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Chan **3014(3)**

David Parry

CHANDOS
OPERA IN ENGLISH

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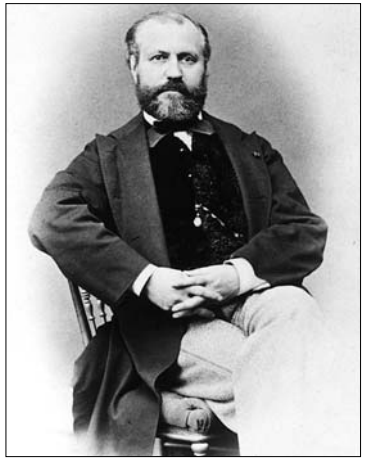

AKG

Charles Gounod

Charles Gounod (1818–1893)

Faust

Opera in five acts (with ballet music)
Libretto by Jules Barbier and Michel Carré
English translation by Christopher Cowell

Faust, a learned doctor ..... Paul Charles Clarke *tenor*
Mephistopheles ..... Alastair Miles *bass*
Marguerite ..... Mary Plazas *soprano*
Valentin, Marguerite's brother, a soldier ..... Garry Magee *baritone*
Siébel, a village youth, in love with Marguerite .....Diana Montague *mezzo-soprano*
Wagner, a student ..... Matthew Hargreaves *bass-baritone*
Martha, Marguerite's neighbour ..... Sarah Walker *mezzo-soprano*

Geoffrey Mitchell Choir
Philharmonia Orchestra
Nicholas Kok assistant conductor
David Parry conductor

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COMPACT DISC ONE

Act I — 27:08

1 Introduction — 7:03 [p.58]

Scene 1

2 'Nothing! In vain I have probed…' — 6:14 [p.58]
Faust

3 'Lazy little daughter open up your eyes' — 2:55 [p. 58]
Chorus, Faust

4 'Can your God help me know the truth?' — 1:21 [p. 59]
Faust

Scene 2

5 'Here I am! You seem somewhat startled' — 2:50 [p. 59]
Mephistopheles, Faust

6 'So bring me the bliss of careless excesses' — 6:45 [p. 60]
Faust, Mephistopheles

Act II — 27:41

Scene 1

7 'Beer or gin or wine or kvass' — 4:55 [p. 61]
Chorus, Wagner

Scene 2

8 'Oh, sacred medallion from the sister I love' — 1:45 [p. 64]
Valentin, Wagner, Siébel, Chorus

9 'Duty bids me leave this place' — 3:50 [p. 64]
Valentin

10 'Cheer up, my friends!' — 1:24 [p. 65]
Wagner, Chorus, Mephistopheles

Scene 3

11 'Pride of place to the golden calf!' — 2:04 [p. 65]
Mephistopheles, Chorus

12 'Your song deserves our thanks!' — 2:47 [p. 66]
Chorus, Valentin, Wagner, Mephistopheles, Siébel

13 'Though the fiends of hell may defy resistance' — 2:32 [p. 67]
Siébel, Valentin, Wagner, Chorus

Scene 4

14 'You haven't seen the last of me yet!' — 1:33 [p. 67]
Mephistopheles, Faust

Scene 5

15 'Just as when the whispering breezes…' — 2:47 [p. 67]
Chorus, Mephistopheles, Faust, Siébel

16 'May I presume to ask…' — 4:03 [p. 68]
Faust, Marguerite, Siébel, Mephistopheles, Chorus

Act III — 54:23

17 Entr'acte — 2:06 [p. 69]

Scene 1

18 'You must help me reveal the love I feel' — 2:46 [p. 69]
Siébel

Scene 2

19 'Are we there?' — 1:15 [p. 70]
Faust, Mephistopheles, Siébel

Scene 3

20 'Wait here for a while, Doctor Faust' — 1:03 [p. 70]
Mephistopheles, Faust

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Scene 4

21 'What turbulent feelings possess me?' 6:46 [p. 71]
Faust

TT 69:03

COMPACT DISC TWO

Scene 5

1 'Be careful! Here she comes!' 0:46 [p. 71]
Mephistopheles, Faust

Scene 6

2 'He would have held my hand if I'd only allowed him' 6:36 [p. 71]
Marguerite

3 'A bouquet! It's from Siébel I'm sure' 5:18 [p. 72]
Marguerite

Scene 7

4 'Bless my soul, I'm dreaming!' 0:44 [p. 73]
Martha, Marguerite

Scene 8

5 'Dame Martha Schwerlein, I believe' 2:30 [p. 73]
Mephistopheles, Martha, Marguerite, Faust

6 'Please take my arm, they won't mind!' 6:56 [p. 74]
Faust, Marguerite, Mephistopheles, Martha

Scene 10

7 'And none too soon!' 1:52 [p. 76]
Mephistopheles

Scene 11

8 'It's very late… Farewell!' 7:03 [p. 76]
Marguerite, Faust

9 'Marguerite!' 4:39 [p. 77]
Faust, Marguerite

Scene 13

10 'Look there! She's opening her window…' 4:03 [p. 78]
Mephistopheles, Marguerite, Faust

Act IV **48:09**

Scene 1

11 Entr'acte 1:55 [p. 79]

12 'They pass me in the street…' 6:31 [p. 79]
Marguerite, Chorus

Scene 2

13 'Marguerite!' 'Siébel!' 1:36 [p. 80]
Siébel, Marguerite

14 'When happy days bring you gladness and laughter' 4:33 [p. 80]
Siébel, Marguerite

Scene 3

15 'Dear Lord, accept the prayers of a penitent sinner' 11:14 [p. 81]
Marguerite, Mephistopheles, Chorus

TT 66:27

COMPACT DISC THREE

Scene 4

1 'Come along my brothers' 3:03 [p. 82]
Chorus, Valentin, Siébel

2 'We seek the soldier's immortal prize' 3:14 [p. 82]
Chorus

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Scene 5

3 'Come on, Siébel, I need a drink or two!' 2:12 [p. 83]
Valentin, Siébel, Mephistopheles, Faust

Scene 6

4 'Is my love awake or sleeping' 2:50 [p. 84]
Mephistopheles

Scene 7

5 'What can I do for you?' 4:07 [p. 84]
Valentin, Mephistopheles, Faust

Scene 8

6 'Over here, come at once!' 1:49 [p. 85]
Martha, Chorus, Valentin, Marguerite, Siébel

7 'Pay heed to my words, Marguerite!' 5:06 [p. 86]
Valentin, Chorus

Act V **32:34**

Scene 1

8 'Over the heather, through the marshes' 1:15 [p. 87]
Chorus

9 'No further!' 2:22 [p. 87]
Faust, Mephistopheles, Chorus

Scene 2

10 'Till the sun awakes in the east' 3:59 [p. 87]
Mesphistopheles, Chorus, Faust

11 'Honeyed nectar, share your pleasure' 1:31 [p. 88]
Faust, Chorus, Mephistopheles

12 'May your elation, O careless love' 2:40 [p. 88]
Mesphistopheles, Faust

Scene 4

13 Intermezzo 4:12 [p. 89]

14 'Go back!' 2:14 [p. 89]
Faust, Mephistopheles

Scene 5

15 'My heart quails at the thought of this meeting!' 2:23 [p. 89]
Faust

16 'Ah! Do I hear my lover's voice?' 5:24 [p. 89]
Marguerite, Faust

Scene 6

17 'Make haste now!' 6:29 [p. 90]
Mephistopheles, Marguerite, Faust, Chorus

Appendix

Ballet Music (from Act V scene 2) **17:04** [p. 92]

18 1 Dance of the Nubian Slaves – 2:30
19 2 Slow Dance – 4:45
20 3 Ancient Dance – 1:36
21 4 Cleopatra's Variations – 1:42
22 5 Dance of the Trojan Women – 2:10
23 6 Mirror Variations – 1:53
24 7 Phryne's Dance 2:28

TT 72:23

Charles Gounod: Faust

An old friend of Gounod's, the Abbé Gay commented after the 1859 premiere of what was to become the composer's most popular score: 'The world has got into him and has chased out Jesus Christ.' That is an apt comment on a composer who found it hard to reconcile his twin stars: the love of God and the love of sensuality, something reflected in his compositions. His oratorios and other sacred works are now largely forgotten; his works for the theatre, or at least two of them, *Faust* and *Roméo et Juliette*, live on, performed in all operatic capitals. Religious aspirations began to take a back seat when Gounod met Pauline Viardot, the celebrated singer, who had drawn his attention to the opera house. Another commentator, the painter Delacroix averred: 'A composer writes *Faust* and that makes him forget all about Hades.' The battle in Gounod's soul between the sacred and the profane is aptly adumbrated in his most famous opera. He cleverly, though perhaps subconsciously, turned the theatre into the pulpit, adapting his religious style to the dictates of the theatre. It was a manner that has obviously appealed to the public wherever and whenever the opera has been given, which has been very often.

First presented at the Théâtre Lyrique as an *opéra comique*, i.e. with dialogue, in 1859, it reached the Opéra ten years later when it was performed with the recitative Gounod had written for a Strasbourg performance in 1860, and that is the form in which it is usually presented today. It received its 2000th performance there in 1944 and had reached its 2836th by the time of Jorge Lavelli's new production in 1975, a tribute in itself to its longevity and popularity. It was first heard in Italy, at La Scala, in 1862. Most of the alterations and abridgements made on that occasion became traditional thereafter, including the elimination of the Walpurgis Night scene.

It was introduced to England in 1863, being given every season until 1911 (much to the annoyance of Bernard Shaw, who reviled it), in Italian, then the *lingua franca* of opera in Britain as elsewhere. For the London premiere at Her Majesty's Theatre, Sir Charles Santley undertook the role of Valentin. Gounod attended the performance, meeting the famed baritone, so when the first performance of the

opera in English was planned for the following year, Santley suggested that the composer might write a song for him using a melody that appears in the Prelude. So it came about that the famous baritone cavatina was born. The critic Henry Chorley wrote the words: 'Even bravest heart may swell' ['Duty bids me leave this place' in the present recording]. It was an immediate success, and has been a staple of baritone recitals ever since.

When the work reached the Opéra, a ballet was needed, a *sine qua non* in Paris. Gounod was disinclined to write one, having reverted to his religious mode, and suggested his pupil Saint-Saëns for the task. As the latter composer commented in his memoirs, he was embarrassed by the commission and hurried to Gounod's home at St Cloud to persuade him to compose the music. Engaged in a card game with an abbé, Gounod nodded but said nothing. In the end he consented to write the delightful score, given here as an appendix. The work, which inaugurated the Metropolitan Opera House in New York in 1883, was soon as popular in the USA as elsewhere.

Sir Thomas Beecham was one of *Faust*'s main advocates, and he made a recording in English in 1929, with a cast derived from the British National Opera Company headed by Heddle Nash and Miriam Licette, and then recorded it again in the late 1940s in France in the original language with a French cast. Although it went through something of a trough in popular esteem after that, it has seldom been out of the repertory of British companies, being presented regularly both at Covent Garden and at Sadler's Wells (most recently at English National Opera in Ian Judge's much-admired staging with John Tomlinson as Mephistopheles).

During his tenure of the Prix de Rome, from 1839 to 1842, Gounod's interest in the first part of Goethe's work was aroused by reading Gérard de Nerval's translation of the play. He immediately fell in love with it, deciding to turn this 'fabulous story' into music. His travels in Goethe's own country, abounding in ancient legends, served to strengthen his will. Then he heard Berlioz's *La damnation de Faust*, which profoundly moved him. However, it did not inhibit his own wish to set Goethe; quite the contrary, it proved a stimulus. In 1849, he made an early attempt at setting the church scene.

Then he met the writers who were to be the librettists of *Faust*, Jules Barbier and Michel Carré, the latter the author of a play *Faust et Marguerite*, seen by Gounod in 1850. That provided the basis for the opera's libretto. Barbier reduced the play to just the right

dimensions to suit Gounod. He eliminated or conflated characters and incidents, essential when a play is accommodated to the slower pace of opera. Only Mephistopheles and some demons remain of supernatural characters. Siébel is virtually a new creation, shyly and virtuously in love with Marguerite. Faust's complex psychology is boiled down to a struggle between lust and pure love. Marguerite is simple innocence betrayed and eventually redeemed. The Prison Scene and the closing apotheosis, not in Carré's play, were added; so was the death of Valentin.

Gounod finished composing the opera in 1858. It was immediately put into rehearsal at the Théâtre Lyrique, where Léon Carvalho was director. His wife Marie Miolan Carvalho was to be Marguerite; hence her prominence in the score. The premiere had to be postponed because the tenor singing Faust lost his voice at the dress rehearsal and had to be replaced. The Church Scene had to be omitted (a practice that at one time was often followed) because the Culture Ministry was at the time anxious to avoid a row with the Vatican, during a time when the unification of Italy was much in the air. The premiere was favourably received, not least because of the prima donna's singing.

Superior persons have often criticized the opera as a travesty of Goethe because its does not match up to the philosophical challenges of the original, which Berlioz and Boito in their Faustian music-dramas come closer to meeting. Gounod was understandably, given his background, more interested in the moral aspect – with Marguerite's downfall and final redemption through repentance and with Faust's doomed attempt to recover his youth in making a pact with the Devil incarnate. His librettists provided him with just the situations he needed.

At an early age Gounod had been fascinated with a work that tackles the same issue as *Faust*, Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. He declared in his autobiography that:

> The first notes of the overture, with the solemn, majestic chords taken from the Commendatore's final scene seemed to lift me into a new world. I was chilled by a sensation of actual terror. But when I heard that terrible thundering roll of ascending and descending scales, stern and implacable as a death warrant, I was seized with such shuddering fear that my head fell on my mother's shoulder and, trembling in the dual embrace of beauty and of horror, I could only murmur 'this is real music indeed!'

Thus spoke the future composer of *Faust*.

Gounod's score was composed under the influence of Meyerbeer, who – we must never forget – was then hugely popular in France. He

was also influenced by Halévy and the Rossini of the French works written for Paris at the end of his operatic career, culminating in *Guillaume Tell*. Gounod's style was at the time as much admired as that of Verdi and Wagner. In England he was seen as Mendelssohn's true successor. Verdi himself admired Gounod although, perhaps rightly, he missed in his music the *fibra drammatica*. The work's very conventionality undoubtedly led to its quick acceptance, the musical forms being those that any opera-lover of the day would have been acquainted with, most notably those of Mephistopheles's solos, couplets, that is with a repeated verse, and of Faust's ternary cavatina, 'Salut, demeure chaste et pure' (This pure abode of simple virtue) with a modulating middle section. The marching rhythms that pervade parts of the score would not be out of place in Meyerbeer's works.

Yet these aspects of the work would not suffice to account for *Faust*'s immense and continuing popularity. That is explained by a gift that is peculiarly Gounod's. It is the lyricism found particularly in Faust's cavatina and in the extended Garden duet in Act III for Marguerite and Faust, the very heart of the opera, with its sensuous, finely shaped melody. No less so is the short, significant scene of the lovers' first meeting, gracefully Gallic in timbre and the already mentioned solo for Valentin, which seems ideally to characterize that upright fellow. Then there's Marguerite's anticipatory excitement as disclosed in her Jewel Song, contrasting with the slightly antique-sounding, elegiac King of Thulé song.

The Kermesse waltz, encountered so often out of context, delicately playing off chorus and orchestra, is memorable. Mephistopheles's two solos may not have the subtlety of their counterparts in Berlioz's setting of Goethe's masterpiece, but are probably more remarkable in terms of melody: the devil may indeed have the best tune in his insinuating Serenade. Young Siébel is nicely pictured in his little, artless solo. The Church Scene, in which Marguerite's isolation is graphically depicted against an impersonal background of archaic organ and chanting chorus, evokes other thoughts, not so musically inspired but effective as theatre. So are Marguerite's hymn to the evening and Faust's part in it at the close of Act III, with the hero returning into her arms, while Mephistopheles laughs sardonically offstage, not to forget Valentin's death scene and the final trio, which are the very stuff of late-Romantic French opera.

Nor should one overlook Gounod's mastery of orchestration, most notable in the interplay with the voices in the Act III quartet, or indeed

the Soldiers' Chorus, hackneyed as it may have become by being used out of context. It is highly effective in its place at the start of Act IV. No matter how much it is denigrated, *Faust* works as music-drama. It is also one of the most grateful pieces to sing and Gounod's music has been graced by virtually all the stars of opera since it was first staged. In an age when singable melody in new work is at such a premium, Gounod's gift in that field shines out like a bright beacon. We mock that gift – and indeed the sentiments of an earlier age – at our peril.

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Synopsis

Act I
Faust, an aged philosopher, sits in his study. He despairs of solving the riddle of the universe and, disillusioned, resolves to poison himself. As he is about to drink the poison he hears the voices of women and farm labourers on their way to work. He curses life and old age and calls upon the devil to help him. Mephistopheles appears and offers riches and power, but what Faust longs for is youth. This Mephistopheles will grant only if Faust signs away his soul. When Faust hesitates he is shown a vision of the beautiful Marguerite sitting at her spinning wheel. He signs the document, drinks from the goblet which Mephistopheles offers him, and is immediately transformed into a young man.

Act II
There is a gathering outside an inn at one of the town gates. Students, townsmen, soldiers and women young and old are gathered, singing joyfully. Marguerite's brother Valentin and his young friend Siébel join the throng. Valentin has been given a medallion by Marguerite, before he goes off to war, and he asks Siébel to look after his sister while he is away.

Wagner tries to cheer things up and begins to sing. He is interrupted by Mephistopheles who sings the Song of the Golden Calf and reads the palms of those around him; he tells Siébel that every flower he touches will die. Rejecting the inferior wine that he is offered by Wagner, Mephistopheles causes wine to flow from the inn sign, and toasts Marguerite. This angers Valentin and both draw their swords. Mephistopheles traces a circle around himself with the point of his sword and when Valentin thrusts his own sword into this circle the blade shatters. Realizing who his opponent is, Valentin and his friends advance on Mephistopheles, holding towards him the cross-shaped guards of their swords. Mephistopheles cowers and withdraws.

The crowd gathers for the dance. Faust and Mephistopheles enter and see Marguerite. Faust offers her his arm, but she politely refuses. He is more entranced than ever.

Act III
Siébel gathers flowers for Marguerite, and as prophesied, they wither and die. Holy water breaks the curse, and he leaves her a bouquet. Mephistopheles leaves a box of jewels for her. Meanwhile Marguerite sings an old ballad, and when she finds the jewels and puts them on she sees a different woman in the mirror. Her elderly neighbour Martha comments that they must be a gift from an admirer.

Faust and Mephistopheles enter, Faust wooing Marguerite and Mephistopheles flirting with Martha. Marguerite begins to weaken but breaks away from Faust's embrace and runs back to her house. Mephistopheles summons up all the intoxicating odours from the night flowers, and Marguerite opens her window to confess her love for Faust to the night. He emerges from the shadows and she welcomes him into her house.

Act IV
Marguerite has been abandoned by Faust and is pregnant with his child. She goes to pray. The soldiers return with Valentin, and Siébel tries to persuade him not to enter the house. But he pushes Siébel aside and enters.

Mephistopheles sings a mocking serenade to Marguerite on behalf of Faust. Valentin rushes out of the house and demands satisfaction from his sister's seducer. He and Faust fight and through Mephistopheles's intervention Valentin falls, mortally wounded. With his dying words Valentin curses Marguerite.

Act V
Walpurgis Night: a chorus of will o' the wisps is heard as Faust and Mephistopheles appear. Faust is shown a vision of Marguerite and demands to be taken to her.

Marguerite has been imprisoned for killing her child, and Faust and Mephistopheles come to save her. She seems to recognize Faust and remembers the night when he first seduced her. Faust encourages her to leave with him, but she prays to God to forgive her. As she dies, Mephistopheles damns her, but angelic voices proclaim that she is saved.

Appendix
The ballet music composed for the Paris Opéra is included here as an appendix.

Paul Charles Clarke was born in Liverpool and studied at the Royal College of Music with Neil Mackie; he was the winner of the 1989 Kathleen Ferrier Competition. Roles have included the Duke (*Rigoletto*), Fenton (*Falstaff*) in Japan and at the Edinburgh Festival, Rodolfo (*La bohème*), Alfredo (*La traviata*) and the title role in *Faust* for Welsh National Opera, Alfredo and Nemorino (*L'elisir d'amore*) for Scottish Opera, Rodolfo and Dmitri (*Boris Godunov*) for Opera North, and Cassio (*Otello*), Tybalt (*Roméo et Juliette*, and Alfredo for the Royal Opera House. He has also appeared abroad with Seattle Opera, Monte Carlo Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Cincinnati Opera and the Metropolitan Opera, New York.

Recordings include Tybalt (*Roméo et Juliette* under Leonard Slatkin), Arturo (*Lucia* under Sir Charles Mackerras) and Don Caesar (Wallace's *Maritana*). Future plans include further appearances with the Metropolitan Opera, New York, Welsh National Opera (including the title role in *Don Carlos* to open the new opera house in Cardiff in 2002), and Seattle, as well as his debut with the Deutsche Oper, Berlin.

Alastair Miles, internationally recognized as one of this country's leading singers, has sung at the Metropolitan Opera (Giorgio (*I puritani*), Raimondo (*Lucia di Lammermoor*)), the Opéra national de Paris (Raimondo), Vienna (Giorgio), San Francisco (Giorgio, Raimondo and Basilio (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*)), Amsterdam (Figaro), and the Royal Opera (Lord Sydney (*Il viaggio a Rheims*)).

