

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 1977, AT 8:30 P.M.

DOROTHY CHANDLER PAVILION

LOS ANGELES MASTER CHORALE and SINFONIA ORCHESTRA

ROGER WAGNER, Music Director

Berlioz: *The Damnation of Faust*, Dramatic Legend, Op. 24



Roger Wagner

Conductor

Maureen Forrester

Contralto

Marguerite

Harry Theyard

Tenor

Faust

Paul Plishka

Bass-baritone

Mephistopheles

Douglas Lawrence

Baritone

Brander

Dorothy Wade

Concertmaster

PART I

A Plain in Hungary

Dance of the Peasants

Recitative (Faust) — *I hear the sound of arms*

Hungarian March (Rakoczy March)

PART II

In the Forests and Glades

a) Easter Hymn — *Christ Is Risen on High*

b) Recitative (Faust) — *Ye Sounds that Breathe of Heav'n*

Recitative (Mephisto) — *My Sweet Innocent Child*

Auerbach's Cellar in Leipzig — Chorus of Drinkers

a) Brander's Song

b) Fugue on Brander's Song — *Amen*

Mephistopheles' Song — *They Say a Monarch Mighty*

Woods and Meadows on the Banks of the Elbe

a) Aria of Mephistopheles — *Among the Roses Softly the Night Discloses*

b) Chorus of Gnomes and Sylphs (Faust's Dream)

c) Waltz of the Sylphs

d) Recitative (Faust) — *Marguerite! Do I Dream?*

Soldiers' Chorus — *Round the City Battlements Rise*

Students' Song — *I am Nox Stellata*

Soldiers' and Students' Chorus

INTERMISSION

PART III

The House of Marguerite — Evening

Recitative (Mephistopheles) — *She Is Here*

Recitative (Marguerite) — *How Heavy Is The Air*

(Marguerite) — *King of Thule*

A Square Before Marguerite's House

a) Invocation — *Ye Sprites of Fire and Flame Eternal*

b) Minuet of the Will-o'-the-Wisps

c) Mephistopheles' Serenade and Chorus of the Will-o'-the-Wisps

Marguerite's Room

Recitative (Marguerite) — *O Heav'n! Who Is It?*

Duet (Marguerite and Faust) — *Angel of Heaven*

Trio and Chorus — *Tis late! Let us away*

PART IV

Romance (Marguerite) — *The Calm of Peace so Gentle*

Soldiers' Chorus — *The Call of the Trumpet*

Recitative and Chase (Mephistopheles) — *In the Deep Vault of Heaven*

The Ride to the Abyss (Faust) — *Tis Her Cry that I hear*

Pandemonium (Chorus) — *Ha! Irimiru Karabrao!*

Epilogue

a) On Earth (six basses) — *Then Silence reigned Hell*

b) In Heaven (Chorus of Celestial Spirits) — *Praise to God in the Highest*

c) The Apotheosis of Marguerite — *Ascent to Heaven*

The musical presentations of the Los Angeles Master Chorale and Sinfonia Orchestra are sponsored by the Los Angeles Master Chorale Association, a Resident Group of the Music Center, and by grants from the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors and County Music Commission, and the National Endowment for the Arts, a Federal Agency in Washington, D.C.

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LA DAMNATION DE FAUST

La Damnation de Faust, long recognized as one of Berlioz's mightiest masterpieces, has also for more than a century been rated as one of his most genuinely popular creations. Two numbers, the Rakóczy March ending Part I and the Sylphs' Dance in Part II, even belong to the hit parade class — if their being included in James J. Fuld's *The Book of World-Famous Music* (1971) properly measures such success. When first performed at Pesth, February 15, 1846, the Rakóczy March based on a Hungarian air named after Francis Rakóczy II, leader of a seven-year revolt (1704-1711) against the Austrians, drove the Pesth public wild with enthusiasm. By 1886, the Sylphs' Dance, which pictures grace and litheness, had become so universally known that Saint-Saëns could tickle his audiences that year with a parody of it in *Elephants (Carnival of Animals)*.

