Points of interest

* Berlioz’ relationship with Harriet Smithson
* The development of Programme Music.
* The use of instrumentation as a colour palate.
* The development of thematic transformation



Symphonie Fantastique

Movement 1.

H. Berlioz 1830.

**Most commonly used time signatures**

**4/4 - 4 crotchet beats in a bar.**

**3/4 - 3 crotchet beats in a bar.**

**2/4 - 2 crotchet beats in a bar.**

**6/8 – 6 quaver beats in a bar.**

Instrumental Music

Set Work 3

**Harmony & Tonality**

* The harmony used is functional throughout.
* Modulations are made to related keys via perfect cadences.
* Enharmonic equivalent notes are used to create new modulations.
* Chromatic harmony features heavily but is manly limited to dominant and diminished 7th chords.
* Suspensions are used to create dissonance and to blur harmonic progressions.

**Melody**

* The music is developed around the love theme (the idee fixe).
* Melodic lines are more adventurous than traditional Classical melodies and feature elements such as; repeated notes, chromatic intervals & irregular phrase lengths.
* The idee fixe is transformed to suit the mood of the programme.
* More lyrical melodies tend to be conjunct.
* Leaps are used to create drama.

**Structure**

* The *Symphonie Fantastique* is divided into five movements. (*Passions, A Ball, Country scene, March to the Scaffold & Dream of the Sabbath).*
* The first movement is loosely based around sonata form, (Exposition, Development & Recapitulation) although this is adapted to fit the programme.
* An introduction is used to precede the introduction of the first theme.
* A religious section is used to bring the work to a close.

**Social & Historical Context**

**Sonority**

**Texture**

**Rhythm, Metre & Tempo**

* Music was seen as a language of expression rather than a functional art.
* The orchestra developed to include many more instruments and tone colours.
* The programme is based around the taking of opium, a recreational drug of the period.
* Berlioz may have written an autobiography based on his stormy relationship with actress Harriet Smithson.
* The music features many emerging Romantic traits.

raits.

* The Symphonie Fantastique is scored for an exceptionally large orchestra.
* Instruments employ a wide variety of playing techniques.
* String techniques in particular include, *con sordini, punta d’arco & double stopping.*
* Extremes of tessitura are used.
* The dynamic range is huge.
* Brass and percussion are used more independently than in more Classical pieces.
* Articulations are used to great effect.
* This movement is in common time.
* As would be expected in a Classical symphony, the tempo is generally *allegro.*
* Triplets and sextuplets are used to create tension and unease.
* Syncopation is used to create tension and drama.
* Dotted rhythms are a feature of the idee fixe.
* Rhythms are often repeated to create drive and tension.
* The concerto is characterised by the use of different textures.
* Much of the texture is melody dominated homophony.
* Homorhythmic passages are used to create contrast and interest.
* The idee fixe is introduced monophonically to highlight its’ importance.
* Rising chromatic scales are often introduced homophonically.
* The homophonic religious section provides calm from the busy sections.

Wider listening: *Les Preludes* – Liszt, *Til Eulenspiegel* – Strauss, *Swan Lake–* Tchaikovsky, *Vltava -* Smetana.