Alastair Miles's successful concert career takes him worldwide to perform with conductors such as Carlo Maria Giulini, Zubin Mehta, Riccardo Muti, Myung-Whun Chung, Kurt Masur, Valery Gergiev and John Eliot Gardiner, and the world's most prestigious orchestras. Amongst his recordings are a *Gramophone* Award-winning recording of *Elijah*, Verdi's Requiem, Handel's *Saul* and *Agrippina*, and for Chandos *Caractacus*, *The Rape of Lucretia* and *La bohème* (the latter in association with the Peter Moores Foundation).

Mary Plazas studied at the Royal Northern College of Music and the National Opera Studio, and won the 1991 Kathleen Ferrier Memorial Scholarship. She made her operatic debut as the Heavenly Voice (*Don Carlos*) with English National Opera and was an ENO Company Principal from 1995 to 1998. Roles have included the title role in *The Cunning Little Vixen*, Micaëla, Mimì, Leila, Nanetta,

Adina and Anne Trulove, and she has performed with the Royal Opera, Opera North, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Garsington Opera and at the Metropolitan Opera, New York.

Television appearances include Opera Factory's *Le nozze di Figaro*, and First Enchantress (*Dido and Aeneas*), also for Chandos. Recordings include Mercadante's *Emma d'Antiochia* and Pacini's *Maria regina d'Inghilterra* for Opera Rara, and *L'enfant et les sortilèges*. She has given recitals and concerts throughout the world performing with international orchestras.

Garry Magee's operatic roles include Guglielmo (*Così fan tutte*) and Prince Afron (*Le coq d'or*) for the Royal Opera, Eddy (*Greek*) with the London Sinfonietta, Malatesta (*Don Pasquale*) at La Monnaie, Silvano (*Un ballo in maschera*) for Monte Carlo Opera, Yeletsky (*La dame de pique*) for Flanders Opera, the Steward (*Flight*) for Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Mountjoy (*Gloriana*) for Opera North, and the title role in *Eugene Onegin* for British Youth Opera. Concert appearances include Rachmaninov's *Spring Cantata* with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and the Orchestra of the Komische Oper Berlin.

Diana Montague studied at the Royal Northern College of Music. Since her debut as Zerlina with Glyndebourne Touring Opera she has appeared in the world's leading opera houses and concert halls including: the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden; the Metropolitan Opera, New York; La Monnaie, Brussels; the Paris Bastille; Teatro Colon, Buenos Aires; and the Bayreuth and Salzburg Festivals.

Her repertoire includes the major mezzo-soprano roles by Mozart, Gluck, Strauss, Rossini, Bellini and Berlioz. Her frequent concert engagements have included many performances with leading conductors, and her many recordings include *I Capuleti e I Montecchi*, *Norma*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Iphigénie en Tauride*, *Il crociato in Egitto* (for Opera Rara), and *Cavalleria rusticana* and a disc of Great Operatic Arias (for Chandos / Peter Moores Foundation).

Matthew Hargreaves studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama with Rudolph Piernay, and won the Decca Prize in the 1997 Kathleen Ferrier Award Compteition. His roles include Figaro, Dandini (*La cenerentola*), the Magistrate (*Werther*), Fiorello (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*) for English Touring Opera, and Polyphemus (*Acis and Galatea*) and Leporello

for Opera Atelier in Toronto. He has also appeared at the Covent Garden Festival, with Broomhill Opera, Opera italiana, British Youth Opera and Pavillion Opera. Recordings include the Bosun (*Billy Budd*) with the Hallé Orchestra and Kent Nagano, the Abbot (*Curlew River*) and Rambaldo (*Maria di Rudenz*) for Opera Rara.

Sarah Walker is one of Britain's most distinguished artists. She has sung with the world's great orchestras, at the major British and European festivals, was a memorable soloist at the Last Night of the Proms, and sang under Bernstein in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony in Berlin to celebrate the fall of the Berlin Wall. She is an acclaimed recitalist and has recorded widely.

In opera she has sung at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, English National Opera, Vienna, Geneva, Monte Carlo, Paris, Barcelona, Madrid, Brussels, Hamburg, San Francisco, Chicago, La Scala, Milan, the Metropolitan Opera, New York, and the Glyndebourne Festival. Sarah Walker was made a CBE in the 1991 Queen's Birthday Honours.

Geoffrey Mitchell's singing career encompassed a remarkably wide repertoire from early to contemporary music. This resulted in conducting invitations from the BBC and subsequently to a wider involvement with his own singers and this led to the establishment of the **Geoffrey Mitchell Choir**. Early recordings resulted in the choir's long-term involvement with Opera Rara for whom they have recorded fifteen operas, and it is currently enjoying a growing reputation with further work from the BBC and international recording companies.

When he formed the **Philharmonia Orchestra** Walter Legge realized his great ambition of forming a hand-picked orchestra of world-class standing. The Philharmonia Orchestra gave its first concert under Sir Thomas Beecham in October 1945 and rapidly became recognized as one of the world's truly great orchestras. Many world-famous conductors have been associated with the orchestra and it remains the world's most recorded orchestra, with a discography of over one thousand recordings including operas for the Peter Moores Foundation / Opera Rara. The Philharmonia's position as 'London's leading orchestra' stems from its vitality, unique warmth of sound and commitment to commissioning and performing music by leading contemporary composers such as the late Witold Lutoslawski, Sir Harrison Birtwistle and the orchestra's visiting composer, James MacMillan.

David Parry studied with Sergiu Celibidache and began his career as Sir John Pritchard's assistant. He made his debut with English Music Theatre and went on to become a staff conductor at Städtische Bühnen Dortmund and at Opera North. He was Music Director of Opera 80 from 1983 to 1987, and since 1992 has been the founding Music Director of the contemporary opera festival Almeida Opera.

He pursues a busy career both in opera and in concert. His repertoire extends from Mozart and early nineteenth-century Italian opera to Janáček, Britten and contemporary music. In England he has appeared regularly at English National Opera and in concert with the Philharmonia. In 1996 he made his debut at the Glyndebourne Festival with *Così fan tutte*.

He is a frequent visitor to Spain where he has appeared with most of the opera companies and symphony orchestras. He gave the Spanish premiere of *Peter Grimes* in Madrid, and in 1996 he conducted the first Spanish production of *The Rake's Progress*, inaugurated two new concert halls with Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and a new opera house with *Carmen*. He has also appeared in Italy, where he conducted *Ricciardo e Zoraide* in the Rossini Opera Festival at Pesaro, in France, Germany, Belgium, Holland, and in Sweden where he conducted an acclaimed production of Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Outside Europe David Parry has appeared at the Hong Kong International Festival, with the UNAM Symphony Orchestra at Mexico City, with a tour of *Carmen* in Japan and, in 1996, conducting a new production of *Katya Kabanova* for the New Zealand Festival.

He has recorded extensively for the Opera Rara label, the most recent issue being Donizetti's *Rosmonda d'Inghilterra*, which won the Prix Cecilia in Belgium and for Chandos he has conducted the award-winning recording of *Tosca,* three recordings of operatic arias (with Bruce Ford, Diana Montague and Dennis O'Neill), *Don Pasquale*, *La bohème*, *Cavalleria rusticana* and *Pagliacci*.

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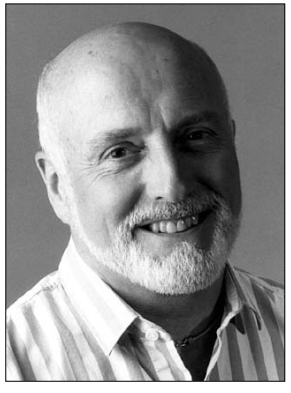
PETER MOORES, CBE, DL

Peter Moores was born in Lancashire in 1932, son of Sir John Moores, founder of the giant Littlewoods mail order, chain store and football pools group. He was educated at Eton and Christ Church, Oxford, where he read Modern Languages. He was already fluent in German and Italian. It was opera which was his great love, however. He had worked at Glyndebourne before going up to university, and at the end of his second year he left Oxford to become a production student at the Vienna State Opera. He was required to attend morning rehearsals and evening performances, but the afternoons were free, so he enrolled as well for a four-year course at the Viennese Academy of Music and Dramatic Art.

By the end of his third year Moores had produced the Viennese premiere of Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia*, had worked as Assistant Producer at the San Carlo Opera House, Naples, the Geneva Festival and the Rome Opera, and seemed set for a successful operatic career. At this point he received a letter from his father asking him to come home as he was needed in the firm. Family loyalty was paramount and he returned to Liverpool immediately.

By 1977 he was Chairman of Littlewoods. Three years later he stepped down from the post, although still remaining on the Board, and was director of a merchant bank. From 1981 to 1983 he was a Governor of the BBC, and a Trustee of the Tate Gallery from 1978 until 1985. In May 1992 he became a Deputy Lieutenant of Lancashire. And in the New Year's Honours List for 1991 he was made a CBE for his charitable services to the Arts.



Christina Burton/PMF

Peter Moores, CBE, DL

He had started his early twenties giving financial support to various young artists, several of whom – such as Geraint Evans, Joan Sutherland and Colin Davis – have since become world-famous. Moores has always been astute in his recognition of potential quality. In 1964 he set aside a large slice of his inheritance to found the Peter Moores Foundation, a charity designed to support those causes dear to his heart: to make music and the arts more accessible to more people; to give encouragement to the young; to fight discrimination and to improve race relations. 99% of the Foundation's money has come from Peter Moores's own pocket – so far about £33 million in today's money.

PETER MOORES FOUNDATION

In the field of music, the Peter Moores Foundation awards scholarships to promising young opera singers through the Royal Northern College of Music. Financial help may be given also to enable a singer to study abroad, or to work on a new role with an acknowledged expert in the repertoire.

In the last twenty years the Foundation has supported the recording of forty operas. Many are sung in English, in translation, because Moores believes that in the popular repertoire, 'what people want is to be able to follow the plot of an opera and understand what is going on'. Others are of interesting but unperformed Italian operas from the early nineteenth century (the age of *bel canto*), which are otherwise only accessible to scholars. Accessibility is the key word.

The same criterion holds where live opera is concerned. So the Foundation may sponsor Welsh National Opera, performing for a week at the Liverpool Empire and charging only £2.50 per ticket – the provision being that each ticket holder must be a first-time opera visitor – or it may fund the production at Glyndebourne of *Ermione*, a *bel canto* opera never before performed in England.

The aim is always the same: availability. 'Share and enjoy' is his philosophy.

Charles Gounod: Faust

Ein alter Freund Gounods, der Abbé Gay, bemerkte 1859 im Anschluß an die Uraufführung der Oper, die das populärste Werk des Komponisten werden sollte: "Die Welt ist in ihn eingedrungen und hat Jesus Christus verscheucht." Das ist eine passende Bemerkung über einen Komponisten, dem es schwerfiel, seine beiden Leitsterne miteinander zu versöhnen – die Liebe zu Gott und die Liebe alles Sinnlichen –, die sich in seinen Kompositionen widerspiegeln. Seine Oratorien und sonstigen Sakralwerke sind heute im wesentlichen vergessen; seine Werke für die Bühne oder wenigstens zwei davon, *Faust* und *Roméo et Juliette*, leben weiter und werden in allen Opernmetropolen aufgeführt. Gounods religiöse Bestrebungen traten in den Hintergrund, als er Pauline Viardot kennenlernte, die gefeierte Sängerin, die seine Aufmerksamkeit auf das Opernhaus lenkte. Ein anderer Kommentator, der Maler Delacroix, behauptete: "Ein Komponist schreibt *Faust* und vergißt prompt alles, was den Hades betrifft." Der Kampf zwischen dem Sakralen und dem Profanen, der in Gounods Seele tobt, wird in seiner bekanntesten Oper treffend umrissen. Er verwandelte geschickt, wenn auch vielleicht unbewußt das Theater in eine Kanzel und paßte sich mit seinem sakralen Stil dem Diktat der Bühne an. Dieser Stil hat offenbar das Publikum angesprochen, wo und wann immer das Werk gespielt wurde, und das ist sehr oft geschehen.

Es wurde 1859 zunächst am Théâtre-Lyrique als *opéra comique*, also mit Dialogen aufgeführt und gelangte erst zehn Jahre später an die Opéra; dort wurde es mit den Rezitativen aufgeführt, die Gounod für eine Straßburger Aufführung im Jahr 1860 geschrieben hatte, und in dieser Form wird es heute gewöhnlich dargeboten. Die 2000. Vorstellung fand dort 1944 statt, die 2836. um die Zeit von Jorge Lavellis Neuinszenierung 1975 – positives Zeugnis für seine Langlebigkeit und Popularität. In Italien, an der Mailänder Scala, war das Werk erstmals 1862 zu hören. Die meisten Änderungen und Kürzungen, die bei dieser Gelegenheit vorgenommen wurden, sind seither Tradition geworden, darunter auch die Streichung der Walpurgisnachtszene.

In England wurde die Oper 1863 eingeführt

und danach jede Saison bis 1911 gespielt (sehr zum Ärger von Bernard Shaw, der sie abscheulich fand), und zwar in italienischer Sprache, der *lingua franca* der Oper in Großbritannien und anderswo. Bei der Londoner Premiere an Her Majesty's Theatre übernahm Sir Charles Santley die Rolle des Valentin. Gounod besuchte die Vorstellung und lernte den berühmten Bariton kennen. Als dann für das folgende Jahr die erste Aufführung der Oper in englischer Sprache angesetzt wurde, schlug Santley vor, der Komponist solle unter Verwendung einer Melodie, die im Vorspiel vorkommt, eine Gesangsnummer für ihn schreiben. So erblickte die bekannte Bariton-Kavatine das Licht der Welt. Der Kritiker Henry Chorley schrieb den Text: "Even bravest heart may swell" ["Duty bids me leave this place" auf dieser Aufnahme]. Das Stück war ein unmittelbarer Erfolg und gehört seither zum festen Programm von Bariton-Recitals.

Als das Werk die Opéra erreichte, wurde ein Ballett benötigt – ein *sine qua non* in Paris. Gounod war wenig geneigt, es zu schreiben, denn er hatte sich gerade wieder dem Sakralen zugewandt, und schlug seinen Schüler Saint-Saëns für die Aufgabe vor. Wie letzterer in seinen Memoiren feststellt, stürzte ihn der Auftrag in Verlegenheit; er eilte zu Gounod nach St. Cloud, um ihn zu überreden, die Musik selbst zu komponieren. Gounod, der mit einem Abbé am Kartentisch saß, nickte, sagte jedoch nichts dazu. Am Ende willigte er ein, das amüsante Stück zu schreiben, das hier als Anhang gespielt wird. Das Werk, mit dem 1883 das Metropolitan Opera House in New York eröffnet wurde, war in den USA bald so populär wie andernswo auch.

Sir Thomas Beecham war einer der Hauptbefürworter des *Faust* und nahm 1929 eine Einspielung in englischer Sprache vor, mit einer Besetzung aus Ensemblemitgliedern der British National Opera Company unter der Führung von Heddle Nash und Miriam Licette, und nahm die Oper Ende der vierziger Jahre erneut auf, diesmal in Frankreich, in der Originalsprache und mit einer französischen Besetzung. Obwohl ihr Ansehen beim Publikum danach ein wenig ins Hintertreffen geriet, hat sie ihren Platz im Repertoire britischer Ensembles kaum einmal verloren, sondern wurde regelmäßig nicht nur in Covent Garden, sondern auch am Sadler's Wells Theatre aufgeführt (zuletzt von der English National Opera in der vielbewunderten Inszenierung von Ian Judge mit John Tomlinson als Mephistopheles).

Als Stipendiat des Prix de Rome von 1839 bis 1842 wurde Gounods Interesse am ersten

Teil von Goethes Werk dadurch geweckt, daß er Gérard de Nervals Übersetzung des Schauspiels las. Er verliebte sich augenblicklich in das Stück und beschloß, diese "fabelhafte Geschichte" in Musik umzusetzen. Seine Reise in Goethes Heimatland mit seiner Fülle alter Legenden bestärkte ihn in seinem Vorhaben. Dann hörte er Berlioz' *La damnation de Faust*, das ihn tief berührte. Sein Wunsch, Goethe zu vertonen, wurde durch das Erlebnis nicht gemindert; ganz im Gegenteil, es erwies sich als Anreiz. 1849 unternahm er einen ersten Versuch, die Domszene zu komponieren.

Dann lernte er die Dichter Jules Barbier und Michel Carré kennen, die späteren Librettisten des *Faust*. Carré war der Verfasser eines Stücks mit dem Titel *Faust et Marguerite*, das Gounod 1850 auf der Bühne sah. Es lieferte die Grundlage für das Libretto der Oper. Barbier kürzte das Stück auf genau den Umfang ein, der Gounod zusagte. Er strich oder verschmolz Figuren und Ereignisse – unverzichtbar, wenn ein Stück dem langsameren Voranschreiten der Oper angepaßt wird. Nur Mephistopheles und einige Geistererscheinungen sind von den übernatürlichen Figuren geblieben. Siébel ist im Grunde eine Neuschöpfung, zaghaft und virtuos in Marguerite verliebt. Fausts komplexe Psyche wird auf das Ringen zwischen Lust und reiner Liebe verkürzt. Marguerite ist ganz schlichte Unschuld, die betrogen und schließlich gerettet wird. Die Kerkerszene und die Apotheose zum Schluß, die in Carrés Stück nicht vorkommen, wurden hinzugefügt, ebenso der Tod Valentins.

Gounod beendete die Komposition der Oper 1858. Man fing am Théâtre-Lyrique, wo Léon Carvalho Direktor war, sogleich mit den Proben an. Seine Gemahlin Marie Miolan Carvalho sollte die Marguerite geben, deshalb steht sie in der Partitur so sehr im Vordergrund. Die Premiere mußte verschoben werden, weil der Tenor, der den Faust sang, auf der Kostümprobe die Stimme verlor und ersetzt werden mußte. Die Kirchenszene mußte ganz ausgelassen werden (eine Praxis, die zeitweise häufige Nachahmung fand), weil das Kulturministerium darauf bedacht war, in einer Zeit, in der die Vereinigung Italiens in der Luft lag, Streit mit dem Vatikan zu vermeiden. Die Uraufführung wurde wohlwollend aufgenommen, nicht zuletzt dank der Gesangsleistung der Primadonna.

Überhebliche Menschen haben der Oper oft vorgeworfen, sie sei ein Zerrbild von Goethes Original, da sie den dort aufgeworfenen philosophischen Fragen nicht gerecht wird, was Berlioz und Boito in ihren Musikdramen zum Faust-Thema eher gelingt. Gounod war in Anbetracht seiner Vorgeschichte

verständlicherweise mehr am moralischen Aspekt interessiert – an Marguerites Untergang und abschließenden Erlösung durch Reue sowie an Fausts mißlungenem Versuch, seine Jugend zurückzugewinnen, indem er mit dem Teufel in Menschengestalt einen Pakt schließt. Gounods Librettist lieferte ihm genau die Situationen, die er brauchte.

Schon in jungen Jahren hatte sich Gounod für ein Werk begeistert, das die gleiche Thematik behandelt wie *Faust*: Mozarts *Don Giovanni*. In seiner Autobiographie legte er dar:

> Die ersten Noten der Ouvertüre mit den feierlichen, majestätischen Akkorden aus der letzten Szene des Komturs schienen mich in eine neue Welt zu versetzen. Ein Gefühl echten Grauens ließ mich frösteln. Als ich jedoch das furchtbare Donnergrollen auf- und absteigender Tonleitern vernahm, hart und unerbittlich wie ein Hinrichtungsbefehl, wurde ich von einer solch schauderhaften Angst erfaßt, daß mein Kopf an die Schulter meiner Mutter sank und ich bebend in der zweifachen Umarmung von Schönheit und Entsetzen nur zu raunen vermochte: "Das ist in der Tat wahrhaftige Musik!"

So sprach der künftige Komponist des *Faust*.

Gounods Komposition stand unter dem Einfluß von Meyerbeer, der – das dürfen wir nie vergessen – damals in Frankreich ungeheuer populär war. Außerdem ließ er sich von Halévy beeinflussen, und von Rossinis französischen Werken, die dieser am Ende seiner Opernkarriere für Paris geschrieben hatte und die in *Guillaume Tell* gipfelten. Gounods Stil wurde zu jener Zeit ebenso bewundert wie der von Verdi und Wagner. In England sah man ihn als den wahren Nachfolger Mendelssohns. Verdi selbst bewunderte Gounod, auch wenn er – vielleicht zu Recht – in seinem Schaffen die *fibra drammatica* vermißte. Gerade der konventionelle Charakter des Werks hat zweifellos zu seiner raschen Annahme geführt, denn die verwendeten musikalischen Formen sind solche, mit denen seinerzeit jeder Opernliebhaber vertraut war; das gilt insbesondere für die Soli und Couplets des Mephistopheles mit wiederholten Zeilen und für Fausts dreiteilige Cavatine "Salut, demeure chaste et pure" (This pure abode of simple virtue) mit ihrem modulierenden Mittelteil. Die Marschrhythmen, die streckenweise die Partitur erfüllen, wären in Meyerbeers Werken auch nicht fehl am Platz.

