Subject: Berlioz - Fantastique
Posted by Wayne Parham on Wed, 01 Sep 2004 06:28:35 GMT
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OK, So I'm on a classical on vinyl kick these days. Every once in a while, I get a week-long obsession with something in the arts. A music type, watching movies, whatever. I guess that's why I like my speakers and sound system gear so much. It allows me to indulge my obsessions. Tonight, I had the urge for something light but large, a dream expressed in sound. There are a couple of songs that stuck in my mind, "Ripples" from Genesis Trick of the Tail and "Last Dance" from Sarah McLachlan Surfacing. But since I'm on a classical on vinyl kick, I chose Hector Berlioz's Symphonie Fantastique.This is a dreamy symphony, written when Berlioz was 27 and under the influence of a steamy obsession with an Irish acresss, Harriet Smithson. It alternates between soft and silky, dreamy and surreal and then it moves almost imperceptively into frenzied, zealous, passionate crescendo, much as you would expect from youthful love.The symphony was musically epoch-making for two reasons - Berlioz's entirely novel use of the orchestra and the element of instrumental color on one hand, and on the other, the conscious and successful attempt to express in music the raw, disorderly, hitherto musically unavowed elements in the new French "romanticism" that had already found expression in literature.