

H E C T O R B E R L I O Z

SYMPHONIE FANTASTIQUE

PORTSMOUTH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA **LIVE** JOHN PAGE CONDUCTOR



Photo Credit **Virgil Mehalek**

PORTSMOUTH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

The Portsmouth Symphony Orchestra is committed to contributing high quality symphonic music to the seacoast community. We are dedicated to enlightening, enriching, and nurturing the audiences of today and tomorrow. Founded in 1997, the orchestra is comprised of over 65 local professionals, educators, dedicated amateurs and advanced students. The orchestra presents four main concerts each season at The Music Hall in Portsmouth NH, along with numerous chamber music and school concerts throughout the year. In November 2012 the orchestra performed at Carnegie Hall with Jane Seymour in the premiere of a new production by composer Tim Janis. In August 2013 the orchestra was honored to accompany Grammy® award-winning clarinetist Richard Stoltzman in the premiere of a work by Lukas Foss at the PARMA Music Festival.

www.portsmouthsymphony.org



JOHN PAGE

Award-winning conductor John Page was appointed Music Director of the Portsmouth Symphony Orchestra in 2011. Page's conducting career began with the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland in 2000, and his 2002 performances of Viktor Ullmann's *The Emperor of Atlantis* garnered the prestigious *Irish Times* Opera of the Year award. Since then he has returned to Ireland frequently to record with the Irish Film Orchestra and his many recordings with PBS show *Celtic Woman* have earned multiple platinum discs.

In 2003 Page moved to the United States and was appointed Zander Fellow to the Boston Philharmonic Orchestra and from 2005 to 2009 he was the orchestra's Assistant Conductor. In 2006 Page joined the Faculty of New England Conservatory as Resident Conductor and Music Director of the NEC Sinfonietta and later, NEC Symphony and in spring 2011 was a Visiting Associate Professor at Boston University assuming the duties of Director of Orchestral Activities. He is also the Artistic Director of the PARMA Orchestra and was appointed Director of Orchestral Activities at Tufts University in 2012.

Since December 2011 Page has conducted the extremely successful Celtic Woman Symphony Tours of the US. He has conducted many major orchestras including the Atlanta Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, Buffalo Philharmonic, Pittsburgh Symphony, Colorado Symphony, Virginia Symphony, and West Virginia Symphony, the Ulster Orchestra and the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland.

www.johnpageconductor.com

PROGRAMME OF THE SYMPHONY

A young musician of morbid sensitivity and ardent imagination poisons himself with opium in a moment of despair caused by frustrated love. The dose of narcotic, while too weak to cause his death, plunges him into a heavy sleep accompanied by the strangest of visions, in which his experiences, feelings and memories are translated in his feverish brain into musical thoughts and images. His beloved becomes for him a melody and like an *idée fixe* which he meets and hears everywhere.

Part one

DAYDREAMS, PASSIONS

He remembers first the uneasiness of spirit, the indefinable passion, the melancholy, the aimless joys he felt even before seeing his beloved; then the explosive love she suddenly inspired in him, his delirious anguish, his fits of jealous fury, his returns of tenderness, his religious consolations.

Part two

A BALL

He meets again his beloved in a ball during a glittering fête.

Part three

SCENE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

One summer evening in the countryside he hears two shepherds dialoguing with their 'Ranz des vaches'; this pastoral duet, the setting, the gentle rustling of the trees in the light wind, some causes for hope that he has recently conceived, all conspire to restore to his heart an unaccustomed feeling of calm and to give to his thoughts a happier colouring; but she reappears, he feels a pang of anguish, and painful thoughts disturb him: what if she betrayed him... One of the shepherds resumes his simple melody, the other one no longer answers. The sun sets... distant sound of thunder... solitude... silence...

Part four

MARCH TO THE SCAFFOLD

He dreams that he has killed his beloved, that he is condemned to death and led to execution. The procession advances to the sound of a march that is sometimes sombre and wild, and sometimes brilliant and solemn, in which a dull sound of heavy footsteps follows without transition the loudest outbursts. At the end, the *idée fixe* reappears for a moment like a final thought of love interrupted by the fatal blow.

Part five

DREAM OF A WITCHES' SABBATH

He sees himself at a witches' sabbath, in the midst of a hideous gathering of shades, sorcerers and monsters of every kind who have come together for his funeral. Strange sounds, groans, outbursts of laughter; distant shouts which seem to be answered by more shouts. The beloved melody appears once more, but has now lost its noble and shy character; it is now no more than a vulgar dance-tune, trivial and grotesque: it is she who is coming to the sabbath... Roars of delight at her arrival... She joins the diabolical orgy... The funeral knell tolls, burlesque parody of the *Dies Irae*. The dance of the witches. The dance of the witches combined with the *Dies Irae*.

Notes by Hector Berlioz

Translated by Michel Austin

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1	DAYDREAMS, PASSIONS.....	14:01
2	A BALL.....	6:38
3	SCENE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE.....	17:07
4	MARCH TO THE SCAFFOLD.....	4:58
5	DREAM OF A WITCHES' SABBATH.....	11:27

Symphonie Fantastique was recorded live June 2, 2013
at The Music Hall Historic Theater in Portsmouth NH

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