Und dennoch würden diese Aspekte des Werks nicht ausreichen, um die immense und nach wie vor andauernde Beliebtheit von *Faust* zu begründen. Die erklärt sich aus einer

besonderen Gabe Gounods, dem lyrischen Gepräge, das er vor allem Fausts Cavatine verleiht, und dem langen Gartenduett im III. Akt für Marguerite und Faust, das mit seiner sinnlichen, raffiniert angelegten Melodie das eigentliche Herzstück der Oper ist. Nicht weniger lyrisch sind die kurze, bedeutsame Szene mit der ersten Begegnung der Liebenden, die vom Timbre her reizvoll gallisch ist, und das bereits angesprochene Solo für Valentin, das diesen rechtschaffenen Burschen ideal zu charakterisieren scheint. Dann wäre da noch Marguerites Vorfreude, die sich in ihrer Juwelenarie offenbart und im Kontrast zu dem leicht altertümlich klingenden elegischen Lied vom König in Thulé steht.

Der Kirmeswalzer, dem man so oft aus dem Zusammenhang gerissen begegnet und der feinfühlig Chor und Orchester gegeneinander ausspielt, ist denkwürdig. Die beiden Soli von Mephistopheles mögen nicht so raffiniert sein wie ihre Entsprechung in Berlioz' Vertonung von Goethes Meisterwerk, sind jedoch wahrscheinlich von der Melodik her bemerkenswerter: Es könnte durchaus sein, daß der Teufel mit dieser schmeichlerischen Serenade den anderen die beste Melodie weggeschnappt hat. Der junge Siébel wird in seinem kurzen, schmucklosen Solo befriedigend dargestellt. Die Domszene, in der Marguerites Vereinsamung vor einem unpersönlichen Hintergrund aus archaischer Orgel und eintönigem Chorgesang aufgezeigt wird, beschwört andere Gedanken herauf, was nicht so sehr musikalisch inspiriert, aber doch bühnenwirksam ist. Das gleiche gilt für Marguerites Hymne an den Abend und Fausts Anteil daran am Schluß des III. Akts, wo der Held in ihre Arme zurückeilt, während Mephistopheles hinter der Bühne höhnisch lacht. Und Valentins Todesszene und das abschließende Trio – beide sind der Inbegriff der spätromantischen französischen Oper – dürfen auch nicht in Vergessenheit geraten.

Ebensowenig sollte Gounods meisterhafte Orchestrierung übersehen werden, vor allem im Zusammenspiel mit den Gesangsstimmen im Quartett des III. Akts, oder gar der Soldatenchor, obwohl dieser so oft aus dem Zusammenhang gerissen wurde, daß er sich abgenutzt hat. An seinem Platz am Anfang des IV. Akts ist er äußerst wirkungsvoll. Man mag dieses Werk noch so sehr verunglimpfen: Faust erfüllt als musikalisches Drama seine Funktion. Außerdem ist es für Sänger eines der dankbarsten Werke, und Gounods Musik wurde seit der ersten Inszenierung von praktisch allen Opernstars beehrt. In einer Zeit, da singbare Melodien in neuen Werken so rar sind,

erstrahlt Gounods Fähigkeit auf diesem Gebiet wie ein Fanal. Sich über diese Fähigkeit – und auch sonst über die Empfindsamkeiten einer vergangenen Epoche – lustig zu machen, kann leicht auf einen selbst zurückfallen.

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Inhaltsangabe

I. Akt

Faust, ein alternder Philosoph, sitzt in seinem Studierzimmer. Er verzweifelt an dem Unterfangen, das Rätsel des Universums zu lösen, und beschließt desillusioniert, sich zu vergiften. Er schickt sich an, das Gift zu trinken, als er Frauenstimmen und eine Schar Knechte auf dem Weg zur Arbeit hört. Er verflucht das Leben und das Greisenalter und fordert den Teufel auf, ihm zu helfen. Mephistopheles erscheint und bietet ihm Reichtum und Macht an, doch wonach Faust sich sehnt ist Jugend. Die aber ist Mephistopheles nur zu gewähren bereit, wenn Faust ihm seine Seele verschreibt. Als Faust zögert, wird ihm eine Vision der schönen Marguerite gezeigt, wie sie an ihrem Spinnrad sitzt. Er unterschreibt den Vertrag, trinkt aus dem Becher, den Mephistopheles ihm reicht, und verwandelt sich augenblicklich in einen jungen Mann.

II. Akt

Vor einer Schenke an einem der Tore der Stadt herrscht reges Treiben. Studenten, Bürger, Soldaten und Frauen jeden Alters haben sich dort vesammelt und singen ein fröhliches Lied. Marguerites Bruder Valentin und dessen junger Freund Siébel mischen sich unter die Leute. Valentin, der im Begriff steht, in den Krieg zu ziehen, hat von Margarethe ein Medaillon erhalten. Er bittet Siébel, seine Schwester zu beschüzen, während er fort ist.

Wagner bemüht sich, sie aufzuheitern, und hebt zu singen an. Er wird von Mephistopheles unterbrochen, der das Lied vom Goldenen Kalb singt und den Umstehenden aus der Hand liest. Zu Siebel sagt er, daß jede Blume, die er anrühre, sterben werde. Mephistopheles lehnt den minderwertigen Wein ab, den ihm Wagner anbietet, läßt selber Wein aus dem Wirtshausschild fließen, und trinkt Marguerite zu. Das erbost Valentin, und beide zücken ihre Degen. Mephistopheles zieht mit der Degenspitze einen Kreis um sich, und als Valentin mit seiner Klinge in diesen Kreis vordringt, zersplittert sie. Valentin und seine Freunde, die erkannt haben, mit wem sie es zu tun haben, dringen auf Mephistopheles ein und halten ihm die kreuzförmigen Griffe ihrer Degen entgegen. Mephistopheles duckt sich und entweicht.

Die Menge schreitet zum Tanz. Faust und Mephistopheles erscheinen und sehen Marguerite. Faust bietet ihr seinen Arm an, doch sie weist ihn höflich zurück. Er ist von ihr nur umso mehr entzückt.

III. Akt
Siébel pflückt Blumen für Marguerite, die wie vorhergesagt verwelken und sterben. Weihwasser hebt den Fluch auf, und er gibt einen Strauß für sie ab. Mephistopheles dagegen hinterläßt eine Schatulle mit Schmuck für sie. Derweil singt Marguerite eine alte Ballade, und als sie den Schmuck findet und anlegt, erblickt sie vor sich im Spiegel eine verwandelte Frau. Ihre alte Nachbarin Martha meint, es müsse sich um das Geschenk eines Bewunderers handeln.

Faust und Mephistopheles treffen ein; Faust umwirbt Marguerite, während Mephistopheles mit Martha schäkert. Margarethe ist drauf und dran, schwach zu werden, reißt sich jedoch von Faust los und eilt zurück zu ihrem Haus. Mephistopheles beschwört die berauschenden Düfte nächtlicher Blüten herauf, und Marguerite öffnet ihr Fenster, um der Nacht ihre Liebe zu Faust zu gestehen. Da tritt er aus dem Dunkel hervor, und sie gewährt ihm Einlaß ins Haus.

IV. Akt
Marguerite ist von Faust verlassen worden, und sie erwartet sein Kind. Sie geht zum Gebet. Valentin und die übrigen Soldaten kehren heim; Siebel versucht ihn vom Betreten des Hauses abzuhalten, doch er schiebt Siebel beiseite und geht hinein.

Mephistopheles bringt Marguerite stellvertretend für Faust eine spöttische Serenade dar. Valentin stürmt aus dem Haus und verlangt Genugtuung vom Verführer seiner Schwester. Er und Faust duellieren sich, und Mephistopheles sorgt dafür, daß Valentin tödlich verletzt zu Boden sinkt. Sterbend belegt Valentin Marguerite mit einem Fluch.

V. Akt
Walpurgisnacht: Man hört einen Chor von Irrlichtern, woraufhin Faust und Mephistopheles erscheinen. Faust wird eine Vision Marguerites offenbart, und er verlangt, zu ihr gebracht zu werden.

Marguerite sitzt im Kerker, weil sie ihr Kind getötet hat; Faust und Mephistopheles kommen, um sie zu retten. Es hat den Anschein, als würde sie Faust wiedererkennen, und sie gedenkt der Nacht, in der er sie verführt hat. Faust redet ihr zu, mit ihm fortzugehen, doch sie bittet Gott um Vergebung. Als sie stirbt, verflucht

Mephistopheles sie, doch da verkünden himmlische Stimmen, daß sie erlöst ist.

Anhang
Die Balletmusik, die für die Paris Opéra komponiert wurde, ist hier als Anhang beigefügt.

Übersetzung: Anne Steeb/Bernd Müller

Paul Charles Clarke wurde in Liverpool geboren und studierte am Royal College of Music bei Neil Mackie; 1989 gewann er den Kathleen-Ferrier-Wettbewerb. Seine Rollen umfaßten den Herzog (*Rigoletto*), Fenton (*Falstaff*) in Japan und auf dem Edinburgh Festival, Rodolfo (*La bohème*), Alfredo (*La traviata*) sowie die Titelrolle in *Faust* an der Welsh National Opera, Alfredo und Nemorino (*L'elisir d'amore*) an der Scottish Opera, Rodolfo und Dmitri (*Boris Godunow*) für die Opera North sowie Cassio (*Otello*), Tybalt (*Roméo et Juliette*) und Alfredo am Royal Opera House. Im Ausland ist er an der Seattle Opera, der Monte Carlo Opera, der Houston Grand Opera, der Cincinnati Opera sowie der Metropolitan Opera in New York aufgetreten.

Zu seinen CD-Aufnahmen zählen Tybalt (*Roméo et Juliette* unter Leonard Slatkin), Arturo (*Lucia* unter Sir Charles Mackerras) sowie Don Caesar (in Wallaces *Maritana*). Für die Zukunft plant Clarke weitere Auftritte an der Metropolitan Opera in New York, an der Welsh National Opera (unter anderem wird er bei der Eröffnung des neuen Opernhauses in Cardiff im Jahr 2002 die Titelrolle in *Don Carlos* singen) sowie in Seattle und schließlich sein Debüt an der Deutschen Oper in Berlin.

Alastair Miles ist als einer der führenden Gesangssolisten Großbritanniens international anerkannt. Er hat an der Metropolitan Opera gesungen (Giorgio in *I Puritani*, Raimondo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*), an der Opéra national de Paris (Raimondo), in Wien (Giorgio), San Francisco (Giorgio, Raimondo und Basilio in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*), Amsterdam (Figaro) und an der Royal Opera (Lord Sydney in *Il viaggio a Rheims*).

Seine erfolgreiche Konzertkarriere führt Alastair Miles mit den weltweit besten Orchestern zusammen unter Dirigenten wie Carlo Maria Giulini, Zubin Mehta, Riccardo Muti, Myung-Whun Chung, Kurt Masur, Valery Gergiev und John Eliot Gardiner. Zu seinen CD-Aufnahmen zählen eine mit dem *Gramophone* Award ausgezeichnete Einspielung des *Elijah*, Verdis Requiem, Händels *Saul* und *Agrippina* sowie für Chandos *Caractacus*, *The Rape of Lucretia* und

La bohème (letztere in Verbindung mit der Peter Moores Foundation).

Mary Plazas studierte am Royal Northern College of Music und dem National Opera Studio; 1991 gewann sie das Kathleen Ferrier Memorial Scholarship. Ihr Operndebüt feierte sie als die Himmlische Stimme (*Don Carlos*) an der English National Opera, wo sie auch von 1995–1998 als erste Sängerin engagiert war. Ihre Rollen umfaßten die Titelrolle in *The Cunning Little Vixen*, Micaëla, Mimì, Leila, Nanetta, Adina und Anne Trulove; sie hatte Engagements an der Royal Opera, der Opera North, der Glyndebourne Festival Opera, der Garsington Opera und der Metropolitan Opera in New York.

Sie hatte Fernsehauftritte in *Le nozze di Figaro* (Opera Factory) und als erste Hexe in *Dido und Aeneas*, die sie auch für Chandos sang. Ihre CD-Aufnahmen umfassen Mercadantes *Emma d'Antiochia* und Pacinis *Maria regina d'Inghilterra* für Opera Rara sowie *L'enfant et les sortilèges*. Sie hat weltweit Recitals und Konzerte mit den großen internationalen Orchestern gegeben.

Garry Magee sang den Guglielmo (*Così fan tutte*) und Prince Afron (*Le coq d'or*) an der Royal Opera, Eddy (*Greek*) mit der London Sinfonietta, Malatesta (*Don Pasquale*) an La Monnaie, Silvano (*Un ballo in maschera*) an der Monte Carlo Opera, Yeletsky (*La dame de pique*) an der Flandern-Oper, den Steward (*Flight*) an der Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Mountjoy (*Gloriana*) an der Opera North sowie die Titelrolle in *Eugen Onegin* für die British Youth Opera. Zu seinen Konzertauftritten zählen Rachmaninows *Frühlingskantate* mit dem City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra und dem Orchester der Komischen Oper Berlin.

Diana Montague studierte am Royal Northern College of Music. Seit ihrem Debüt als Zerlina mit der Glyndebourne Touring Opera ist sie in den führenden Opernhäusern und Konzertsälen aufgetreten, darunter das Royal Opera House in Covent Garden, die Metropolitan Opera in New York, La Monnaie in Brüssel, die Pariser Bastille, das Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires sowie die Festivals in Bayreuth und Salzburg.

Ihr Repertoire umfaßt die großen Mezzosopran-Rollen von Mozart, Gluck, Strauss, Rossini, Bellini und Berlioz. Neben häufigen Konzertengagements mit führenden Dirigenten hat sie zahlreiche CD-Aufnahmen gemacht, darunter *I Capuleti e I Montecchi*, *Norma*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Iphigénie en Tauride*, *Il crociato in Egitto* (für Opera Rara) und *Cavalleria rusticana* sowie schließlich eine CD mit großen Opernarien (für Chandos/Peter Moores Foundation).

Matthew Hargreaves studierte an der Guildhall School of Music and Drama bei Rudolph Piernay; 1997 gewann er sowohl den Decca Prize als auch die Kathleen Ferrier Award Competition. Zu seinen Rollen zählen Figaro, Dandini (*La cenerentola*), der Magistrat (*Werther*), Fiorello (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*) mit der English Touring Opera, sowie Polyphemus (*Acis und Galatea*) und Leporello am Opera Atelier in Toronto. Weitere Auftritte hatte er auf dem Covent Garden Festival, mit der Broomhill Opera, der Opera italiana, der British Youth Opera und der Pavillion Opera. Seine CD-Aufnahmen umfassen den Bootsmaat (*Billy Budd*) mit dem Hallé Orchestra unter Kent Nagano, den Abt (*Curlew River*) und Rambaldo (*Maria di Rudenz*) für Opera Rara.

Sarah Walker ist eine der herausragendsten Künstlerinnen Großbritanniens. Sie hat weltweit mit den führenden Orchestern gesungen, ist auf den großen britischen und europäischen Festivals aufgetreten, feierte unvergeßliche Soloauftritte in der "Last Night of the Proms" und sang unter Bernstein in Beethovens Neunter Sinfonie anläßlich des Falls der Berliner Mauer.

Auftritte führten sie an das Royal Opera House in Covent Garden, die English National Opera, nach Wien, Genf, Monte Carlo, Paris, Barcelona, Madrid, Brüssel, Hamburg, San Francisco und Chicago, an die Mailänder Scala, die Metropolitan Opera in New York und zum Glyndebourne Festival. 1991 wurde Sarah Walker mit dem CBE der Queen's Birthday Honours ausgezeichnet.

Geoffrey Mitchell hat im Lauf seiner Gesangskarriere ein erstaunlich umfangreiches Repertoire erschlossen, von alter bis hin zu zeitgenössischer Musik. Daraus ergaben sich erst Dirigieraufträge von der BBC, dann eine ausgedehntere Zusammenarbeit mit seinen Sängern, die wiederum zur Gründung des **Geoffrey Mitchell Choir** führte. Frühe Schallplattenaufnahmen hatten zur Folge, daß der Chor langfristige Beziehungen zu Opera Rara einging, für die er 15 Opern aufgezeichnet hat. Derzeit genießt er dank weiterer Verpflichtungen für die BBC und internationale Schallplattenfirmen wachsendes Ansehen.

Mit der Gründung des **Philharmonia Orchestra** verwirklichte Walter Legge sein

hohes Ziel, ein handverlesenes Orchester der Spitzenklasse aufzustellen. Das Philharmonia Orchestra gab sein erstes Konzert unter Sir Thomas Beecham im Oktober 1945 und war bald als eines der wahrhaft großen Orchester der Welt angesehen. Viele bekannte Dirigenten haben mit ihm zusammengearbeitet, und es ist und bleibt das meistaufgezeichnete Orchester der Welt. Seine Diskographie, darunter auch Opern für die Peter Moores Foundation/ Opera Rara, beläuft sich auf über tausend Aufnahmen. Der Rang des Philharmonia Orchestra als "das führende Orchester Londons" ist auf seine Vitalität zurückzuführen, seinen einmalig warmen Klang und sein Engagement für die Vergabe von Kompositionsaufträgen und die Aufführung der Musik bedeutender Gegenwartskomponisten wie dem verstorbenen Witold Lutoslawski, Sir Harrison Birtwistle und James MacMillan, dem Gastkomponisten des Orchesters.

David Parry studierte bei Sergiu Celibidache und begann seine Laufbahn als Sir John Pritchards musikalischer Assistent. Er debütierte mit dem English Music Theatre und wurde Kapellmeister an den Städtischen Bühnen Dortmund sowie an Opera North in Leeds. Von 1983 bis 1987 fungierte er als Musikdirektor für Opera 80 und seit 1992 ist er der Musikdirektor (und Gründer) des zeitgenössischen Opern-Festivals Almeida Opera.

Parrys Tätigkeitsbereich ist nicht nur das Opernhaus, sondern auch der Konzertsaal. Sein Repertoire erstreckt sich von Mozart und der italienischen Oper des frühen 19. Jahrhunderts bis zu Janáček, Britten und zeitgenössischer Musik. In England dirigiert er regelmäßig an der English National Opera und konzertiert mit dem Philharmonia Orchestra, 1996 machte er mit *Così fan tutte* sein Debüt bei dem Glyndebourne Festival.

David Parry gastiert häufig in Spanien, wo er bereits mit den meisten Opernkompanien und Sinfonieorchestern aufgetreten ist. Die spanische Premiere von *Peter Grimes* fand unter seiner Leitung in Madrid statt; 1996 dirigierte er die erste spanische Inszenierung von *The Rake's Progress* (Strawinsky) und weihte zwei neue Konzertsäle mit der Neunten Sinfonie von Beethoven sowie ein neues Opernhaus mit *Carmen* ein. In Italien leitete er *Ricciardo e Zoraide* bei dem Rossini-Festival in Pesaro. Er tritt in Frankreich, Deutschland, Belgien, den Niederlanden und Schweden auf, wo er eine gefeierte Inszenierung von Brittens *A Midsummer Night's Dream* dirigierte.

Außerhalb Europas ist David Parry bei dem Hongkong International Festival und mit dem UNAM Symphony Orchestra in Mexico City aufgetreten, war mit *Carmen* in Japan auf Tournee und leitete eine Neuinszenierung von *Katja Kabanova* für das Festival in Neuseeland.

Parry hat zahlreiche Werke für das Label Opera Rara eingespielt, zuletzt *Rosmonda d'Inghilterra* von Donizetti, das in Belgien mit dem Prix Cecilia ausgezeichnet wurde; für Chandos hat er eine preisgekrönte *Tosca* aufgenommen, drei Aufnahmen operatischen Arien (mit Bruce Ford, Diana Montague und Dennis O'Neill), *Don Pasquale, La bohème, Cavalleria rusticana* und *Pagliacci*.

Charles Gounod: Faust

Après la première (1859) de ce qui allait devenir la partition la plus populaire de Gounod, un vieil ami du compositeur, l'abbé Gay, fit cette observation: "Le monde s'est emparé de lui et en a chassé Jésus-Christ." C'est une remarque qui s'applique particulièrement bien à un compositeur qui trouvait difficile de concilier les deux influences qui le guidaient: l'amour de Dieu et l'amour de la sensualité, chose qui se reflète dans ses compositions. Ses oratorios et ses autres œuvres sacrées sont maintenant dans une large mesure oubliées, mais ses œuvres pour la scène, tout au moins deux d'entre elles, *Faust* et *Roméo et Juliette*, survivent, continuant d'être représentées dans toutes les capitales opératiques. Ses aspirations religieuses commencèrent à être reléguées au second plan lorsque Gounod fit la connaissance de Pauline Viardot, célèbre cantatrice, qui attira son attention sur l'opéra. Un autre commentateur, le peintre Delacroix affirma: "Un compositeur écrit *Faust* et cela lui fait tout oublier d'Hadès." La bataille que se livrèrent le sacré et le profane dans l'âme de Gounod est habilement esquissée dans son opéra le plus célèbre. Il y transforma adroitement, bien que peut-être inconsciemment, le théâtre en chaire, adaptant son style religieux aux lois du théâtre. C'est une façon de procéder qui a manifestement séduit le public, partout et à chaque fois que l'opéra a été représenté – donc très souvent.