Ironically, in view of the present universal acceptance of the whole as well as individual parts, *La Damnation* when first produced entire December 6, 1846, at the Opéra-Comique, Paris, proved too novel and heterogeneous a work to win immediate favor. Berlioz who classed it as a *légende dramatique* in 1846, had first considered calling it an *opéra de concert*. After its cool reception at the Paris premiere he later on thought in December 1848 of expanding it into a full-fledged opera entitled *Méphistophelès* with libretto by Scribe, for premiere at Drury Lane, London. Fortunately he desisted. After only minor changes, he finally published the entire work, as we now know it, in 1854.

Among the critics' complaints that Berlioz tried to forestall in the preface published in 1854 was the locale of Part I. Goethe's Faust never visited Hungary. Yet Part I of *La Damnation* opens with Faust alone at sunrise in Hungarian fields enjoying solitude and welcoming the return of spring. Hungarian peasants enter to enliven the scene. Next enter soldiers, greeted by Faust as a "proud and joyful sons of the Danube with fire in their eyes." The theme of the Rakóczy March, to which the soldiers now triumphantly step forward, is according to Berlioz's own note in the published libretto "very old, by an unknown author; it is the battle song of the Hungarians."

Modern research summarized in Apel's *Harvard Dictionary of Music* credits the march theme to János Bihari (1764-1827) who composed it in 1809.

Only in Part II of *La Damnation* does Berlioz begin setting episodes from Goethe — and even then with frequent license. Faust's boredom with books leads him to the brink of suicide, from which he is saved by sounds of the Easter Hymn. Mephistopheles materializes out of nothingness inviting the aged philosopher to enjoy delights Faust never dreamed of. At this juncture Goethe's Faust makes his pact with the devil, but Berlioz's Faust waits until much later. They visit Auerbach's wine cellar at Leipzig and hear Brander sing the Rat's Song. Poisoned by the kitchen maid, the rat scurries about as if in heat and then dies. Brander's drinking companions ridicule the rat's "rest in peace" requiem with a mock heroic Amen fugue based on the first notes of Brander's Rat Song. Mephistopheles follows this with a Song of the Flea, satirizing political sycophants who will bow before even a biting insect dressed in court velvet.

Faust remains unmoved by all this roistering. Mephistopheles decides next to lure him with a beautiful maiden, preparing him with a dream sequence on the banks of the Elbe. After beautiful airy spirits have enticed him, Marguerite appears. By her window pass soldiers and students. Part II ends with the soldiers' and students' songs riotously combined — an idea suggested to Berlioz by Monsigny's adroit combination of two folkish songs at the close of Act II in *Le Déserteur* (1769).

Part III begins in Marguerite's bedroom, into which Faust has crept. Upon her entry he hides while she sings first of a handsome lover whom she has never met and then the ballad of the King of Thule who remained faithful to his lady a lifetime after her death. Mephistopheles conjures up dancing will-o'-the-wisps to distract Marguerite. He then mocks her with a moralizing serenade. "Never trust any lover until the wedding ring is on your finger," he advises her in a song all the more cruel because already he is encompassing her ruin. He withdraws so that Faust and Marguerite can bill and coo. But all of a sudden Faust rushes out while gossiping neighbors tell her mother what was afoot in the bedroom.

At the start of Part IV Marguerite

alone in her room bewails her abandonment. Faust meantime consoles himself by communing with Nature in the great out-of-doors. Mephistopheles interrupts his musings to announce that Marguerite is in a dungeon sentenced to death for having poisoned her mother with a sleeping potion left her by Faust. "Save her," Faust begs Mephistopheles, who agrees, but only on condition that Faust deed his soul to hell. Away they gallop, supposedly to save her, until suddenly they both plunge headlong into the abyss. Faust is now devoured by flames amid the general pandemonium of hellish jabberwocky. In an epilogue, Marguerite ascends on high to join the angelic host.

