue is preceded by a sixteen-measures introduction.
- 37 See J.G. Prod'homme, *L'ENFANCE DU CHRIST* (Paris, 1898) for a detailed discussion of the subject.
- 38 Hector Berlioz, *LES GROTESQUES DE LA MUSIQUE* (Paris, 1859), p.169. Quoted in Prod'homme, pp.9ff.
- 39 MÉMOIRES, 2, pp.182-183, trans. Newman, pp.367-368.