D'abord présentée au Théêtre-Lyrique en 1859, sous forme d'opéra comique (c'est à dire avec dialogue parlé), l'œuvre atteignait l'Opéra dix années plus tard; elle y fut jouée avec le récitatif que Gounod avait écrit pour une représentation donnée à Strasbourg en 1860 – c'est d'ailleurs la forme sous laquelle on la présente généralement de nos jours. C'est aussi à l'Opéra qu'eut lieu sa 2000ème représentation en 1944, et on avait atteint la 2836ème à l'époque de la nouvelle mise en scène réalisée par Jorge Lavelli en 1975, en soi un hommage à la longévité et à la popularité de l'œuvre. On l'entendit pour la première fois en Italie à La Scala, en 1862. La plupart des modifications et des coupures effectuées à cette occasion devinrent par la suite de tradition, y compris l'élimination de la scène de la nuit de Walpurgis.

Introduite en Angleterre en 1863, l'œuvre y fut donnée à chaque saison jusqu'en 1911 (à la vive contrariété de Bernard Shaw auquel elle inspirait de la répulsion) et chantée en italien, qui était alors la langue véhiculaire opératique en Grande-Bretagne comme partout ailleurs. Lors de la première londonienne à Her Majesty's Theatre, Sir Charles Santley chanta le rôle de Valentin. Gounod, qui assistait à la représentation, fit la connaissance du célèbre baryton de sorte que, lorsque la première représentation de l'opéra en anglais fut fixée pour l'année suivante, Santley suggéra que le compositeur écrivît un air à son intention, en utilisant une mélodie figurant dans le Prélude. C'est ainsi que la célèbre cavatine pour baryton vit le jour. Enthousiasmé, le critique Henry Chorley écrivit: "Even bravest heart may swell" ["Duty bids me leave this place" sur cet enregistrement]. Elle remporta un succès immédiat et depuis lors est toujours restée un des ingrédients de base des récitals de baryton.

Lorsque l'œuvre atteignit l'Opéra, il lui fallut un ballet, une condition *sine qua non* à Paris. Gounod, qui avait retrouvé ses aspirations religieuses, se montra peu enclin à le composer et suggéra que cette tâche soit confiée à son élève Saint-Saëns. Comme ce dernier le relata dans ses mémoires, il trouva cette commande embarrassante et se rendit tambour battant chez Gounod à Saint-Cloud pour le persuader de composer la musique. Gounod, qui était occupé à jouer aux cartes avec un abbé, hocha la tête sans dire quoi que ce soit. A la fin, il consentit à écrire la délicieuse partition figurant ici en appendice. L'œuvre fut jouée à l'inauguration du Metropolitan Opera House de New York en 1883, et devint bientôt aussi populaire aux Etats-Unis qu'elle l'était partout ailleurs.

Sir Thomas Beecham, qui était un des principaux défenseurs de *Faust*, enregistra l'œuvre en anglais, en 1929, avec des chanteurs de la British National Opera Company sous la direction de Heddle Nash et Miriam Licette, puis l'enregistra à nouveau vers la fin des années 1940, en France, dans la langue d'origine avec des chanteurs français. Bien qu'après cela l'œuvre baissât quelque peu dans l'estime populaire, elle a rarement quitté le répertoire des compagnies britanniques, étant régulièrement représentée à Covent Garden et au Sadler's Wells (très récemment à l'English National Opera dans une mise en scène très applaudie de Ian Judge, avec John Tomlinson en Méphistophélès).

Durant l'époque où Gounod était lauréat du Prix de Rome, de 1839 à 1842, son intérêt pour la première partie de l'œuvre de Goethe fut éveillé lorsqu'il lut une traduction de la pièce, faite par Gérard de Nerval. Il tomba

immédiatement amoureux de la pièce et décida de mettre cette "fabuleuse histoire" en musique. Les voyages qu'il fit au pays de Goethe, où les légendes anciennes abondaient, eurent pour effet de renforcer sa détermination. Il entendit ensuite *La damnation de Faust* de Berlioz, qui l'émut profondément. Ceci, loin de mettre un frein à son désir de mettre Gœthe en musique, ne fit que le stimuler. En 1849, il tenta une première fois de mettre la scène de l'église en musique.

Il fit ensuite la connaissance des écrivains qui allaient devenir les auteurs du livret de *Faust*, Jules Barbier et Michel Carré. Carré était l'auteur d'une pièce intitulée *Faust et Marguerite*, vue par Gounod en 1850, qui fournit les bases du livret d'opéra. Barbier réduisit les dimensions de la pièce pour qu'elles conviennent exactement aux besoins de Gounod en éliminant ou regroupant les personnages et les événements, un travail qui s'avère essentiel lorsqu'on désire adapter une pièce au rythme plus lent de l'opéra. Parmi les personnages surnaturels, seuls Méphistophélès et quelques démons restèrent.

Siébel, brûlant d'un amour timide et vertueux pour Marguerite, est quasiment une création nouvelle. La psychologie complexe de Faust se réduisit à une lutte entre le désir charnel et l'amour pur. Marguerite incarna l'innocence trahie et finalement rachetée. La scène de la prison et l'apothéose finale, qui ne figuraient pas dans l'œuvre de Carré, furent ajoutées, de même que la mort de Valentin.

Gounod acheva la composition de l'opéra en 1858, et les répétitions commencèrent aussitôt au Théâtre-Lyrique dont le directeur était Léon Carvalho. La femme de ce dernier, Marie Miolan Carvalho, devait incarner Marguerite, ce qui explique l'importance accordée au rôle dans la partition. Il fallut reporter la première: le ténor chantant Faust, devenu aphone au cours de la répétition générale, devait être remplacé. Il fallut omettre la Scène de l'église (pratique qui fut souvent de mise à un certain moment) du fait que le ministre de la culture tenait à éviter de se brouiller avec le Vatican, à une époque où l'unification de l'Italie était fortement dans l'air. La première reçut un accueil favorable, notamment à cause de la prestation de la prima donna.

L'élite a souvent critiqué cet opéra, le qualifiant de parodie de Goethe parce qu'il ne pouvait rivaliser avec les défis philosophiques de l'original, condition que Berlioz et Boito semblaient plus près de remplir dans leurs drames musicaux faustiens. Gounod se montra (bien naturellement vu sa formation) plus intéressé par l'aspect moral – la ruine de Marguerite et sa rédemption finale par le

repentir, ainsi que la tentative de Faust vouée à l'échec de retrouver la jeunesse en signant un pacte avec le diable incarné. Ses librettistes lui fournirent très exactement les situations dont il avait besoin.

A un âge précoce, Gounod avait été fasciné par une œuvre portant sur le même sujet que *Faust*, le *Don Giovanni* de Mozart. Il déclara dans sa biographie que les premières notes de l'ouverture, avec les majestueux accords solennels empruntés à la scène où apparaît le Commandeur pour la dernière fois semblèrent le faire pénétrer dans un monde nouveau. Il fut glacé par une sensation de véritable terreur. Mais lorsqu'il entendit le terrible roulement de tonnerre des gammes ascendantes et descendantes, sévère et implacable comme un arrêt de mort, il fut saisi d'un tel frisson de peur que sa tête tomba sur l'épaule de sa mère et que, tremblant sous la double étreinte de la beauté et de l'horreur, il ne put que murmurer: "Voilà vraiment de la musique!" Ainsi parla le futur compositeur de *Faust*.

Gounod, lorsqu'il composa sa partition, fut fortement influencé par Meyerbeer, qui – ne l'oublions jamais – jouissait alors d'une popularité énorme en France. Gounod fut aussi influencé par Halévy et Rossini, le Rossini des œuvres françaises qui furent écrites pour la scène parisienne à la fin de sa carrière opératique, et dont le point culminant fut *Guillaume Tell*. Le style de Gounod était à l'époque aussi admiré que celui de Verdi et de Wagner. En Angleterre, on le considérait comme le véritable successeur de Mendelssohn. Verdi lui-même admirait Gounod, bien qu'il regrettât, peut-être à juste titre, l'absence de *fibra drammatica* dans sa musique. Ce fut sans aucun doute le conformisme même de l'œuvre qui amena à son acceptation rapide, ses formes musicales étant celles qui étaient familières à tout amateur d'opéra de l'époque, en particulier celles des solos de Méphistophélès, des couplets, c'est à dire avec un refrain répété, et celle de la cavatine en trois parties de Faust, "Salut, demeure chaste et pure" (This pure abode of simple virtue) avec une section centrale modulante. Les rythmes de marche qui envahissent certaines parties de la partition ne paraîtraient pas déplacés dans les œuvres de Meyerbeer.

Cependant, ces aspects de l'œuvre ne suffiraient pas à expliquer la popularité à la fois immense et persistante de Faust. Ce qui l'explique c'est un don spécial à Gounod. C'est le lyrisme que l'on trouve en particulier dans la cavatine de Faust et dans le duo prolongé que chantent Marguerite et Faust dans le jardin à l'acte III, duo qui constitue le cœur même de l'opéra avec sa voluptueuse mélodie,

merveilleusement tournée. On retrouve la même qualité dans la courte scène significative au timbre gracieusement français, où les amants se rencontrent pour la première fois, et le solo de Valentin, mentionné au préalable, qui semble caractériser de façon idéale ce jeune homme si droit. Vient aussi l'excitation pleine d'anticipation de Marguerite telle que la révèle l'air des bijoux contrastant avec la chanson élégiaque du roi de Thulé, empreinte d'un léger parfum d'antiquité.

La valse de la kermesse que l'on rencontre si souvent hors de son contexte, opposant délicatement chœur et orchestre est mémorable. Les deux solos de Méphistophélès bien que n'ayant peut-être pas la subtilité de leurs équivalents dans la mise en musique du chef d'œuvre de Goethe écrite par Berlioz, sont probablement plus remarquables au niveau de la mélodie: il semblerait que le plus bel air ait été attribué au diable avec sa sérénade insinuante. Le jeune Siébel est joliment campé avec son petit solo ingénu. La Scène de l'église, au cours de laquelle l'isolement de Marguerite se trouve dépeint de façon frappante sur le fond impersonnel créé par un orgue archaïque et un chœur qui chante, évoque d'autres trouvailles, moins inspirées du point de vue musical, mais efficaces au niveau théâtral. Il en est ainsi de l'hymne au soir que chante Marguerite et du rôle qu'y joue Faust à la fin de l'acte III lorsqu'il revient se jeter dans les bras de la jeune fille, tandis que le rire sardonique de Méphistophélès monte des coulisses, sans oublier la scène de la mort de Valentin et le trio final qui touchent à la matière même de l'opéra français de la fin du romantisme.

Il ne faudrait pas non plus négliger la maîtrise de l'orchestration qu'avait acquise Gounod. Elle semble des plus évidentes dans l'interaction des voix du quatuor de l'acte III, et d'ailleurs dans le chœur de soldats: tout banal qu'il ait pu devenir à force d'être utilisé hors de contexte, il est saisissant lorsqu'il est chanté à sa place, au début de l'acte IV. Si dénigré soit-il, *Faust* est un drame musical réussi. C'est aussi une des œuvres les plus élégantes à chanter – depuis sa première mise en scène, cette musique de Gounod a eu l'honneur d'être interprétée par quasiment toutes les stars de l'opéra. A une époque où l'on prise tant la rare présence de mélodies chantables dans une œuvre nouvelle, le talent de Gounod répand sa lumière, tel un phare dans la nuit. C'est à nos risques et périls que nous tournons en dérision ce talent – et d'ailleurs les sentiments d'un âge antérieur.

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Argument

Acte I
Faust, un philosophe d'un âge avancé, est assis dans son cabinet de travail. Il désespère de résoudre l'énigme de l'univers et, désabusé, décide de s'empoisonner. Alors qu'il s'apprête à boire le poison, il entend les voix des femmes et des ouvriers agricoles se rendant au travail. Maudissant la vie et la vieillesse, il appelle le diable pour qu'il lui vienne en aide. Méphistophélès apparaît et lui offre richesses et puissance, mais ce que Faust désire ardemment, c'est la jeunesse, chose que Méphistophélès ne lui accordera que s'il signe la reddition de son âme. Comme Faust hésite, il a une vision de la belle Marguerite assise à son rouet. Il signe le document, boit au gobelet que lui présente Méphistophélès, et se transforme instantanément en jeune homme.

Acte II
Des gens se sont rassemblés devant une auberge située près d'une des portes de la ville. Ce sont des étudiants, des hommes de la ville, des soldats et des femmes jeunes et vieilles qui chantent joyeusement. Le frère de Marguerite, Valentin, et son jeune ami Siébel se joignent à la foule. Valentin auquel Marguerite a donné un médaillon avant qu'il ne parte à la guerre, demande à Siébel de veiller sur sa sœur en son absence.

Wagner, essayant d'égayer l'atmosphère, se met à chanter. Il est interrompu par Méphistophélès qui chante la Chanson du veau d'or et lit les lignes de la main de ceux qui l'entourent; il dit à Siébel que toute fleur qu'il touchera mourra. Repoussant le vin médiocre que lui offre Wagner, Méphistophélès fait couler du vin de l'enseigne de l'auberge et boit à la santé de Marguerite. Ce geste provoque la colère de Valentin. Ils dégainent tous les deux. Méphistophélès trace un cercle autour de lui avec la pointe de son épée et, lorsque Valentin attaque et que son épée pénètre à l'intérieur du cercle, la lame se brise en éclats. Le jeune homme se rend compte de l'identité de son adversaire. Valentin et ses amis marchent en direction de Méphistophélès, brandissant la garde en forme de croix de leurs épées. Méphistophélès, recroquevillé de peur, s'en va.

La foule s'assemble pour danser. Faust et Méphistophélès entrent et voient Marguerite. Faust lui offre le bras, mais elle refuse poliment. Le ravissement de Faust en est encore accru.

Acte III
Siébel cueille des fleurs pour Marguerite, et, comme prédit, elles se flétrissent et meurent. Le recours à l'eau bénite met fin à cette

malédiction et il laisse un bouquet à la porte de Marguerite. Méphistophélès dépose un coffret rempli de bijoux à l'intention de la jeune fille. Pendant ce temps, Marguerite chante une vieille ballade. Lorsqu'elle trouve les bijoux et s'en pare, c'est une femme bien différente qu'elle voit dans son miroir. Sa voisine d'âge mûr, Martha, remarque qu'ils sont sûrement le don d'un admirateur.

Faust et Méphistophélès entrent, Faust faisant la cour à Marguerite et Méphistophélès contant fleurette à Martha. Marguerite, qui commence à faiblir, se dégage pourtant de l'étreinte de Faust et retourne en courant chez elle. Méphistophélès rassemble alors tous les parfums enivrants des fleurs de la nuit, et Marguerite ouvre sa fenêtre pour confesser à la nuit l'amour qu'elle ressent pour Faust. Ce dernier émerge de l'ombre et elle le fait rentrer chez elle.

Acte IV
Marguerite a été abandonnée par Faust dont elle attend l'enfant. Elle s'en va prier. Les soldats reviennent avec Valentin. Siébel essaie de le dissuader d'entrer dans la maison, mais le jeune homme écarte son ami et rentre.

Méphistophélès chante de la part de Faust une sérénade moqueuse qui s'adresse à Marguerite. Valentin sort précipitamment de la maison pour demander satisfaction à celui qui a séduit sa sœur. Valentin et Faust se battent et, par l'action de Méphistophélès, Valentin s'effondre mortellement blessé. Dans son dernier souffle, Valentin maudit Marguerite.

Acte V
La nuit de Walpurgis: un chœur de feux follets se fait entendre tandis que Faust et Méphistophélès apparaissent. Faust, qui a une vision de Marguerite, demande à être emmené auprès d'elle

Marguerite est emprisonnée pour avoir tué son enfant. Faust et Méphistophélès viennent la délivrer. Elle semble reconnaître Faust et se remémore la nuit où il l'a séduite pour la première fois. Faust l'incite à partir avec lui, mais elle prie Dieu de la pardonner. Lorsqu'elle meurt, Méphistophélès la maudit, mais des voix angéliques proclament qu'elle est sauvée.

Appendice
La musique du ballet, composée pour l'Opéra de Paris, se trouve incluse en appendice.

Traduction: Marianne Fernée

Né à Liverpool, **Paul Charles Clarke** étudie au Royal College of Music avec Neil Mackie et remporte la Kathleen Ferrier Competition de

1989. Parmi les rôles qu'il a incarnés figurent le Duc (*Rigoletto*), Fenton (*Falstaff*) au Japon et au Festival d'Edimbourg, Rodolphe (*La bohème*), Alfredo (*La traviata*) et le rôle-titre de *Faust* pour le Welsh National Opera, Alfredo et Nemorino (*L'elisir d'amore*) pour le Scottish Opera, Rodolphe et Dimitri (*Boris Godounov*) pour Opera North, et Cassio (*Otello*), Tybalt (*Roméo et Juliette*) et Alfredo pour le Royal Opera House. Il s'est aussi produit à l'étranger avec l'Opéra de Seattle, l'Opéra de Monte-Carlo, l'Opéra de Houston, l'Opéra de Cincinnati et le Metropolitan de New York.

Parmi les enregistrements à son actif, il faut citer Tybalt (*Roméo et Juliette* sous la direction de Leonard Slatkin), Arturo (*Lucia* sous la direction de sir Charles Mackerras) et Don Caesar (*Maritana* de Wallace). A l'avenir, il projette de retourner au Metropolitan de New York, au Welsh National Opera (entre autres pour incarner le rôle-titre de *Don Carlos* lors de l'inauguration du nouvel opéra de Cardiff en 2002) et à Seattle, mais il doit aussi faire ses débuts à la Deutsche Oper de Berlin.

Reconnu sur le plan international comme un des plus grands chanteurs de Grande-Bretagne, **Alastair Miles** a chanté au Metropolitan (Giorgio (*I puritani*) et Raimondo (*Lucia di Lammermoor*)), à l'Opéra national de Paris (Raimondo), à Vienne (Giorgio), à San Francisco (Giorgio, Raimondo et Basilio (*Le barbier de Séville*)), à Amsterdam (Figaro) et au Royal Opera (Lord Sydney (*Il viaggio a Rheims*)).

Sa carrière à succès de concertiste l'emmène dans le monde entier. Il chante sous la direction de chefs tels que Carlo Maria Giulini, Zubin Mehta, Riccardo Muti, Myung-Whun Chung, Kurt Masur, Valery Gergiev et John Eliot Gardiner, en compagnie des orchestres les plus prestigieux du monde. Parmi les enregistrements à son actif, il faut citer *Elijah* qui a remporté le *Gramophone* Award, le Requiem de Verdi, *Saul* et *Agrippina* de Haendel, et chez Chandos – *Caractacus*, *The Rape of Lucretia* et *La bohème* (réalisée en association avec la Peter Moores Foundation).

Après avoir fait ses études au Royal Northern College of Music et au National Opera Studio, **Mary Plazas** décroche en 1991 la bourse remise à la mémoire de Kathleen Ferrier. Elle fait ses débuts à l'opéra en chantant la Voix céleste (*Don Carlos*) avec l'English National Opera dont elle sera une des principales chanteuses de 1995 à 1998. Parmi les rôles qu'elle a incarnés figurent le rôle-titre de *La petite renarde rusée*, Micaela, Mimì, Leïla, Nanetta, Adina et Anne Trulove. Elle a aussi

chanté avec le Royal Opera, Opera North, le Glyndebourne Festival Opera, l'Opéra de Garsington et au Metropolitan de New York.

Parmi ses apparitions à la télévision, figurent *Le nozze di Figaro* avec Opera Factory et une interprétation de la Première sorcière (*Dido and Aeneas*) existant aussi chez Chandos. Parmi sa discographie, il faut citer *Emma d'Antiochia* de Mercadante et *Maria regina d'Inghilterra* de Pacini chez Opera Rara, sans oublier *L'enfant et les sortilèges*. Elle a aussi donné des récitals et des concerts dans le monde entier, chantant avec des orchestres internationaux.

Parmi les rôles incarnés par **Garry Magee** à l'opéra, figurent Guglielmo (*Così fan tutte*) et le Prince Afron (*Le coq d'or*) pour le Royal Opera, Eddy (*Greek*) avec le London Sinfonietta, Malatesta (*Don Pasquale*) à la Monnaie, Silvano (*Un ballo in maschera*) pour l'Opéra de Monte-Carlo, Eletski (*La dame de pique*) pour l'Opéra des Flandres, le Steward (*Flight*) pour le Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Mountjoy (*Gloriana*) pour Opera North, et le rôle-titre d'*Eugène Onéguine* pour le British Youth Opera. Parmi ses prestations de concert, il faut citer la cantate *Printemps* de Rachmaninov avec le City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra et avec l'Orchestre de l'Opéra-comique de Berlin.

Diana Montague a fait ses études au Royal Northern College of Music. Depuis ses débuts en Zerline avec le Glyndebourne Touring Opera, elle s'est produite dans les plus grands opéras et les plus prestigieuses salles de concert du monde, dont le Royal Opera de Covent Garden, le Metropolitan de New York, la Monnaie de Bruxelles, l'Opéra Paris-Bastille, le Teatro Colon de Buenos Aires et les festivals de Bayreuth et de Salzbourg.

