CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The growing prestige of instrumental music in the early nineteenth century created new demands for orchestral genres of all types. The composers were challenged to innovate the genre accordingly along with better overall capability of the instruments while being performed by larger body of musicians for larger audiences.

This concern was addressed by Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) with his nine symphonies that were written with new and unique new ways of writing. They encompassed wide range of new compositional approaches; for example, the third with its original programmatic idea as "the Grand symphony: Bonaparte;" the fifth with the famous four-note pattern as unifying motive throughout the whole work; or the sixth with five movement describing "countryside" feelings; and the glorious ninth symphony with the fusion vocal music into the symphonic framework, inspired by Schiller's poem *An die Freude* ["Ode to Joy"] in the last movement.

The ninth symphony was obviously unusual and overwhelming at that time as the work was acknowledged as the transcendental limit point of absolute music and its expression; very overwhelmingly that it provoked a crisis of confidence among composers because they felt inadequate to write symphony at the same level

of Beethoven. By 1830, the future of instrumental music, especially the symphony, had become a topic of debate; for example, Schuman stated:

> "there was reason to believe the dimensions and goals of the symphony [after the ninth symphony] <u>had been exhausted</u>. . . .in which the idea of the symphony is confined to a smaller orbit."[1]

Wagner also agreed with Schumann that the ninth symphony marked the end of the genre as the high point of absolute music.[2] He deemed that any composers who tried to write symphony would have no choice but to imitate or even copy Beethoven, which would commit the "sin" of unoriginality; really, unless nineteenth century composers reinvented and redefined the genre beyond expectations, they would not have been successful in composing symphony.

However, one specific composer, Hector Berlioz (1803-1869), decided to take on the challenge of composing a symphony even though Beethoven had cast a overwhelming shadow over his contemporaries. In one of his letters, Berlioz wrote the following:

> "<u>Now that I have heard that awe-inspiring giant Beethoven, I realize what point the art of music has reached</u>; <u>it's a question of taking it up at that point and carrying it further</u> – no, not further, that's impossible, he attained the limits of art, but <u>as far in another direction</u>. There are new things, many new things to be done, I feel it with an immense energy, and I shall do it, have no doubt, if I live."[3]

[1] Robert Schumann, "A Symphony by Berlioz" (1835), in Hector Berlioz, *Fantastic Symphony* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1971), 227.
[2] Alex Ross, "The Symphony Survives," *The New Yorker*, August 31, 2015, https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/08/31/the-symphony-unfinished.
[3] David Cairns, *Berlioz: The Making of an Artist 1803-1832* (London: Penguin UK, 2019)

Through his four symphonies, Berlioz displayed such originality in those numbers and provided new listening experience to the audience. They were so strikingly original and different from anything heard previously.

The purpose of this research is to analyse various innovations that Berlioz experimented in his first symphony, the *Symphonie Fantastique*, H. 48 – which was not overwhelmed by Beethoven's shadow – in order to assess how he set the new standard of symphonic writing in the nineteenth century. In gathering and presenting the data, the author provided musical analysis of each of the movement and found the following four elements to be completely new during that time:

1. *Idée fixe*, which is a long melody to describe Berlioz's lover, Harriet Smithson, and how he described the journey of his love by cycling the whole five movements by this specific melody.

2. Self-written program based on the autobiography of the composer himself; this approach would be an important predecessor for Wagner's concept of total artwork (*gesamtkunstwerk*) later.

3. Expanded instrumentation and orchestration by employing a combination of unusual instruments, extended techniques, and enlarging the ensemble.

4. Parody technique of a thirteenth-century *cantus firmus* – *Dies irae* – in a symphonic work.

The qualitative method of musical analysis leads to the conclusion that Berlioz, in his distinctive ways, has indeed successfully set *Symphonie Fantastique* as the new standard of symphonic writing in the nineteenth century, who was not actually overwhelmed by Beethoven's shadow.

1.2 Research Questions

Was Berlioz considered as one of the most important and successful composers in setting a new standard for symphonic writing in the nineteenth century, that was not actually overwhelmed by Beethoven's shadow?

1.3 Purposes of Research

The purpose of this research is to provide analytical evidence that Berlioz was one of the most important and successful composers in setting new standard of symphonic writing in the nineteenth century by providing analysis of *Symphonie Fantastique*, H. 48.

1.4 Scope and Limitations of Research

1. The selected symphonic composition to be analyzed is *Symphonie Fantastique,* H. 48 by Hector Berlioz.

2. The edition used for analysis is from *New Edition of the Complete Works, Vol. 16*, edited by Nicholas Temperley, published by Kassel: Bärenreiter-Verlag, 1971.

1.5 Significance of Research

This research is expected to assist musicians and musicologists in understanding and evaluating about how Berlioz has succeeded in setting the new standard of symphonic writing in the nineteenth century.

1.6 Research Writing Structure

Chapter 1, "Introduction" includes background of the scientific work; research questions; purposes of research; scope and limitations of research; and significance of research; and research writing structure.

Chapter 2. "Theoretical Studies" includes The origin and development of symphony to the nineteenth-century; Instrumentation and orchestration in mid-to-late eighteenth century; The stature of Selected Beethoven's symphonies; Brief biography of Berlioz; and Structural coherence throughout history until the nineteenth-century.

Chapter 3, "Methodology" includes methods and analytical process of the research, such as exploration of the topic and point of interest; differences between reality and problem; sources with similar topics; review of research sources; research methodology; and research timetable.

Chapter 4, "Discussion" includes the musical analysis of Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*.

Chapter 5. "Conclusion" includes the result of this research.