Because *La Damnation* ends thus, some critics have contended that Berlioz should have called it "The Apotheosis of Marguerite." So far as the text goes, Berlioz wrote some of Part IV himself, commissioned Almiré Gandonnière to write some of the first three parts, and used Gérard de Nerval's translation of Goethe (1827) for the rest. Already in *Huit Scènes de Faust* (composed in the autumn of 1828), Berlioz had used Nerval's same translation for "eight scenes" that in revised form and different order reappear in *La Damnation* (Easter Song, Peasants' Dance, Sylphs' Dance, Song of the Rat, Song of the Flea, King of Thule, Marguerite's Soliloquy, Mephistopheles's moralizing serenade). The work as now known therefore represents the combination of eight scenes that were originally conceived for a ballet never produced — scenes that were then published at his own expense as opus 1 and only much later incorporated with revision into a work of vastly greater scope. To justify the lengthy time span for the gestation of *La Damnation* Berlioz could invoke Goethe himself, whose first draft of 1773-1775, and *Fragment* of 1790 were not followed by the publication of Part I of *Faust* until 1808 and of Part II until 1831.

This concert is being dedicated to the memory of Lois Spain who was associated with the Los Angeles Master Chorale Association as Executive Secretary for eight years.

WHO'S WHO



Canadian contralto **Maureen Forrester** has become a legend on five continents through her performances in opera, concert, with orchestras and on recordings.

Miss Forrester's Metropolitan Opera debut took place February 10, 1975 when she appeared as Erda in *Das Rheingold* in the first performances of Wagner's *Ring* since 1962. March 15, 1975, she was Erda in *Siegfried*, thus embarking on another chapter of her extraordinary career. She has scored with the New York City Opera and Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires as Cornelia in Handel's *Julius Caesar*, as well as with the San Francisco Opera in *La Gioconda*, with the Toronto Opera in *Die Walkure*, at the Caramoor Festival in *Dido and Aeneas*, in Ottawa in *Marriage of Figaro* and *Un Ballo in Maschera*, and as Brangane in *Tristan und Isolde* with the Opera Company of Quebec, Zubin Mehta conducting.

A favorite of symphony orchestra conductors, she has performed under the baton of such eminent conductors as Eugene Ormandy, Herbert von Karajan, Leonard Bernstein, William Steinberg, Seiji Ozawa, Zubin Mehta, George Szell, Otto Klemperer, Bruno Walter, Lorin Maazel and James Levine.

Maureen Forrester has often been cited as the definitive present-day interpreter of Gustav Mahler's vocal music and has performed his works with virtually every major orchestra of the world.



Harry Theyard, tenor, created unprecedented news at the Metropolitan Opera on January 17, 1974 when, on less than eight hours notice, he made his unscheduled debut starring in the title-role of *Tales of Hoffman* opposite Joan Sutherland. His success was immediate and the next evening he went on with his regularly scheduled debut as Des Grieux in *Manon Lescaut* to both critical and public acclaim. A similar situation happened less than three weeks later when Mr. Theyard was summoned on three hours notice to sing the broadcast performance of *Hoffman*, having just performed as Des Grieux the evening before. In the words of radio-announcer Milton Cross, it was one of the most remarkable achievements of recent Metropolitan Opera history. Mr. Theyard was awarded a standing ovation from the Metropolitan Opera audience.

A native of New Orleans, and a graduate of Loyola University with degrees in Business Administration and Foreign Trade, Harry Theyard made his official operatic debut as Michele in the New York City Opera production of Menotti's *The Saint of Bleeker Street*.

A tour with the Metropolitan Opera National Company followed, and Mr. Theyard was heard throughout the United States in over forty performances as Rodolfo in *La Boheme* and Alfredo in *La Traviata*. Subsequent engagements included the Chicago Lyric Opera productions of *Salome* (Narraboth) and *Madame Butterfly* (Pinkerton), the Opera Society of Washington's *Manon Lescaut* (Des Grieux), and the Spring Opera of San Francisco's productions of *Rigoletto* (Duke) and *Carmen* (Don Jose).