Son répertoire comprend les grands rôles de mezzo-soprano trouvés chez Mozart, Gluck, Strauss, Rossini, Bellini et Berlioz. A l'occasion de ses fréquents engagements de concert, elle a chanté à maintes reprises sous la direction des plus grands chefs. Parmi les nombreux enregistrements à son actif, il faut citer *I Capuleti e I Montecchi*, *Norma*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Iphigénie en Tauride*, *Il crociato in Egitto* (chez Opera Rara) et *Cavalleria rusticana*, plus un disque consacré aux Grands airs d'opéra (enregistré pour Chandos/la Peter Moores Foundation).

Matthew Hargreaves a étudié à la Guildhall School of Music and Drama avec Rudolph Piernay, et a remporté le Prix Decca dans le cadre de la Kathleen Ferrier Award Competition de 1997. Il a incarné Figaro, Dandini (*La cenerentola*), le Bailli (*Werther*),

Fiorello (*Le barbier de Séville*) pour l'English Touring Opera, et Polyphème (*Acis and Galatea*) et Leporello pour Opera Atelier, à Toronto. Il s'est aussi produit au Festival de Covent Garden, avec Broomhill Opera, Opera italiana, le British Youth Opera et Pavillion Opera. Au nombre de ses enregistrements, figurent Bosun (*Billy Budd*) avec le Hallé Orchestra sous la baguette de Kent Nagano, l'Abbé (*Curlew River*) et Rambaldo (*Maria di Rudenz*) pour Opera Rara.

Sarah Walker est une des artistes les plus distinguées de Grande-Bretagne. Elle a chanté avec les plus grands orchestres du monde et a participé aux plus grands festivals de Grande-Bretagne et d'Europe. Elle a donné une prestation soliste mémorable à la dernière soirée des Promenade-Concerts de Londres et a chanté sous la direction de Bernstein dans la Neuvième symphonie de Beethoven pour célébrer la chute du Mur de Berlin. C'est une chanteuse de récital très applaudie qui a une imposante discographie à son actif.

Sur les scènes lyriques, elle a chanté au Royal Opera de Covent Garden, à l'English National Opera, à Vienne, Genève, Monte-Carlo, Paris, Barcelone, Madrid, Bruxelles, Hambourg, San Francisco, Chicago, la Scala de Milan, le Metropolitan de New York et au Festival de Glyndebourne. Sarah Walker a été nommée au grade honorifique de CBE en 1991 dans la Queen's Honours List publiée au moment de l'anniversaire de la reine.

La carrière de chanteur de Geoffrey Mitchell a couvert un répertoire d'une remarquable étendue allant de la musique ancienne à la musique contemporaine. Elle prit son essor à la suite de plusieurs invitations à diriger que lui offrit la BBC, et à une collaboration plus étroite avec ses propres chanteurs. C'est ainsi qu'il fut amené à fonder le **Geoffrey Mitchell Choir** avec lequel il a enregistré quinze opéras pour Opera Rara. Jouissant d'une réputation grandissante, ils ont d'autres projets avec la BBC et des maisons de disques internationales.

Quand il créa **Philharmonia Orchestra**, Walter Legge réalisa sa grande ambition de former un orchestre de niveau international composé de musiciens triés sur le volet. Le Philharmonia Orchestra donna son premier concert sous la direction de sir Thomas Beecham en octobre 1945, et s'imposa rapidement comme l'un des véritables grands orchestres du monde. De nombreux chefs d'orchestre illustres ont été étroitement associés avec cet orchestre qui demeure aujourd'hui le plus enregistré au monde. En effet, sa discographie compte plus

de mille enregistrements incluant des opéras pour la Peter Moores Foundation, Opera Rara. La position de "premier orchestre de Londres" du Philharmonia Orchestra résulte de sa vitalité, de sa sonorité chaleureuse unique et de sa volonté de commander et de jouer des œuvres de compositeurs contemporains importants tels que le regretté Witold Lutoslawski, Sir Harrison Birtwistle, et le compositeur associé de l'orchestre, James MacMillan.

David Parry étudia avec Sergiu Celibidache et commença sa carrière comme assistant de sir John Pritchard. Il fit ses débuts avec l'English Music Theatre et devint plus tard chef appointé du Städtische Bühnen Dortmund et d'Opera North. Directeur musical d'Opera 80 de 1983 à 1987, il est depuis 1992 le directeur musical fondateur du festival d'opéra contemporain Almeida Opera.

Il poursuit une carrière très active à l'opéra et dans les salles de concert. Son répertoire va de Mozart et d el'opéra italien du début du XIXe siècle à Janáček, Britten et à la musique contemporaine. En Angleterre, il a fait des apparitions régulières à l'English National Opera et lors de concerts avec le Philharmonia. En 1997, il a fait ses débuts au Festival de Glyndebourne avec *Così fan tutte.*

Il se rend fréquemment en Espagne où il s'est produit avec la plupart des troupes d'opéra et des orchestres symphoniques. Il a donné la première espagnole de *Peter Grimes* à Madrid et, en 1996, a dirigé la première mise en scène espagnole de *The Rake's Progress*. Il a aussi inauguré deux nouvelles salles de concert avec une interprétation de la Neuvième symphonie de Beethoven et un nouvel opéra avec *Carmen*. Il s'est également produit en Italie où il a dirigé *Ricciardo et Zoraide* au Festival d'opéra de Pesaro (consacré à Rossini), mais il s'est aussi rendu en France, en Allemagne, en Belgique, en Hollande, et en Suède où il a dirigé une mise en scène très applaudie du *Midsummer Night's Dream* de Britten.

Hors d'Europe, David Parry s'est produit au Festival international de Hong Kong, a dirigé l'UNAM Symphony Orchestra à Mexico, a fait une tournée consacrée à *Carmen* au Japon, et, en 1996, a dirigé une nouvelle mise en scène de *Katya Kabanova* au Festival de Nouvelle-Zélande.

Il a réalisé un grand nombre d'enregistrements pour le label Opera Rara, le plus récent étant *Rosmonda d'Inghilterra* de Donizetti, qui a remporté le prix Cecilia en Belgique, et c'est chez Chandos qu'il a dirigé son enregistrement primé de *Tosca*, trois disques d'aries operatiques, *Don Pasquale, La bohème, Cavalleria rusticana* et *Pagliacci.*

Charles Gounod: Faust

Dopo la prima del 1859 di quella che divenne l'opera più popolare di Gounod l'abate Gay, vecchio amico del compositore, osservò: "Il mondo gli è entrato in corpo ed ha scacciato Gesù Cristo." Questo commento ben si adatta ad un compositore che trovò difficile conciliare le sue stelle gemelle: l'amore di Dio e l'amore della sensualità, il che si rispecchia nelle sue composizioni. I suoi oratori ed altri pezzi liturgici sono adesso in gran parte dimenticati; i suoi lavori per il teatro, o almeno due di essi, *Faust* e *Roméo et Juliette*, sopravvivono, rappresentati nelle capitali di tutto il mondo. Le aspirazioni religiose divennero secondarie quando Gounod incontrò Pauline Viardot, la celebre cantante che aveva attirato la sua attenzione all'opera lirica, Un altro commento ci viene dal pittore Delacroix, il quale sostenne: "Un compositore scrive *Faust* e ciò gli fa dimenticare tutto sugli Inferi." La battaglia nell'animo di Gounod fra il sacro e il profano si profila in maniera pertinente nella sua opera più famosa. Abilmente – magari nel subcosciente – Gounod tramuta il teatro in pulpito, adattando il suo stile liturgico alle esigenze della scena, facendolo in maniera che ovviamente è piaciuta al pubblico ogni volta ed ovunque l'opera viene rappresentata, ovverosia molto spesso.

Presentata dapprima nel 1859 al Théâtre Lyrique come *opéra-comique* cioè con dialogo, giunse all'Opéra dieci anni dopo e fu eseguita con il recitativo che Gounod aveva scritto per un'esecuzione a Strasburgo nel 1860: è in tale forma che viene oggi generalmente presentata. Nel 1944 ebbe a Strasburgo la sua bimillesima esecuzione; nel 1975, al tempo del nuovo allestimento di Jorge Lavelli, il numero delle sue esecuzioni raggiunse il 2836: chiaro tributo alla sua longevità e popolarità. In Italia venne presentata per la prima volta alla Scala nel 1862. Molte delle modifiche e dei tagli apportati per quell'occasione sono divenuti da allora tradizionali, compresa l'eliminazione della scena della Walpurgisnacht.

L'opera fu introdotta in Inghilterra nel 1863, eseguita poi in ogni stagione fino al 1911 (con grande scorno di Bernard Shaw che la svillaneggiò) in italiano, allora la lingua franca dell'opera in Inghilterra come altrove. Per la première londinese allo Her Majesty's Theatre la parte di Valentin fu affidata a

Sir Charles Santley. Gounod assistette alla rappresentatione incontrando il celebre baritono; così quando la prima esecuzione dell'opera in inglese fu messa in programma per l'anno successivo Santley suggerì al compositore di scrivere una romanza per lui utilizzando un tema tratto dal Preludio. Fu così che nacque la famosa cavatina del baritono. Il critico Henry Chorley scrisse questa frase: "Even bravest heart may swell" ["Duty bids me leave this place" su questo disco]. Il successo fu immediato e la romanza è rimasta di prammatica nei recitals del baritono da quel giorno.

Quando l'opera giunse all'Opéra ci voleva un balletto, *sine qua non* a Parigi. Gounod non era incline a scriverlo essendo ritornato ai suoi umori religiosi e suggerì che il compito venisse affidato al suo allievo Saint-Saëns. Come quest'ultimo scrisse nelle sue memorie, la commissione mise in imbarazzo Saint-Saëns che si affrettò alla casa di Gounod a St. Cloud per persuaderlo a comporre la musica. Impegnato a giocare a carte con un abate Gounod fece cenno d'assenso ma non disse nulla. Alla fine acconsentì a scrivere questo delizioso pezzo qui incluso come appendice. l'opera, che inaugurò il Metropolitan a New York nel 1883, presto divenne tanto popolare negli Stati Uniti quanto altrove.

Sir Thomas Beecham fu uno dei principali fautori del *Faust* che incise nel 1929 in inglese con interpretti tratti dalla British National Opera Company, capitanati da Heddle Nash e Miriam Licette, e nuovamente nei tardi anni 40 in Francia nella lingua originale e con interpreti francesi. Sebbene l'opera abbia sofferto in seguito un certo declino nella stima popolare è stata raramente esclusa dal repertorio delle compagnie britanniche essendo apparsa regolarmente sia al Covent Garden sia al Sadler's Wells (più recentemente alla English National Opera nell'assai lodato allestimento di Ian Judge con John Tomlinson nel ruolo di Mefistofele).

Durante la sua detenzione del Prix de Rome, dal 1839 al 1842, l'interesse di Gounod alla parte prima del lavoro di Goethe fu suscitato dalla sua lettura della traduzione di Gérard de Nerval del dramma. Immediatamente s'invaghì del dramma, decidendo di mettere in musica questa "storia favolosa". I suoi viaggi nel paese di Goethe, ricco di leggende, valsero a rafforzare la sua risoluzione. Ascoltò poi *La damnation de Faust* di Berlioz, che lo colpì profondamente. Peraltro la sua determinazione di musicare Goethe non ne venne inibita; fu, al contrario, uno stimolo. Nel 1849 fece un primo tentativo di mettere in musica la scena nella chiesa.

Incontrò poi gli scrittori che sarebbero stati i librettisti del *Faust*: Jules Barbier e Michel Carré, quest'ultimo autore di un dramma, *Faust et Marguerite*, che Gounod vide nel 1850. Fu questo a fornire la base per il libretto dell'opera. Barbier ridusse il dramma alle giuste proporzioni per adattarlo a Gounod. Eliminò o compresse personaggi e azione, operazione essenziale quando un dramma viene messo a servizio del rallentato corso di un'opera. Soltanto Mefistofele ed alcuni demoni mantengono il loro carattere soprannaturale. Siébel è virtualmente un'innovazione, timidamente e virtuosamente innamorato di Marguerite. La complessa psicologia di Faust è ridotta ad una lotta fra concupiscenza e puro amore. Marguerite è semplice innocenza tradita ed alfine riscattata. Furono aggiunte la Scena nella Prigione e l'apoteosi finale, che non sono presenti nel dramma di Carré, e così pure la morte di Valentin.

Gounod finì di comporre l'opera nel 1858. le prove al Théâtre Lyrique, di cui Léon Carvalho era direttore, seguirono immediatamente. Alla moglie di Carvalho, Marie Miolan, fu affidata la parte di Marguerite: da ciò la sua prominenza nella partitura. La prima dovette essere rimandata perche il tenore che cantava Faust perse la voce alla prova generale e fu necessario rimpiazzarlo. La Scena nella Chiesa dovette essere omessa (pratica che, in un certo tempo, fu spesso seguita) perché il Ministro della Cultura era ansioso di evitare una lite con il Vaticano in un periodo in cui l'unificazione dell'Italia era energicamente ventilata. La première fu accolta favorevolmrente, sopratutto per l'interpretazione della prima donna.

Individui di gusti raffinati hanno spesso criticato l'opera giudicandola un pervertimento di Goethe perche non corrisponde alle indagini filosofiche che Berlioz e Boito hanno affrontato più da vicino nei loro melodrammi faustiani. Comprensibilmente – dato i suoi precedenti – Gounod si sentiva più coinvolto nell'aspetto morale: nella rovina di Marguerite, con la sua redenzione finale attraverso il pentimento; nell'abortivo tentativo di Faust di recuperare la sua giovinezza stringendo un patto con il Diavolo incarnato. I suoi librettisti gli fornirono proprio le situazioni che gli occorrevano.

In gioventù Gounod era stato affascinato da un lavoro che affronta le stesse questioni del *Faust*: il *Don Giovanni* di Mozart. Nella sua autobiografia dichiarò che:

> Le prime note dell'ouverture, con i solenni, maestosi accordi tratti dalla scena finale del Commendatore, parvero sollevarmi in un mondo nuovo. Mi sentii raggelare in una sensazione di

reale terrore. Ma quando ho sentito quel tremendo, tuonante rotolio di scale ascendenti e discendenti, severo ed implacabile come una sentenza di morte, sono stato afferrato da un tale raccapricciante terrore che ho lasciato cadere la testa sulla spalla di mia madre e, tremando nel duplice abbraccio di bellezza e di orrore, ho potuto solo mormorare: "questa è autentica musica, davvero!"

Così parlò il futuro compositore di *Faust*.

Gounod compose la sua musica sotto l'influenza di Meyerbeer che – non dobbiamo mai dimenticarlo – era allora enormemente popolare in Francia. Fu pure influenzato da Halévy e dal Rossini dei pezzi francesi scritti per Parigi al termine della sua carriera d'operista che toccò l'apice nel *Guillaume Tell*. Lo stile di Gounod a quel tempo era ammirato quanto quello di Verdi o Wagner. In Inghilterra era visto come il vero successore di Mendelssohn. Lo stesso Verdi ammirava Gounod anche se – forse giustamente – sentiva nella sua musica la mancanza di *fibra drammatica*. La convenzionalità stessa dell'opera indubbiamente la rese rapidamente accettata, gli schemi musicali essendo quelli che erano familiari a qualsiasi amante dell'opera del tempo, particolarmente i pezzi solistici di Mefistofele, distici, cioè con verso ripetuto, e la cavatina ternaria di Faust, "Salut, demeure chaste et pure" (This pure abode of simple virtue), con una sezione centrale modulante. I ritmi di marcia che pervadono parti della musica non sarebbero fuori posto nelle opere di Meyerbeer.

Eppure questi suoi aspetti non sarebbero sufficienti a giustificare l'immensa e costante popolarità del *Faust*. La spiegazione sta nel dono che è tipico di Gounod: il lirismo, che si trova in modo specifico nella cavatina di Faust e nell'esteso duetto del Giardino di Marguerite e Faust nell'Atto III, cuore stesso dell'opera, con la sua melodia sensuale e flessuosa. Altrettanto si può dire della breve ma significativa scena del primo incontro degli amanti, dal timbro leggiadramente gallico, e della già menzionata romanza di Valentin, che sembra fatta apposta per caratterizzare questo onesto personaggio. C'è poi la speranzosa eccitazione di Marguerite che si rivela nella sua Romanza dei Gioielli, e che è in contrasto con la lievemente arcaica ed elegiaca Romanza del Re di Tule.

Il valzer della kermesse, incontrato così spesso fuori del contesto, che delicatamente mette a confronto coro e orchesta, è memorabile. I due pezzi a solo di Mefistofele possono non avere la sottigliezza della loro controparte nella versione di Berlioz del capolavoro goethiamo, ma sono probabilmente più considerevoli in termini melodici: il

diavolo sembra avere davvero i toni più seducenti in questa insinuante Serenata. Il giovane Siébel è ben ritratto nella sua piccola, ingenua romanza. La Scena nella Chiesa, in cui l'isolamento di Marguerite è graficamente illustrato su uno sfondo impersonale di organo arcaico e di coro salmodiante, evoca altri pensieri, non tanto ispirati musicalmente ma di sicuro effetto drammatico. Altrettanto dicasi dell'inno alla sera di Marguerite e della parte che in esso ha Faust alla fine dell'Atto III, in cui l'eroe fa ritorno alle sue braccia, mentre Mefistofele sghignazza sardonicamente fuori scena; ne si dimentichi la scena della morte di Valentin e il trio finale, quintessenza dell'opera tardo – romantica francese.

Si tenga poi conto della padronanza della strumentazione che Gounod possiede e che particolarmente emerge nell'interazione con le voci nel quartetto dell'Atto III, nonché del Coro dei Soldati, per quanto volgarizzato sia stato nel suo uso fuori del contesto, ma che è altamente efficace al suo posto all'inizio dell'Atto IV. Per quanto lo si voglia denigrare *Faust*, come melodramma, funziona. È inoltre una delle opere più grate alla voce e la musica di Gounod è stata favorita da praticamente tutte le stelle della lirica sin dalla sua prima rappresentazione. In un'epoca in cui la melodia cantabile nella nuova musica è come l'araba fenice il dono di Gounod in questo campo splende come un faro. Si derida pure quel dono, e quei sentimenti di un tempo passato, a nostro rischio e pericolo.

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La trama

Atto I

Faust, un anziano filosofo, è seduto nel suo studio. Dispera di risolvere l'enigma dell'universo e, disilluso, decide di avvelenarsi. Mentre è sul punto di bere il veleno sente voci di donne e di braccianti che si avviano al lavoro. Maledice la vita e la vecchiaia, invocando il demonio affinchè lo aiuti. Mefistofele appare e gli offre ricchezze e potere ma ciò che Faust brama è la giovinezza, che Mefistofele gli concederà solo se Faust gli cederà la sua anima. Quando Faust esita gli viene mostrata una visione della seducente Marguerite seduta all'arcolaio. Faust firma il patto, beve dal boccale che Mefistofele gli offre e immediatamente si trasforma in un giovanotto.

Atto II

C'è un affollamento fuori di una taverna ad una delle porte della città. Studenti, cittadini,

soldati e donne, giovani e vecchi, sono radunati e cantano allegramente. Il fratello di Marguerite, Valentin, e il suo giovane amico, Siébel, si uniscono alla comitiva. Valentin ha ricevuto un medaglione da Marguerite prima di partire per il fronte e chiede a Siébel di vegliare su Marguerite mentre egli è alla guerra.

Wagner cerca di rallegrare la compagnia mettendosi a cantare. Viene interrotto da Mefistofele che canta la Canzone del vitello d'oro e che legge la mano a quelli che gli stanno intorno. Ricusando il vino scadente offertogli da Wagner fa sgorgare del vino dall'insegna della taverna e fa un brindisi a Marguerite. Ciò manda in furia Valentin e ambedue sfoderano la spada. Con la punta della spada Mefistofele traccia un circolo intorno a sé e quando la spada di Valentin lo penetra la lama si spezza. Accorgendosi dell'indentità del suo avversario Valentin e i suoi amici si avanzano verso Mefistofele puntando verso di lui le impugnature delle loro spade a forma di croce. Mefistofele si rannicchia e indietreggia.

La folla si raduna per ballare. Faust e Mefistofele entrano e scorgono Marguerite. Faust le offre il braccio ma ella gentilmente lo rifiuta. Faust è più che mai affascinato.

Atto III

Siébel coglie dei fiori per Marguerite e, come profetizzato, questi appassiscono e muoiono. L'acqua santa scioglie il maleficio e Siébel le lascia un mazzo di fiori. Mefistofele lascia uno scrigno di gioielli per Marguerite. Frattanto ella canta una vecchia ballata e quando trova i gioielli e l'indossa scorge nello specchio una donna diversa. La sua anziana vicina, Marta, commenta che devono essere un regalo di un ammiratore.

Entrano Faust e Mefistofele. Faust corteggia Marguerite e Mefistofele amoreggia con Marta. Marguerite comincia a cedere ma si stacca dall'abbraccio di Faust e corre verso casa. Mefistofele fa sprigionare tutti gli effluvi inebrianti dai fiori notturni, e Marguerite apre la finestra per confessare alla notte il suo amore per Faust. Questi emerge dall'ombra ed è da lei introdotto nella casa.

Atto IV

Marguerite è stata abbandonata da Faust ed è incinta di lui. Va a pregare. I soldati ritornano con Valentin e Siébel cerca di persuaderlo a non entrare in casa, ma Valentin lo respinge ed entra.

