**THE BERLIOZ SOCIETY**

Registered Charity Number 1124443

President: David Cairns Chairman: Diana Bickley

**Study Day 23 November 2024**

**at the Art Workers’ Guild, Queen Square, London**

*Berlioz and Byron – Bicentennial Considerations*

Berlioz’s fascination with Byron came early in his career, when in the 1820s he was reading English literature in French translation; hence, for example, two of his concert overtures have titles suggested by the works of Walter Scott and another by Shakespeare.

Byron was an international celebrity and his death trying to assist the course of Greek independence inspired Berlioz’s friend and confidant Humbert Ferrand as well as the composer himself. The outcome was a dramatic cantata, *Scène héroïque (La Révolution grecque)*, for two male soloists, mixed chorus, and orchestra. For this the authors interrupted work on their opera, *Les Francs-juges*; but hopes that the Opéra might accept either work **for performance were** dashed.

Explicitly Byronic was Berlioz’s successful Rome Prize cantata *La Mort de Sardanapale*, for which he didn’t choose the subject; the libretto derives from Byron’s *Sardanapalus: A Tragedy* (also represented in the magnificent painting by Delacroix). Four years later, Berlioz’s second symphony took its title, *Harold en Italie*, from the fourth canto of Byron’s epic *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*, which took the hero to Italy. The overture *Le Corsaire* was so called after two other titles had been tried out, becoming Byronic by association with Byron’s eponymous poem.

We are delighted to welcome two international Byron scholars, Professor Roderick Beaton and Olivier Feignier (whom some of us have met at previous AWG meetings) to speak about aspects of Byron, his feelings for Greece, and his reputation in France in Berlioz’s time. Following their talks they will lead a Q and A session.

After a buffet lunch, Chris Follett will present extracts from Berlioz’s most Byronic work, *Harold en Italie,* and Adam Ridley will offer a discussion of Berlioz and the world of the waltz.

We welcome back mezzo-soprano Aino Konkka, who will perform settings of Byron’s poetry, accompanied by Diana Bickley. Before we close Hugh Macdonald talks on his work as General Editor of the New Berlioz Edition, and Diana Bickley will close the day with some personal reminiscences from her time working on Volume 20.

**Programme for the Study Day 23 November 2024**

***Berlioz and Byron – Bicentennial Considerations***

9.15 Coffee and Registration

10.00 Welcome and introduction from the Chairman

10.15 Recording **–** *Scène héroïque* (*La Révolution grecque)*

introduced by Julian Rushton

10.45 *If I am a poet, it is the air of Greece that made me so –*

Byron’s life and death in Greece (1809-1824) – Roderick Beaton

11.15 Coffee

11.45 *He was the only poet of our times who deserved what I call Glory –* Byron’s death and transfiguration in France (1824 -1840)

– Olivier Feignier

12.15 Further discussion between this morning’s speakers, with Q and A

1.00 Lunch

2.00 *Harold en Italie*

Presentation of Berlioz’s most Byronic work by Chris Follett

3.00 History of the Waltz – Adam Ridley

3.30 Tea

4.00 Settings of Byron’s poetry sung by

Aino Konkka (mezzo-soprano) accompanied by Diana Bickley

5.00 A brief history of the NBE – Hugh Macdonald and Diana Bickley

5.45 Notices

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**BERLIOZ SOCIETY STUDY DAY**

**SATURDAY 23 NOVEMBER 2024**

**The Art Workers’ Guild**

**BOOKING FORM**

**Name of each person (exactly as you wish the name(s) to appear on the name badges).**

**………………………………………………………………………………………………….**

**Address………………………………………………………………………………………...**

**……………………………………………………….. Post Code…………………………….**

**Telephone……………………………………………**

**e-mail (please write very clearly) ……………………………………………………………**

**I wish to reserve .…... places at £80 each Total: £ …....**

**Payment may be made by online transfer or by cheque**

Please send your complete booking form to helen.petchey@ntlworld.com

or by post to Helen Petchey, 12 Monkhams Drive, Woodford Green, IG8 0LQ

**by 18 October 2024.**

For online transfer, our Bank Account details are as follows:

Sort code: 50-21-01 Account no: 31302939

IBAN: GB15NWBK50210131302939

IBAN BIC: NWBKGB2L

(If paying via online transfer, please make the reference "SD followed by your surname", for instance SDPETCHEY).

Cheque to be in GB£, drawn on a UK bank account, crossed "Account Payee Only" and made out to

**'The Berlioz Society'**. Please contact me if you do not have a UK bank account.