Over the past several months, Mr. Theyard has sung with the New Orleans Opera, the Operas of Milwaukee, Omaha, Miami and the Paris Radio Orchestra.



Paul Plishka, Metropolitan Opera basso, is one of the most sought-after artists on today's opera scene. He was born and raised in Old Forge, Pennsylvania. He attended Montclair State College in New Jersey, and began his musical education there under the direction of Armen Boyajian and the Paterson Lyric Opera Theatre. There he received his first training in many of the roles he was to perform on the world's great opera stages.

At 23, he won first place in the Baltimore Opera Auditions and joined the national company of the Metropolitan Opera touring with that group until he joined the parent company in New York where he made his debut in *La Gioconda* in 1967. His many commitments for the next several months include a recital at Town Hall in New York and appearances with both the San Francisco and Houston Symphonies. He made his debut at Covent Garden in London this summer singing Ramfis in a new production of *Aida*.

Mr. Plishka sang in *The Damnation of Faust* at the famed La Scala during the 1974-75 season.

Roger Wagner, during his long and illustrious career, has received a plethora of signal honors from his city, county, the nation, and throughout the world. In 1953, Wagner and his Chorale were invited to participate at the coronation festivities of Elizabeth II in London. In 1959, and again in 1964, he and the Chorale were selected to represent the United States in concerts throughout Latin America. In 1966, the United States State Department, through its Cultural Exchange Program, again sent the Chorale on tour to the Middle East, Turkey, Yugoslavia, France, and Italy. In Rome, he and the Chorale had the honor of singing for Pope Paul VI at an audience in St. Peter's Basilica — the first non-Italian choir to do so in twenty-five years. In

January, 1973, Roger Wagner shared the podium with Eugene Ormandy to conduct the Philadelphia Orchestra and the Los Angeles Master Chorale at the Inaugural Concert at Kennedy Center. In May, 1973, Dr. Wagner served as guest conductor of major symphonies during a month-long tour of the major capitals of South America, and in July he conducted the Los Angeles Philharmonic and his Chorale in Bach's B Minor Mass at the Hollywood Bowl. In May, 1974, he conducted a triumphal tour of the Soviet Union with the Master Chorale, where "he made a notable impact on the Soviet musical world." In July, 1976, Dr. Wagner conducted the New Philharmonic Orchestra and the Chorale of Radio France in concerts in Paris, during the Festival Estival de Paris. The prestigious Paris publication "Le Monde" wrote "under his dynamic direction, Roger Wagner emerged extremely precise, devoid of all stiffness and complaisance." Roger Wagner and his Chorale were invited to participate in the Israeli Festival in August, 1976. The Chorale was critically acclaimed for its performances in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Caesarea and Haifa. In commemoration of the Chorale's outstanding participation in the Israeli Festival, Wagner was awarded the Knesset silver medal of the State of Israel.

In July and September 1977, Wagner conducted the New Philharmonic and Radio France Chorale in two performances in the Royal Chapel of Versailles. Dr. Wagner holds a full professorship in the Music Department at UCLA. He has made numerous recordings and received the Grammy Award for his album *Virtuoso*.

The Los Angeles Master Chorale and Sinfonia Orchestra is now in its fourteenth season of presenting great choral masterworks in The Music Center and the Hollywood Bowl. The organization, which was formed by Roger Wagner and the Los Angeles Junior Chamber of Commerce, became a resident company of The Music Center in 1964. Dr. Wagner has been music director for the Chorale and Orchestra since its formation. Each year a series of important choral programs is presented in the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, marking Los Angeles as the only city in the country which supports its own professional resident chorus presenting an annual choral season. One hundred

twenty-five of the Southland's finest singers have been admitted to the select membership in the ensemble. The Sinfonia Orchestra membership is drawn from professional ranks in the Los Angeles area and is one of the finest in the United States.

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