Mefistofele canta a Marguerite una beffarda serenata per conto di Faust. Valentin si precipita fuori della casa e pretende

soddisfazione dal seduttore di sua sorella. Valentin e Faust si battono e – grazie all'intervento di Mefistofele – Valentin cade mortalmente ferito. Sul punto di morte Valentin maledice Marguerite.

Atto V

Walpurgisnacht. Si sente un coro di spiriti mentre appaiono Faust e Mefistofele. A Faust viene mostrata una visione di Marguerite ed egli esige di essere condotto da lei.

Marguerite è in prigione per aver ucciso il suo bambino e Faust e Mefistofele vanno a salvarla. Ella sembra riconoscere Faust e ricorda la notte in cui fu sedotta da lui. Faust la esorta a fuggire con lui ma Marguerite chiede perdono a Dio. Mentre ella muore Mefistofele la maledice ma voci angeliche proclamano che Marguerite è salva.

Appendice

La musica del balletto fu composta per l'Opéra a Parigi ed è qui inclusa come appendice.

Traduzione: Marcella Barzetti

Paul Charles Clarke è nato a Liverpool e ha studiato al Royal College of Music con Neil Mackie; nel 1989 ha vinto il Premio Kathleen Ferrier. I suoi ruoli hanno incluso: il Duca (*Rigoletto*), Fenton (*Falstaff*) in Giappone e al Festival di Edimburgo, Rodolfo (*La bohème*), Alfredo (*La traviata*) e la parte del protagonista nel *Faust* per la Welsh National Opera; di nuovo Alfredo e Nemorino (*L'elisir d'amore*) per la Scottish Opera; ancora Rodolfo e Dmitri (*Boris Godunov*) per Opera North; Cassio (*Otello*), Tybalt (*Roméo et Juliette*) e Alfredo per la Royal Opera House. All'estero ha partecipato alle stagioni dell'opera di Seattle, Montecarlo e Houston Grand Opera, Cinicinnati Opera e il Metropolitan di New York.

La sua discografia include Tybalt (*Roméo et Juliette*), diretta da Leonard Slatkin, Arturo (*Lucia di Lammermoor*), diretta da Sir Charles Mackerras, e Don Caesar (*Maritana* di Wallace). I suoi programmi futuri comprendono ulteriori impegni con il Metropolitan di New York, la Welsh National Opera (fra i quali la parte del protagonista nel *Don Carlo* che inaugurerà il nuovo teatro dell'opera di Cardiff nel 2002) e a Seattle, oltre al suo debutto con la Deutsche Oper di Berlino.

Alastair Miles, riconosciuto in campo internazionale come uno dei più insigni interpreti britannici, ha cantato al Metropolitan (Giorgio, *I puritani*), Raimondo

(*Lucia di Lammermoor*), all'Opéra national de Paris (Raimondo), a Vienna (Giorgio), a San Francisco (Giorgio, Raimondo, Basilio (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*), ad Amsterdam (Figaro) e alla Royal Opera House (Lord Sydney, *Il viaggio a Rheims*).

Nella sua brillante carriera concertistica, svolta su raggio mondiale, Alastair Miles ha cantato con direttori quali Carlo Maria Giulini, Zubin Mehta, Riccardo Muti, Myung-Whun Chung, Kurt Masur, Valery Gergiev e John Eliot Gardiner, e con orchestre del massimo rango internazionale. Fra i suoi dischi figurano: la registrazione dell'oratorio *Elijah* – che ha vinto un premio *Gramophone* – il Requiem di Verdi, *Saul* e *Agrippina* di Handel e per Chandos *Caractacus*, *The Rape of Lucretia* e *La bohème* (quest'ultima in collaborazione con la Peter Moores Foundation).

Mary Plazas ha studiato presso il Royal Northern College of Music e il National Opera Studio, vincendo nel 1991 una borsa di studio della fondazione Kathleen Ferrier Memorial. Ha debuttato sulla scena lirica nella parte della Voce celeste (*Don Carlo*) per la English National Opera e per la stessa compagnia ha cantato in grado principale dal 1995 al 1998. I suoi ruoli hanno incluso la parte di protagonista ne *La volpe astuta*, Micaëla, Mimì, Leila, Nannetta, Adina e Anne Trulove; ha cantato inoltre per la Royal Opera, Opera North, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Garsington Opera e al Metropolitan di New York.

In televisione è apparsa ne *Le nozze di Figaro*, con Opera Factory, e Prima maga (*Didone ed Enea*), pure per Chandos. La sua discografia include: *Emma d'Antiochia* di Mercadante e *Maria regina d'Inghilterra* di Pacini per Opera Rara, e *L'enfant et les sortilèges*. Ha svolto ovunque intensa attività cameristica e oratoriale cantando con orchestre di rango internazionale.

I ruoli operistici di **Garry Magee** includono Guglielmo (*Così fan tutte*) e il Principe Afron (*Le coq d'or*) per la Royal Opera; Eddy (*Greek*) con la London Sinfonietta, Malatesta (*Don Pasquale*) al Teatro della Monnaie, Silvano (*Un ballo in maschera*) per l'opera di Montecarlo; Yeletsky (*La dama di picche*) per la Flanders Opera; lo Stewart (*Flight*) per la Glyndebourne Festival Opera; Mountjoy (*Gloriana*) per Opera North e la parte di protagonista nell'*Eugene Onegin* per la British Youth Opera. La sua attività concertistica ha incluso la *Cantata della primavera* di Rachmaninov con la City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra e con l'orchestra della Komische Oper di Berlino.

Diana Montague ha studiato al Royal Northern College of Music. Dal suo debutto nalla parte di Zerlina per la Glyndebourne Touring Opera è apparsa nei principali teatri lirici e auditori di tutto il mondo, fra i quali la Royal Opera House Covent Garden e il Metropolitan di New York, La Monnaie di Brusselle, il Teatro della Bastiglia a Parigi, il Teatro Colon di Beunos Aires, e ai Festivals di Bayreuth e Salisburgo.

Il suo repertorio comprende i maggiori ruoli per mezzosoprano di Mozart, Gluck, Strauss, Rossini, Bellini e Berlioz. I suoi frequenti ingaggi in sede di concerto hanno incluso molte esecuzioni con pretigiosi direttori. La sua discografia comprende: *I Capuleti e I Montecchi*, *Norma*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Iphigénie en Tauride, Il crociato in Egitto* (per Opera Rara) e per la Chandos/Peter Moores Foundation *Cavalleria rusticana* e un disco di Grandi arie operistiche.

Matthew Hargreaves ha studiato alla Guildhall School of Music and Drama con Rudolph Piernay; nel 1997 ha vinto Premio Decca nella competizione Kathleen Ferrier. I suoi ruoli comprendono Figaro, Dandini (*La cenerentola*), il Magistrato (*Werther*), Fiorello (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*) per la English Touring Opera, Polyphemus (*Acis e Galatea*) e Leporello per l'Opera Atelier di Toronto. E' apparso inoltre al Festival del Covent Garden, con la Broomhill Opera, Opera Italiana, British Youth Opera. I suoi dischi includono *Billy Budd* (il Nostromo) con la Halle Orchestra diretta da Kent Nagano, *Curlew River* (l'Abate) e *Maria di Rudenz* (Rambaldo) per Opera Rara.

Sarah Walker è un'artista britannica di massima distinzione. Ha cantato con tutte le grandi orchestre, è stata solista memorabile nel concerto finale dei Promenade concerts e ha cantato la Nona sinfonia di Beethoven a Berlino con Bernstein a celebrazione della caduta del muro di Berlino. La sua fama si estende in campo cameristico ed ha al suo attivo una vasta discografia.

Nel campo della lirica Sarah Walker ha cantato alla Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, English National Opera, Vienna, Ginevra, Montecarlo, Parigi, Barcellona, Madrid, Brusselle, Amburgo, San Francisco, Chicago, Alla Scala e al Metropolitan di New York, nonché al Festival di Glyndebourne. Nel 1991 è stata insignita dell'ordine CBE dalla Regina d'Inghilterra.

La carriera vocale di Geoffrey Mitchell si distingue per il repertorio eccezionalmente

ampio, che va dalla musica antica a quella contemporanea. Tale fatto gli ha fruttato numerosi inviti della BBC ad esibirsi nel ruolo di direttore e, in seguito, un'attività più impegnativa in sintonia con propri cantanti nonché la consequente formazione del **Geoffrey Mitchell Choir**. Dopo le prime registrazioni su disco il complesso ha potuto stabilire regolari rapporti di lavoro con la compagnis Opera Rara, per la quale ha registrato ben 15 opere. Attualmente gode di crescente reputazione grazie agli ulteriore incarichi ricevuti dalla BBC e dalle case discografiche internazionali.

Con la constituzione della **Philharmonia Orchestra** Walter Legge realizzò il suo grande sogno di creare un complesso di classe internazionale con strumentisti selezionati rigorosamente. L'Orchestra, che diede il primo concerto nell'ottobre del 1945 sotto la bacchetta di Sir Thomas Beecham, si affermò ben presto come uno tra i complessi mondiali di effettiva grandezza. La Philharmonia, da tempo associata a numerosi direttori di fama internazionale, è senz'altro il complesso sinfonico con il maggior numero di registrazioni discografiche all'attivo (oltre mille), che includono alcune opere per la Peter Moores Foundation/Opera Rara. La sua posizione di "principale orchestra londinese" è dovuta all'energia, all'incomparabile intensità sonora e all'impegno con cui commissiona ed esegue opere musicale di eminenti compositori contemporanei, come quelle del defunto Witold Lutoslawski, di Sir Harrison Birtwistle e di James MacMillan, ospite della Philharmonia Orchestra.

David Parry ha studiato con Sergiu Celibidache ed ha iniziato la sua carriera come assistente di Sir John Pritchard. Ha fatto il suo debutto con l'English Music Theatre ed è poi diventato direttore stabile della Städtische Bühnen Dortmund e di Opera North. Dal 1983 al 1987 è stato direttore artistico di Opera 80 e dal 1992 Direttore Musicale fondatore del festival di opera contemporanea dell'Almeida Opera.

Svolge un'intensa attività sia nel teatro lirico sia in campo sinfonico. Il suo repertorio da va Mozart e l'opera italiana del Settecento a Janáček e Britten e la musica contemporanea. In Inghilterra ha diretto frequentemente alla English National Opera ed in concerti sinfonici con la Philharmonia. Nel 1996 ha debuttato al festival di Glyndebourne con *Così fan tutte*.

Dirige spesso in Spagna nella maggior parte dei teatri lirici e con orchestra sinfoniche. Ha

diretto la prima spagnola di *Peter Grimes* a Madrid e nel 1996 il primo allestimento spagnolo della *Carriera di un libertino*, ha inaugurato due nuove sale di concerti con la Nona sinfonia di Beethoven ed un nuovo teatro lirico con la *Carmen*. Altre tournées l'hanno portato in Italia, dove ha diretto *Ricciardo e Zoraide* al Festival Rossini di Pesaro, in Francia, Germania, Belgio, Olanda, e Svezia dove ha diretto con grande successo *Il sogno di una notte di mezza estate* di Britten.

Fuori d'Europa David Parry si è esibito al festival internazionale di Hong Kong, con l'orchestra sinfonica UNAM a Città del Messico e in una serie di rappresentazioni della *Carmen* in Giappone. Nel 1996 ha diretto *Katya Kabanova* in un nuovo allestimento per il festival della Nuova Zelanda.

Ha iniciso numerosi dischi per Opera Rara, fra questi il più recente è quello di *Rosmonda d'Inghilterra* di Donizetti, che ha vinto il Priz Cecilia in Belgio; per Chandos ha diretto l'acclamato disco della *Tosca*, tre dische di grandi arie operistiche, *Don Pasquale*, *La bohème*, *Cavalleria rusticana* e *Pagliacci*.

Alastair Miles as Mephistopheles in the 1996 Welsh National Opera production of Gounod's *Faust*.
Photo by Bill Cooper

Paul Charles Clarke as Faust in the 1996 Welsh National Opera production of Gounod's *Faust*.
Photo by Bill Cooper

COMPACT DISC ONE

Act I

1 **Introduction**

Scene 1

Scene and Chorus
It is night. Faust, alone, is seated at a table covered with books and parchments; an open book lies before him. His lamp is nearly extinguished.

Faust
2 Nothing!
In vain I have probed the secrets of creation,
in the dark watches of the night;
no whisp'ring voice to bring me consolation,
no refuge, no respite!
Through the long hours of lonely grieving,
I have prayed the day will soon be here
when I break my ties to the living!
Nothing is clear! Nothing is sure!
(*He closes the book and rises. Day begins to dawn.*)
The sky grows pale and the dark night is flying;
the blush of dawn fades into grey.
(*despairingly*)
Another day and still another day!
Oh death, grant me the peace for which my soul is crying!
(*picking up a flask from the table*)
Ah, well! If death would still delay,
then I will choose my time of dying!
(*He pours the contents of the flask into a goblet.*)
To life I bid a glad farewell!
I shall not fear to reach my final destination;
I rejoice, for when I drink this potion
I submit of my own free will!
For when I drink this potion
I shall die of my own free will!

(*As he raises the goblet to his lips, the voices of women singing are heard outside.*)

Young Girls
3 Lazy little daughter
open up your eyes;
morning's golden mantle
spreads across the skies.
The birds sing in chorus
to welcome in the dawn,
who, with rosy fingers,
caresses the waving corn;
flowers' open faces
kiss the sun above;
ev'rything in Nature
is yearning for love!

Faust
Happy voices leave hollow echoes
that fade vainly away!
(*He raises the goblet to his lips again.*)
I raise the ancient cup: why do my fingers tremble?
My hand still declines to obey!

(*The voices of men on their way to work are heard outside.*)

Harvesters
The sunrise calls us to the meadow,

along the way each darting swallow
flies up so high no eye can follow
through the silver haze of the dawn.
The sky is clear, the air is mellow
and sunrise calls us to the meadow.
Thanks be to God!

Young Girls and Harvesters
Thanks be to God!

Faust
God! God! God!

Recitative
Faust
4 Can your God help me know the truth?
Can he restore my faith or my passion or my youth?
I place a bitter curse on ev'ry human pleasure!
A curse upon the fetters
chaining me to life here below!
And I curse all the brief illusion;
empty hopes that fade in confusion,
phantoms of love, phantoms of war!
Curse contentment and joy, the false wisdom of science,
and of faith, and of pray'r,
and curse above all acquiescence!
Appear, Satan, appear!

Scene 2

Duet
Mephistopheles (*appearing suddenly*)
5 Here I am!
You seem somewhat startled.
I thought this was what you expected;
I look just like you, an elegant hat
and a purseful of money.
Don't tell me my coat's out of fashion!
I'm sorry, I left in a hurry!
Speak up, my friend, what do you want?
Come on, tell me! Are you afraid?

Faust
No.

Mephistopheles
Could it be you doubt my power?

Faust
D'you blame me?

Mephistopheles
You are welcome to test it!

Faust
Begone!

Mephistopheles
Ha! Beware, lest you seem ungrateful!
For take my word, when Satan comes
he will not endure such behaviour.
What's the use of calling him
all the way from his domain
if you then intend to send him back again!

Faust
What can you do for me?

Mephistopheles
Anything… Everything… But I must be told
what you require; coffers of gold?

Faust
I've no use for limitless riches.

Mephistopheles
Ah, I see where the wind is blowing!
You long for glory?

Faust
Something more!

Mephistopheles
Then for power?

Faust
No! The gift I desire
comprehends them all:
I want to be young again!
6 So bring me the bliss
of careless excesses,
of women's caresses
and lovers to kiss!
And passion that surges
out of my control,
one glorious orgy
of body and soul!
So help me recapture
the fervent caresses
of youth's eager rapture
in youthful excess!

Mephistopheles
I see! My pow'r can transform your
existence!

Faust
And what would I owe you in return?

Mephistopheles
Merely this:
Up here, I offer my assistance,
but down there I will count on yours!

Faust
Down there?

Mephistopheles
Down there!
(*holding out a parchment*)
Come on, sign it! What's this? You're trembling!
Do you still think you might refuse?
Youth herself is calling you. Dare to look at her,
dare to choose!
(*Ha makes a sign; a vision appears showing Marguerite at her spinning wheel.*)

Faust
Heav'nly vision!

Mephistopheles
My friend, aren't you tempted?

Faust (*eagerly reaching for the parchment*)
Quickly!

Mephistopheles
You sign here!

(*Faust signs the parchment.*)

Mephistopheles (*picking up the goblet from the table*)
And after that, master, if you need further proof,
drain the cup; you will find there no foaming
poison brew,

nor will you find the shadow of death; you will
find life and youth!

Faust (*taking the goblet and addressing the vision of Marguerite*)
To you, adorable vision of love!
(*Faust drains the goblet and is transformed into a young man. The vision vanishes.*)

Mephistopheles
Come!

Faust
Will I meet her again?

Mephistopheles
Tomorrow…

Faust
What!

Mephistopheles
Or today.

Faust
Thank God!

Mephistopheles
She's waiting!

Faust and Mephistopheles
Lead onward!

Faust
And bring me the bliss
of careless excesses,
of women's caresses
and lovers to kiss!
And passion that surges
out of my control,
one glorious orgy
of body and soul!
So help me recapture
the fervent caresses
of youth's eager rapture
in youthful excess!

Mephistopheles
And sample the bliss
of careless excesses,
of women's caresses
and lovers to kiss!
And passion that surges
out of your control,
one glorious orgy
of body and soul!
Go out and recapture
the fervent caress
of youth's eager rapture
and its excess,
of youth's eager rapture
in youthful excess!

(*They rush off and the curtain falls.*)

Act II
At one of the city gates, on the left an inn with a sign showing the wine god Bacchus

Scene 1

Chorus
Students
7 Beer or gin
or wine or kvass,

joy lies in a
full glass!
Legs are hollow,
heads are hot;
drunkards swallow
the lot!

Wagner
Ale or port
or punch or rum,
only water
we shun!
Wine's your lover,
beer's your friend;
drink forever,
Amen!

Students
Ale or port *etc*.

Soldiers
Soldiers storming a fortress
play a daring game!
Soldiers courting a mistress
find it much the same!
If you're fearless and handsome
victory is sure.
Make them yield and pay the ransom;
claim the spoils of war!

Townsmen
Life at home is scarcely exciting;
that's why we tell stories of war,
while remaining safe and secure,
far from any fighting!
Sundays are spent passing the time
down where the river murmurs gently,
watching all the boats sailing by
till the bottle is empty!

Young Girls
Do you think those lads have seen us
as they swagger past?
Now the crowd has come between us;
don't walk on so fast!

Young Students
Have you seen such airs and graces?
We shall spoil their plan!
Friends, beware of their embraces;
stay free while you can!

Matrons
All this silly girlish teasing
fools men every time!
They forget we grow more pleasing
as we reach our prime!

Young Girls
We try to please them,
what is the use?
(*to the older women*)
How they whine and whimper
now their day is past!
Taunting words are hollow,
we don't care a jot!
Life is getting shorter;
now's the time for fun!
Just in case we never
have the chance again!

Matrons
Your looks are pleasing,
put them to use,
before your sins
come home to roost!
(*to the young girls*)
How they smirk and simper,
just as bold as brass!
Impudent and shallow
Jezebels, the lot!
Mother never taught her
how to turn them down.
She will be forever
chasing after men!

Townsmen
We shan't refuse
to put this wine to proper use!
Another glass, it won't be the last!
Some husbands have to swallow a lot!
It's thus the whole world over
when women ensnare men!
Some husbands have to swallow a lot!
Their wives are always right in the end!
Let nothing hinder a man
from enjoying his glass! Another glass!
Nothing should hinder
the joys of the glass!

Young Students
We'll stop our teasing,
let's call a truce.
Watch their tempers simmer;
what a childish farce!
In the end we shall
overcome the lot!
Now we come to court her,
who will be the one?
Goddess, be my lover,
say we'll meet again,
yes, say when will we meet again?
Watch their tempers simmer;
they lose them so fast!
What a childish farce!

Students
Here's to the booze!
Beer or gin
or wine or kvass,
joy lies in a
full glass!
Legs are hollow,
heads are hot;
drunkards swallow
the lot!
Ale or port
or punch or rum,
only water
we shun!
Wine's your lover,
beer's your friend;
drink forever,
Amen!

Soldiers
Here's to the army!
And the brave recruits!
Be she saint or sinner,

we can always win her
once the die is cast.
On the trail we follow,
straighter than an arrow,
swifter than a shot!
When he wants his sport
a soldier gives no quarter
till the battle's won!
And we like to savour
the trophies of the brave
at every battle's end!

Scene 2

Scene and Recitative
Valentin
(*He enters, holding a medallion in his hand.*)
8 Oh, sacred medallion
from the sister I love,
give me the strength to challenge
the tyranny of death,
with the help of God above!
(*He hangs the medallion around his neck.*)

Wagner
Ah! Here's Valentin, eager to join the battalion!

Valentin
I'll drink a final toast with my faithful companions!

Wagner
What is wrong? I can see you leave with heavy heart…

Valentin
Marguerite and I have never been apart;
she needs a mother's wisdom to offer her protection.
On whom can she depend?

Siébel
Rely on our affection,
her friends will keep her safe while you're away.

Valentin
My thanks!

Siébel
Your trust will be repaid!

Students
You may depend on us!

Valentin
9 Duty bids me leave this place,
cradle of my father's race.
At my farewell, oh God of grace,
my sister I entrust to Thee.
Shield her from care and pain,
guard her till I return again.
She is dear as life to me.
Now as duty and honour require,
I go eager to march with the brave and the free,
none more keen or more fierce in the battle's raging fire,
fighting for fatherland and sweet victory!
And if Thy will be that I perish,
I'll still protect the sister I cherish,
Oh Marguerite!

Duty bids me leave this place *etc.*
Oh, God of love, look down from above,
watch over Marguerite, Oh God above!

Wagner
10 Cheer up, my friends! There's no danger of dying!
Wine is too precious to water with crying!
So raise your glass and sing a happy song
to cheer us on!

Students
So raise a glass and sing a happy song
to cheer us on!

Wagner
A rat, not so very bold
and not so very fine,
once lived in a cellar cold
beneath a vat of wine…
A cat…

Mephistopheles (*appearing suddenly, interrupting Wagner*)
Pardon me!

Wagner
Eh!

Scene 3

Mephistopheles
May I join your revels?
I have a thirst to match the devil's!
But first, forgive my interruption of your song!
And, when it's over, I shall sing some of my own!

Wagner
One is all we require, to show your good intentions!

Mephistopheles
I shall do what I can to merit your attention!

Song of the Golden Calf

Mephistopheles
11 Pride of place to the golden calf!
All the nations'
invocations
offer a universal proof!
All the world, from throne to cellar,
gathered in their idol's thrall,
as the jangling florins fall
dance a frenzied tarantella
when their wretched lord commands,
and the Devil leads the dance!

All
And the Devil leads the dance!

Mephistopheles
Bow ye gods to the golden calf!
In his tawdry,
worldly glory,
howling his vile, blaspheming laugh!
He despises human sorrow
and the seething human hordes,
who, with blood-encrusted swords,
swarm down every slimy furrow
as their lust for gold demands,
and the Devil leads the dance!

All
And the Devil leads the dance!

Recitative and Chorus

Students

12 Your song deserves our thanks!

Valentin

An unusual person!

Wagner

Can we tempt you with a glass of this excellent wine?

Mephistopheles

Yes, of course!
(*taking Wagner's hand and reading his palm*)
Ah! Your hand bears an ominous sign!
There's a break in your lifeline.

Wagner

And so?

Mephistopheles

A dreadful omen!
You'll meet your final hour as you lead the attack!

Siébel

Is this some magic power?

Mephistopheles (*taking Siébel's hand*)

I seem to have a knack;
the truth lies in your palm: I can tell you are cursed
and than any flower still in bloom
will die if you touch it.

Siébel

Me!

Mephistopheles

No more bouquets for Marguerite!

Valentin

For whom? Was that my sister's name?

Mephistopheles

A suggestion to guide you;
Your murderer, my friend, is a colleague of mine!
(*snatching the cup from Wagner*)
Your very good health!
(*He tastes the wine and throws it from the cup.*)
Peuh! This is horrible wine!
Life will improve with a decent vintage inside you!
(*striking on a barrel surmounted by a figure of Bacchus, which serves as a sign for the inn*)
Hola! Bacchus, wake up! We're thirsty!
(*Wine flows from the barrel.*)
Please be my guests!
I'll try to satisfy any requests!
Where were we now? Yes, I've remembered;
we were drinking a toast to Marguerite!

Valentin

Enough!
Treat her name with respect or your days here are numbered.

Wagner and Students (*drawing their swords*)

Hola!

Mephistopheles (*mockingly*)

Why shake with fear when you threaten my life?
(*He traces a circle around himself with the point of his sword. Valentin goes to attack him, but his sword breaks in the air.*)

Valentin

My blade has been shattered
and the splinters scattered!

(*Valentin and the rest advance on Mephistopheles, holding towards him the cross-shaped guards of their swords. Mephistopheles backs away.*)

Siébel, Valentin, Wagner and Students

13 Though the fiends of hell may defy resistance,
we can still prevail with divine assistance!

Valentin

Though steel may dissolve in his hands…

Wagner and Students

Though steel may dissolve in his hands…

Valentin

…the devil…

Wagner and Students

…the devil…

Valentin, Siébel, Wagner and Students

…will find this cross can thwart the power of evil!
The blessed cross will thwart the power of evil!

(*Everybody leaves. Mephistopheles remains, subdued.*)

Scene 4

Mephistopheles

14 You haven't seen the last of me yet!
Au revoir!

Faust (*entering*)

What is wrong?

Mephistopheles

Nothing! I'm all ears, Doctor Faust!
What is your dearest wish? I'm here at your disposal!

Faust

Can you find me the lovely girl
brought to life by your art?
Was she real or illusion?

Mephistopheles

Quite real! Virtue defends her against our intrusion;
she puts her trust in a higher world!

Faust

I'll have her nonetheless! Come, if you can't produce her
find another master to serve!

Mephistopheles

Say no more! My employment here is more than I deserve,
I wouldn't like to lose the job, as I will prove to you, sir!
She'll be here… at this spot, answering my command;
Beautiful, chaste and young as my master demands!

Scene 5

Waltz and Chorus

(*Students and girls enter arm-in-arm followed by musicians. The townspeople are behind them. The musicians begin to play.*)

Chorus

15 Just as when the whispering breezes
blow hither and thither and yon,

whirling clouds of dust along,
so the waltzers' joyful sallies
set alive the hills and valleys
with the sound of rousing song!

Mephistopheles (*to Faust*)
You've a duty
to beauty,
so take your chance
with a pretty
young filly
who'd love to dance!

Faust
No! This joke
is becoming stale.
Just leave me alone
with my vision.

Siébel (*entering*)
If I wait here, I'm bound to meet Marguerite!

Some Girls (*approaching Siébel*)
We'd ask you to dance, but it isn't a leap year!

Siébel
No! No! I don't know how to waltz!

Chorus
Just as when the whispering breezes *etc*.

Faust
There she is! My vision!

Mephistopheles
Speak up! This is your chance!

Siébel (*approaching Marguerite*)
Marguerite.

Mephistopheles (*stepping forward and blocking Siébel's way*)
You called?

Siébel
Damn your banter! Let me pass!

Mephistopheles
What marvellous luck; you're still here!
Ha ha! Come now… Don't be shy… I won't bite!

(*Siébel recoils from Mephistopheles, who chases him around the scene behind the dancers.*)

Faust (*accosting Marguerite*)
16 May I presume to ask, most beautiful of ladies,
if you will take my arm and walk with me today?

Marguerite
Thank you, no! I am neither a lady nor a beauty,
and need no helping hand to guide me on my way!

(*She leaves.*)

Faust (*gazing after her*)
By the Lord! What refinement, what lack of affectation!
Child of my dreams, I love you!

Siébel (*returning*)
I must have missed her!

Mephistopheles (*to Faust*)
And so?…

Faust
And so… she has refused me!

Mephistopheles (*laughing*)
Cheer up! Don't be depressed;
if you must fall in love
I shall help in your quest!
(*He goes off with Faust in the direction taken by Marguerite.*)

Some Girls
Did you hear?

Other Girls
Marguerite
rejected him outright! You'd think she'd be discreeter!

Students and Girls
One, two! Take to the floor!
Let's dance some more!

All
Just as the whispering breezes *etc*.
They spin till they're dizzy,
then once again.
Their God has no mercy,
pleasure's his name!
The world is in motion
and racing by,
what joy! What elation
in every eye!
The world is in motion,
crowds go racing by.

Act III

17 **Entr'acte**

Scene 1
Marguerite's garden. At the back, a wall with a little door. A bower on the left, a house on the right with a window facing the audience. Trees and shrubs etc. Siébel enters and stops by a bed of roses and lilies.

Siébel
18 You must help me reveal
the love I feel.
As you open before her
tell her how I adore her.
Let your presence impart
my secret heart!
Be the ardent expression
of an innocent passion;
bear my love to her there
on scented air!
(*He plucks a flower.*)
It's faded!
That damnable fiend wields a power
that Nature obeys!
(*He throws the flower away.*)
When I pluck any lovely flower
it withers away!
What if I dipped my hand in holy water?
(*He dips his fingers in a little font attached to the wall.*)
At prayer here every day I have seen Marguerite!
I'll try once again! Now or never!

(*He plucks another flower.*)
Are they still living? Yes! Then Hell has lost its power!
You must go in my place
to her embrace.
Be the delicate language
that disguises my anguish,
but allows her to know
I love her so!
You must go in my place
to her embrace.
When the flowers surround her
with their perfume around her
she will never resist
one tender kiss!
Just one kiss,
one tender kiss!

Scene 2

Scene and Recitative
(*Mephistopheles and Faust enter cautiously.*)

Faust
19 Are we there?

Mephistopheles
Follow me!

Faust
Did you see someone else?

Mephistopheles
Siébel, looking for love!

Faust
Siébel!

Mephistopheles
Sh! See for yourself!

(*They conceal themselves.*)

Siébel (*returning, unaware of the presence of Faust and Mephistopheles*)
Who'd resist such a sweet bouquet?

Mephistopheles (*aside, mockingly*)
So sweet!

Siébel
Victorious!
I'll tell her how I overcame the trials he set me,
and if she wants to know how my heart is enslaved,
one sweet kiss shall be her answer!

Mephistopheles (*mockingly*)
How depraved!

(*Siébel fastens the bouquet to the door and leaves.*)

Scene 3

Mephistopheles (*to Faust*)
20 Wait here for a while, Doctor Faust,
and the charming bouquet presented by your pupil,
I'll match with a treasure so rare,
jewels so far beyond compare,
even dreams cannot show their equal!

Faust
Let me be!

Mephistopheles
As you say, I won't be far away.
(*He leaves.*)

Scene 4

Cavatina

Faust
21 What turbulent feelings possess me?
It must be love that begins to obsess me!
Oh, Marguerite! I am here at your feet!
This pure abode of simple virtue
charged with the essence of compassion
is blessed by the light of her presence!
What riches lie in poverty concealed!
What sweet content these humble walls may yield!
Bounteous Nature, here she received the gift of beauty,
and here your watchful eye kept her safe night and day
with the fondest of care.
Here, heaven's inspiration brought her a woman's feeling,
and through the power of love an angel from above
came to answer my prayer!
Within, yes, within.
This pure abode of simple virtue *etc.*

COMPACT DISC TWO

Scene 5

Mephistopheles (*re-entering, carrying a jewel case*)
1 Be careful! Here she comes!
Jewels will overshadow his bouquet,
and if not I'll give my powers away.

Faust
Let's go! I don't want to see her again!

Mephistopheles
Give your conscience a rest.
Put this box in the doorway;
she's bound to find it there!
(*He puts the casket next to the flowers.*)
I feel lucky today!

(*Mephistopheles leads Faust away. They hide in the garden.*)

Scene 6
(*Marguerite enters through the little door and comes silently to the front.*)

Recitative
Marguerite
2 He would have held my hand if I'd only allowed him.
I still don't know his name, or the least thing about him!
(*She sits down at her spinning wheel and as she spins she sings an old ballad.*)

Song of the King of Thulé

Marguerite
'Once a faithful King of Thulé
mourned his lady fair, his beloved.
In her memory he forged a goblet
all of gold, as bright as the day.'

He was handsome and charming as far as I could say.

'As he sat in pomp and in splendour,
always he kept it by his side,
and when he drank the red, red wine
his eyes would fill with tears so tender!

'As every life must one day end,
so the King, on his death-bed lying,
called for the cup as he lay dying,
raised it up with a trembling hand!'

I talked a lot of nonsense, why did I blush like that?

'He smiled, for his sorrows were over.
Draining the wine he sighed "Farewell!"
As the cup lay still where it fell
he went to meet his own true lover.'

He was so bold, yet he suggested nothing wrong.
The manners of a lord!
(*She puts the spinning wheel away*.)
Ah well, life carries on!
Dear Valentin! May God protect you
while you're far away!
I'm alone with the moonlight.
(*noticing the flowers*)
3 A bouquet!
It's from Siébel I'm sure. Poor foolish boy!
(*She sees the jewel case*.)
But what is that?
Why on earth is this casket at my door?
I'm frightened to touch it… Then again…
There is a key to try…
I'll turn the lock! I'm so nervous… But why?
If I open the lid, who could blame me for looking?
(*She opens the casket*.)
Oh God! What are these jewels?
Like a magical dream
their colours blaze. It's no illusion!
My eyes are overwhelmed
by their wanton profusion!
(*She puts down the casket and kneels to look at the jewels. She takes out the earrings*.)
I don't know if I dare
have the boldness to wear
this pair of golden earrings!
Ah, I see what I need; right here inside the casket
there's a mirror.
I know what I want to ask it!
(*She puts on the earrings and looks at herself in the mirror*.)

The Jewel Song

Ah! I see beauty
gaily laughing in the glass!
Can it be Marguerite?
Answer me! Answer, are you Marguerite?
No, no, this is not you!
This is a stranger before me.
She's a fairy tale princess.
This is not you,
but a princess accustomed
to honour and glory!
Ah, if my love could see
this wond'rous change in me,
he'd find a village maiden
as lovely as any lady.
Ah, he'd find a village maid
could be a noble lady!

(*She goes back to the jewel case*.)
Like a new butterfly emerging,
gems too rich and rare to resist
entwine my throat, adorn my wrist!
(*She puts on the bracelet and the string of pearls*.)
Ah! Like a living hand clasping my arm in greeting!
Ah! I see beauty gaily laughing in the glass! *etc*.
Marguerite, is this a dream?
Will it vanish before me?
No! It's the face of a queen
Crowned with honour and glory!

Scene 7

Martha (*entering*)
4 Bless my soul, I'm dreaming!
You're looking simply lovely, my darling!
Is the jewel box a gift?

Marguerite
Alas! I suppose it was brought by mistake.

Martha
Not at all!
If you found them, you keep them. Say no more about it.
They're for you, from a secret admirer of course!
Husbands are not so free as I know to my cost!

(*Mephistopheles and Faust enter*.)

Scene 8

Mephistopheles (*saluting*)
5 Dame Martha Schwerlein, I believe.

Martha
What presumption.

Mephistopheles
Forgive me for intruding, ma'am, we mean no harm!
(*aside to Faust*)
You can see that the jewels have worked like a charm!
(*aloud*)
Dame Martha Schwerlein?

Martha
I am she.

Mephistopheles
I'm entrusted
with a message; prepare for a terrible shock.
Your absent husband, madam, is dead, buried and burning!

Martha
Oh God!
(*She faints*.)

Marguerite
What is wrong?

Mephistopheles (*reviving Martha*)
Nothing!

Martha
Oh, what dreadful luck! He will not be returning!

Marguerite (*aside*)
When I see him, I tremble,
how my face must be burning!

Mephistopheles (*to Martha*)
Your absent husband, madam, is dead, buried
and burning!

Faust (*aside*)
The sight of her dispels this tempestuous
yearning!

Martha (*to Mephistopheles*)
Was anything left for his wife?

Mephistopheles
No! So take my advice; embark on a new life; go
out and find
a man to take his place tomorrow!

Faust (*to Marguerite*)
Why remove the jewels you wear?

Marguerite
I should never have put them on,
in truth they're only borrowed…

Mephistopheles (*with affected ardour, to Martha*)
Any man worth his salt would be proud to
ensnare
so choice and fair a widow!

Martha (*aside*)
Ah! Bah!
(*aloud*)
Go on…

Mephistopheles
Ah, death! No man escapes your shadow!

Quartet
Faust (*to Marguerite*)
6 Please take my arm, they won't mind!

Marguerite
Don't ask, it wouldn't be fitting!

Mephistopheles (*offering his arm to Martha*)
Take my arm!

Martha (*aside*)
He's so refined!

Mephistopheles (*aside*)
I'm afraid she's no spring chicken!

Marguerite
I am conscience stricken!

Martha
I'm a little smitten!

Faust
How my heart is stricken!

(*Marguerite takes Faust's arm and they walk together in the garden.*)

Martha
You say you travel all the time?

Mephistopheles
Indeed. Work is a heavy load to carry,
without friends, or a home, unmarried! Ah!

Martha
That may suit a man in his prime.
But one day you'll feel the terrible sadness
of growing old alone and friendless.
Old age can be friendless!

Mephistopheles
Thoughts of such a miserable fate
fill my soul with grim trepidation!

Martha
Beware too much procrastination.
Think, dearest sir, it's not too late.

Mephistopheles
First-rate advice!

(*They walk together into the garden. Faust and Marguerite re-enter.*)

Faust
You seem… very lonely.

Marguerite
My brother's at war, I have lost my mother,
and sorrows come never alone
for the sister I love is gone.
Poor angel! God knows how much I loved her!
In life we were never apart
and our happiness seemed forever!
But those whom God calls first to heaven
are the young and the pure-at-heart!
Every moment of the day
she would be there, trying to make me smile.
Despite the pain, despite the sorrow,
I'd relive everything tomorrow
just to have her here for a while!

Faust
If the Lord followed your example,
on the day of your sister's birth
a blessed angel came down to earth!

Marguerite
Why mock my words?

Faust
No! I'm a lover.

Marguerite
You are not sincere,
secretly you jeer
at me and my lack of breeding.
Whatever you say
I should not remain…
How my heart is beating!
It's wrong!
Yet my heart is wildly beating!

Faust
Take my arm, my dear.
God has led me here
and smiles on our meeting
so why be afraid, alas,
to believe what I say?
Hear a lover's entreating!

(*Mephistopheles and Martha reappear.*)

Martha (*to Mephistopheles*)
Have you stopped your ears?
Or perhaps you sneer
at my lack of breeding!
Don't hurry away,
I've not had my say,
why are you retreating?
Must you rush away?

Mephistopheles
Do not shed a tear,
our time has surely been too fleeting!
Do not shed a tear,
I must disappear.
The beautiful things that you say

make me long to stay,
that needs no repeating!

Marguerite (*to Faust*)
You have to go… It's nearly night.

Faust
Beloved!

Marguerite
You must leave!
(*She slips away from him and goes out.*)

Faust (*following her*)
Don't desert me! Why take flight?

Mephistopheles
She's a little near the knuckle!
I'm in retreat!
(*He hides behind a tree.*)

Martha (*aside*)
I'll be more subtle.
(*aloud*)
I say… Where has he gone? Young man!

Mephistopheles
Yes!

Martha
Won't you stay?

Mephistopheles
Catch if you can!
Ouf! That relentless old Medusa
is so keen to trap a man
she wants Satan to seduce her!

Faust (*off-stage*)
Marguerite!

Martha (*off-stage*)
Don't go far!

Mephistopheles
Au revoir!

Scene 10

Mephistopheles (*alone*)
7 And none too soon!
Under the looming shadows
they walk, happy to be with each other…
Well, well, I shall not interrupt
or I may break the spell!
Oh night, unfurl your welcome shadow!
Oh love, deafen their conscience to untimely remorse!
And now, see how my powers force
all the flowers to bloom, sweeter and ever sweeter,
till their scent bewitches the heart of Marguerite!
(*He disappears in the shadows.*)

Scene 11

Duet
Marguerite (*returning with Faust*)
8 It's very late… Farewell!

Faust
How can you be so cruel?
Think twice. Hands such as yours were designed for caresses.
Let my eyes take their fill of perfection!
Where the soft silver light

adorns your flawless face with a pure and chaste reflection,
surpassing the beauty of the night!

Marguerite
In the silence I am moved by a joy so enchanting!
Life and dreams drift apart…
I hear and understand this voice so beguiling
which sings here within my heart!
(*taking her hand away from him*)
A moment's pause, I beg you…

Faust
What is this?

Marguerite (*plucking the petals from a flower*)
It's just a game!
Don't fret, indulge my whim!

Faust
You talk so low I can't hear you.

Marguerite
He loves me… No, he loves me not…
He loves me… Not… He loves me… not.
He loves me!

Faust
Yes, the flower cannot lie, the truth lies at your feet.
Let your heart hear its voice, the voice of heav'n above you:
He loves you! Do you know how much those words can mean?
A love… Ever renewed, like a phoenix from the ashes;
rising to burn again with a joy everlasting!

Marguerite and Faust
Everlasting!

Faust
Oh tender moon that fills the night
oh radiant love
whose secret joy gleams pure and bright,
shine your light down
upon these lovers!

Marguerite
Let me be yours, I lay my life
here before you!
You are my all, I adore you,
my love will never die!
Say it… Say you love me!

Faust
9 Marguerite!

Marguerite (*tearing herself away from his embrace*)
Ah! Please go!

Faust
You're heartless!

Marguerite
I am helpless!

Faust
I cannot let you go! Have mercy!

Marguerite
You must go!
Go now, I beg! Yes, you must leave me
alas, I'm frightened, you must depart!
Your love may break my heart, you must believe me!

Faust
You mean I should desert you?
What bitter pain, alas,
if we must part, Marguerite!
Leaving you will surely break my tender heart!
Have compassion!

Marguerite
You should not have spoken…

Faust
Marguerite!

Marguerite
By the love you bear, love now confessed,
grant me as a token
of vows as yet unbroken,
oh, grant me this request!

Faust
Oh, pure untainted girl!
Chaste and unworldly
your power has moved me
and claimed possession of my will!
I obey… but tomorrow…

Marguerite
Yes, tomorrow… I'll be waiting.
Come soon! Come soon!

Faust
Before I leave you,
speak once again to seal the spell!
You love me?

(*Marguerite, hastening towards the house, stops for an instant on the threshold and blows a kiss to Faust.*)

Marguerite
Farewell!

Faust
My joy is unconfined! Ah! Farewell!
(*He starts for the garden door, but Mephistopheles bars his way.*)

Scene 12

Mephistopheles
So imprudent!

Faust
Did you overhear?

Mephistopheles
Every word!
Your eagerness is too absurd!
It's hard to believe you're my student.

Faust
Go away!

Mephistopheles
Let's hear, if we may,
just what else she will say
when she's alone again
with the starlight… Dear master!

(*Marguerite opens her window.*)

Scene 13

Mephistopheles
10 Look there! She's opening her window…

Marguerite
He loves me! What pleasure and pain!
In the darkness my heart rejoices!
Nature's untold myriad voices
seem to swell the refrain
'He loves you!' Ah! Now my life has meaning!
The night is my friend, I am reeling,
drunk with all the pleasures of love,
like the leaves my heart trembles and flutters!
Come soon, ah, come my only love,
hurry to me! Come!

Faust (*rushing to the window*)
Marguerite!

Mephistopheles
Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

Marguerite
Ah!
(*She gives herself to Faust's embrace. Mephistopheles laughs loudly and cynically as he leaves the garden.*)

Act IV

Scene 1

Marguerite's Room

11 **Entr'acte**

Marguerite
12 They pass me in the street… How we laughed
in the old days,
long ago… but now…

Girls' Voices (*off-stage*)
Her unknown lover lived to fight another day!
Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

The Spinning-wheel Song

Marguerite
They have cast me out! Ah, how heartless!
I was always first to blame others' weaknesses,
and quick to stand in judgment!
So today they condemn me with pitiless fervour.
Time has brought a shameful return.
Even though heaven knows it was not base
corruption
which led my soul towards perdition,
but love, gentle love alone.
When will he return?
Contentment was fleeting,
wretched now, I yearn,
each hour keeps repeating…
When will he return?
What star does he follow?
Each empty tomorrow
affords me no word,
no consoling word, alas!
What star does he follow?
When will he return?
In silence I smother
the grief I must suffer!
My tears flow unheard.
How I bear my sorrow
he will never learn!
How I long to hear him,
to see him again!

My courage is spent,
my spirit is weary!
When will he return?
Oh my love, where are you?
Put an end to my sorrow
if you love me!

(*Siébel enters hurriedly.*)

Scene 2

Scene and Recitative
Siébel
13 Marguerite!

Marguerite
Siébel!

Siébel
Again in tears!

Marguerite
Alas!
They've all forsaken me but you.

Siébel
I've the strength of a child, but I'm a man in spirit!
I'll exact my revenge for his cowardly flight!
I'll have his life!

Marguerite
But whose?

Siébel
I'll tell you if you wish it…
The traitor I despise!

Marguerite
No, say no more!

Siébel
All right! Will you always love him?

Marguerite
Yes! I will!
But I've no right to ask for sympathy from you.
My poor Siébel. My troubles hurt you too.

(*Siébel takes Marguerite's hand.*)

Romance
Siébel
14 When happy days bring you gladness and laughter,
seeing your joy my sadness disappears.
But if the pain and sorrow follow after,
oh, Marguerite, oh, Marguerite,
I shed a tear to mingle with your tears!
We are two flowers that bloom beside each other;
destiny guides us on a single course.
I share your grief as if I were a brother,
oh, Marguerite, oh, Marguerite,
blameless and chaste, my selfless love endures!

Marguerite
God will reward your love, it brings me consolation.
Though I may risk contempt and condemnation
I'll go into the church. They cannot bar my way!
The child that I shall bear; for his sake I will pray!

Scene 3
(*In the church. Some women enter the church. Marguerite enters after them and kneels.*)

Marguerite
15 Dear Lord, accept the prayers of a penitent sinner;
hear me, in your mercy and love!

Mephistopheles (*appearing behind a pillar*)
No! You shall not be heard!
Strike her senseless with terror!
Spirits of Hell, heed my command!

Demons (*off-stage*)
Marguerite!

Marguerite
Who is calling?

Demons
Marguerite!

Marguerite
I am fainting… I'll die!
Dear Lord, must I now
render to heaven the price of my shame?

Mephistopheles
Recollect bygone days, when the bright-winged angels
kept you safe in their love:
you would come to His house, singing hymns of thanksgiving
to your Saviour above.
As you murmured a prayer full of innocent feeling,
your heart still kept a place
where the love of your God and your mother's caress
were held in one embrace!
The voices of the damned call you forth to your sentence:
you will know no respite
from everlasting pain, everlasting repentance,
in everlasting night!

Marguerite
God! Whose voice do I hear in the whispering shadows?
God, I implore… The light is failing… I see no more!

Priests and Boys (*invisible*)
When God rends the skies asunder,
and his cross shines forth in splendour
all creation comes to its end!

Marguerite
Alas! This holy music strengthens my foreboding!

Mephistopheles
No! Unpardoned to hell you must go!
The sacred light of life is fading!

Priests and Boys
How may I approach my Saviour?
Who will be my one protector?
For redemption is never sure!

Marguerite
Ah! These words increase my oppression!
My temples are ready to burst!

Mephistopheles
Farewell to nights of love and to days full of passion!
Your fate is sealed! Your soul accursed!

Marguerite, Priests and Boys
Dear Lord! In the name of all sinners
accede to my prayer!
Shine a light of mercy upon us
to ease our despair!
Dear Lord! In the name of all sinners,
I implore you, accede to my prayer!
Shine a light of mercy upon us
to comfort our despair!

Mephistopheles
Marguerite, your damnation awaits in Hell!
(*He vanishes.*)

Marguerite
Ah!

COMPACT DISC THREE

Scene 4

The Soldiers' Chorus

Soldiers
1 Come along my brothers,
lay down your arms at last now the fighting is done.
Our sisters and mothers
can dry their bitter tears and greet us every one!
March homeward my brothers,
our sisters and mothers
are all drying their tears to greet us every one!

Valentin (*noticing Siébel*)
By the Lord, it's Siébel!

Siébel (*embarrassed*)
As you see… I…

Valentin
Embrace me,
welcome me home!
Where's Marguerite?

Siébel
She's still at her prayers, I suppose.

Valentin
Prayers for my safe return!
She's a saint!
When all the tales are told of our exploits in battle
she will hang on every word!

Soldiers
Home by the hearth merrily burning,
stirring tales frightened children beg to hear once more
from the brave soldiers returning.
Evoke the cannon's roar,
and echo the turmoil of the war.
2 We seek the soldier's immortal prize;
glory or death under foreign skies.
Conquering sons of a warrior race,
our courage defies the danger we face!
If to lay down our lives
is our destiny
for the land of our birth
and our liberty,

then our voices unite
in the battle cry!
March on to the fight,
to win or to die!
Home fires await,
our task is done,
our spirits soar in expectation.
Peace is restored; the war is won,
our homes await, our task is done.
Friends and lovers cheer; we're home at last,
a time for joy and celebration.
Though many a heart is beating fast
when they recall the dangers past.
What jubilation!
And now we may claim
the victor's embrace!

(*The Soldiers march off. Valentin and Siébel remain.*)

Scene 5

Recitative
Valentin
3 Come on, Siébel, I need a drink or two!
We'll go inside then I can hear the news!

Siébel
No… You must wait!

Valentin
But why?
Why this strange inhibition?
Look directly at me…
Siébel, what does this mean?

Siébel (*with an effort*)
You see…
No, I cannot…

Valentin (*starting towards the house*)
What are you hiding?

Siébel (*trying to hold Valentin back*)
Please listen!
Don't condemn her unheard.

Valentin
Let me past, let me past!
(*He rushes into the house.*)

Siébel
Try to be kind!
Oh God, do not desert her!
Protect her to the last!

Scene 6
(*Faust and Mephistopheles enter, the latter carrying a guitar. Faust goes towards Marguerite's house, then stops.*)

Mephistopheles
Why wait another moment?
Let's go into the house!

Faust
A plague on you! I fear
misfortune and disgrace once more follow me here.

Mephistopheles
You are wasting your time. You loved her and you left her!

Now it is time to go where we will be more welcome.
Come, the Sabbath awaits!

Faust
Marguerite!

Mephistopheles
The choice is made, I cannot fight such overpowering passion.
But, if you wish to gain admission
you'll stand a better chance with the help of my voice.
(*Faust, deep in thought, moves away.*)
(*Mephistopheles accompanies himself on the guitar.*)

Serenade
4 'Is my love awake or sleeping,
does she hear my call?
Catherine, oh my sweeting,
don't you hear my call
as the shadows fall?'
When your lover comes a calling
then your heart takes wing.
Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!
Don't unlock your door my darling
till you wear his ring!
'Catherine, I adore you,
will you keep our tryst?
Why refuse when I implore you;
will you crown our tryst
with one tender kiss?'
When your lover comes a-pleading
then your heart takes wing.
Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!
Don't give him a kiss, my sweeting,
till you wear his ring!
Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

Scene 7

Trio: The Duel
Valentin (*rushing from the house*)
5 What can I do for you?

Mephistopheles
My friend, we have intruded. How gauche!
It was not to yourself my serenade alluded.

Valentin
My sister would enjoy your charade more than I!

Faust (*aside*)
His sister!

(*Valentin shatters Mephistopheles's guitar.*)

Mephistopheles
What a crude exhibition!
Clearly you are not a musician!

Valentin
You try my patience! Reply!
Which one of you will give me satisfaction
for this disgrace and degradation?
Which one will die in defence of his cause?

(*Faust draws his sword.*)

Mephistopheles
Since you insist… Go on, my friend the floor is yours!
All his threats are in vain.

His rage inspires derision.
When he strikes I'll strike again
with terror and confusion!

Valentin
Oh God above, inflame my fatal resolution!
Redouble my fatal resolution!
His blood will clear my name,
the blood of retribution!

Faust (*aside*)
My courage and purpose wane
before such resolution!
Spilling his blood makes vain
all hopes of my salvation!
To spill his brother's blood makes vain
all hopes of my salvation.

Valentin (*grasping the medal which is hanging around his neck*)
And you, my sister's parting thought.
You were my guardian and companion,
but now I scorn the help you brought accursed medallion,
your help has been too dearly bought!
(*He throws the medal away.*)

Mephistopheles (*aside*)
An act you may regret!

Valentin
Oh, God above, inflame
my fatal resolution!
Redouble my fatal resolution.
His blood will clear my name,
the blood of retribution!

Faust
My courage and purpose wane
before such resolution!
Spilling his blood makes vain
all hopes of my salvation!
To spill his blood
ends all hope of my salvation!

Mephistopheles
All his threats are in vain,
his rage inspires derision.
When he strikes I'll strike again
with terror and confusion!

Valentin
I'm ready! Take up your guard!

Mephistopheles (*softly to Faust*)
Keep as close as you can.
Concentrate on the thrust, do you hear? I will parry.

(*They fight. Valentin falls, mortally wounded.*)

Mephistopheles
How are the mighty fallen from hero to carcass!
And now, make your escape! And hurry!
(*He drags Faust away.*)

Scene 8

The Death of Valentin

Martha and Women
6 Over here, come at once!
They were fighting in public,
now one lies wounded there.
Come and see, here he is!

Women and Men
He is barely alive; look and see if he's breathing.
Quick, over here! He needs our help at once!
Hurry up!

Valentin (*raising himself with an effort*)
Enough!
Save your breath and spare me your pity!
I've turned away the hand of death too many times;
now he claims his due!

Marguerite (*appearing at the back with Siébel*)
Valentin, Valentin!
(*She pushes through the crowd and kneels beside Valentin.*)

Valentin
Marguerite, you too? What do you want?
(*He pushes her away.*)
Go home!

Marguerite
Oh God!

Valentin
She's killed her brother!
I fought her lover
to defend our family name!

Crowd
She's to blame!

Siébel (*to Valentin*)
Spare her,
you are her brother!
Spare her,
spare her this bitter pain!

Marguerite
I shamed my brother!
What bitter pain!

Crowd
He fought her lover;
if he should die then she's to blame!

Valentin
7 Pay heed to my words, Marguerite!
Every creature on earth must meet the dreaded reaper,
and when he comes, seeking his prey,
we must bow to our fate; God has ordained the day!
You! Now you run headlong towards perdition,
you will forget how to work for your bread!
Since you now live for self-gratification,
duty and trust, virtue and truth are dead!
Go! Oppressed by dishonour
and beset my remorse!
Hear this as I leave you:
Die! And though God may forgive you,
you must live with my curse!
Though God may forgive you,
you must live with a brother's curse!

Crowd
What a vile profanation!
In your ultimate moment,
think what you do,
and ensure your salvation!
Forgive her, and your God will have mercy on you!

Valentin
Marguerite, my curse upon you!
Death waits for you as for us all.
I… must die by your hand… like a soldier I fall.

Crowd
God, in your infinite mercy, forgive him his sins.

Act V

Scene 1

The Walpurgis Night

Will o' the Wisps
8 Over the heather,
through the marshes,
hither and thither
lightning flashes.
Coming and going,
ever quicker,
see how the glowing
lanterns flicker.
Beware! They glitter
on copse and cairn,
they glide and flitter
through field and fen;
blazing reflections,
icily cold;
unquiet spectres,
wandering souls.

Faust
9 No further!

Mephistopheles
Did we not decide
there would be no questions, remember?

Faust
Where are we now?

Mephistopheles
This is my empire!
Down here, my friend, I rule by right,
so, welcome to Walpurgis Night!

Voices
You're welcome to Walpurgis Night!
Hoo hoo, hoo hoo!

Faust
My blood is frozen!

Mephistopheles
You'll see! I'll work a transformation;
dark to light with one incantation!

Scene 2

Scene and Chorus
Mephistopheles
10 Till the sun awakes in the east,
with a shimmer of gold and scarlet,
you'll revel in private at our feast,
the guest of empresses and harlots.

Chorus
Raise our glasses before us
to Gods of ages past.
Let our voices in chorus
sing while the revels last!

Mephistopheles
Royal courtesans, queens in far-off days,
Cleopatra the fair, and ravishing Thaïs,
let us all take our place for a while at the feast.
(*to Faust*)
Come on! Just to ease the torment
of your wounded heart.
Drink from this goblet and in a moment
you'll feel your former pain depart!

Chorus
Raise our glasses before us
to Gods of ages past.
Let our voices in chorus
sing while the revels last!

Faust
Vain remorse and shameful delusion!
Now my soul must escape your prison!
Come, let us toast the death of my illusion!

Drinking Song
11 Honeyed nectar, share your pleasure;
let my spirit drink its fill
and your kisses fiery pressure
make my blood race faster still.
Entombed in sweetest pleasure
my spirit drinks its fill,
finding in the witches' measure
dark oblivion distilled!

Chorus
Nectar of love!

Mephistopheles and Chorus
Finding in the witches' measure
dark oblivion distilled!

Faust
Careless love, before your folly
passion's flame burns ever higher
free from danger, free from worry.
Nothing can subdue your fire!
Divine and potent folly,
your flame burns ever higher.
Sentimental melancholy
drowns in wanton, wild desire!

Chorus
O, careless love!

Mephistopheles and Chorus
Sentimental melancholy
drowns in wanton wild desire!

Mephistopheles
12 May your elation, O careless love,
extinguish all remorse while his heart is in thrall!
O careless love, may your elation stifle all remorse
while his heart is in thrall.

(*Faust sees a vision of Marguerite.*)

Scene 3

Mephistopheles
What is wrong?

Faust
Are you going blind?
Look: she is there, so pale and silent…
And a crimson thread, half hidden by her hair…

Mephistopheles
Illusion!

Faust
…devours the throat that it encloses!

Mephistopheles
Witchcraft!

Faust
Lean as a sabre cut, red as the fallen roses!

Mephistopheles
Sorcery!

Faust
Marguerite! My blood is like ice in my veins!
Bring me to her! Hear and obey!

Scene 4

13 **Intermezzo**

Prison Scene
(*Marguerite is asleep. Faust and Mephistopheles enter.*)

Faust (*to Mephistopheles*)
14 Go back!

Mephistopheles
It's almost daylight, the scaffold is prepared;
You're wasting time; she is yours for the taking.
They're all asleep, here are the keys.
Now only you can save her. She is waiting.

Faust
Leave us alone!

Mephistopheles
Hurry up! I'll keep watch at the gate.

Scene 5

Faust
15 My heart quails at the thought of this meeting!
Oh, what torture!
Oh, source of vain regret and everlasting pain!
I've found her here, at last, that sweet and gentle creature,
condemned unfeelingly to pine beneath a melancholy burden,
while black despair has disordered her mind…
By violent means her child, our wretched child, was killed…
Her guilt is certain! Marguerite! Marguerite!

Marguerite (*waking*)
16 Ah! Do I hear my lover's voice?
Hearing him call, my heart wakens to joy!

Faust
Marguerite!

Marguerite
Through the harsh din of the demons' screeching.
His voice reaches my ears, quelling the Devil's roar!

Faust
Marguerite!

Marguerite
I see his gentle hand beseeching.
Grant me freedom! He is here! I am free!
I have heard him and seen him once more!
Yes, you're here beloved.
The torments I suffered
will not seem so hard!
You come to reclaim me

and your love will save me.
You're here, I give you my heart!

Faust
Yes, I an here, beloved.
Though hell close above you
we shall never part!
I come to reclaim you
and my love will save you.
I'm here, I give you my heart!

(*He tries to take her away. She gently avoids his arms.*)

Marguerite (*her mind wandering*)
Not yet! Here I was walking
when you first saw me,
it seems so long ago.
And there your hand
almost dared to caress my own.
'May I presume to ask, most beautiful of ladies,
if you will take my arm and walk with me today?'
'Thank you, no, I am neither a lady nor a beauty,
and need no helping hand to guide me on my way.'

Faust
Yes, it lives in my heart!
Come along, we must hurry!

Marguerite
Here's the path where the scented rose
filled the air with sweet exhalations.
Night after night you held me close
beneath the silent constellations.

Faust
Come, come Marguerite.

Marguerite
No!

Faust
Come, come with me!

Marguerite
No! No, stay beside me!

Faust
Oh God! Why does she not respond?

Scene 6

Trio

Mephistopheles
17 Make haste now! Or abandon all hope!
Soon the morning will come, bringing the hangman's rope!

Marguerite
Satan's here… Satan's here!
He is there in the shadow.
His eyes like coals devour his face!
What can he want?
Cast him out from this place!

Mephistopheles
The shadows are melting, our horses await,
stamping on the cobbles,
they call us to fly, before it's too late!
Quick, bring the girl!
You may still be in time to save her!

Marguerite
My God protect me now!
My God, you are my saviour!

Faust
Come! Come now
or else you will be lost forever!

Marguerite
Angel choirs, bright visions of love,
carry my soul to God above!
Dear Father in your mercy receive me!
Dear Lord, you are my all, forgive me!

Faust
We must go, come with me!

Marguerite
Angel choirs, bright visions of love,
carry my soul to God above!

Mephistopheles
Don't delay!

Marguerite
Dear Father, in your mercy receive me!
You are my all, dear Lord, forgive me!

Faust
Come with me! I claim you for my own!

Mephistopheles
You must leave her!
Glimmers of dawn brighten the sky above!
Don't delay, we have lingered enough.
Follow us! Come, we'll save you, believe me!

Marguerite
Angel choirs, bright visions of love *etc.*

Faust
Come! Come, trust in my love,
glimmers of dawn light the sky above!
Come! I swear you will not leave me!
Marguerite!

Faust
Marguerite!

Marguerite
What threat blazes there in your eyes?
Why are your hands dripping with blood?
Go! You're a loathsome sight!

Faust
Ah!

Mephistopheles
Damnation!

Apotheosis

Chorus of Angels
Salvation!
God's kingdom shall endure!
Christ Jesus is risen!
Peace reigns for evermore
with our Father in heaven!
Christ Jesus is risen!
God's kingdom shall endure!

(*The prison walls open. The soul of Marguerite is transported to Heaven. Faust gazes after her in despair and falls to his knees in prayer. Mephistopheles turns away before the glory of the archangel's sword.*)

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Ballet Music

18 1 Dance of the Nubian Slaves –
19 2 Slow Dance –
20 3 Ancient Dance –
21 4 Cleopatra's Variations –
22 5 Dance of the Trojan Women –
23 6 Mirror Variations –
24 7 Phryne's Dance

Christian Steiner

Paul Charles Clark

Steve Shipman

Alastair Miles

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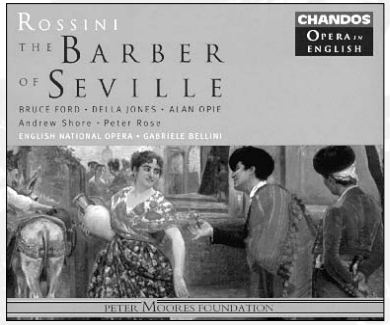

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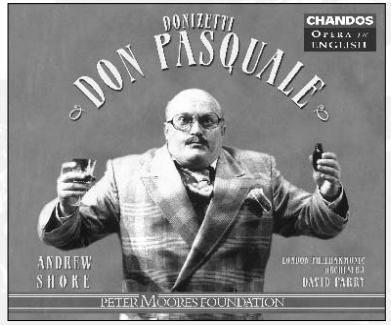

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Paul Charles Clarke as Faust and Alastair Miles as Mephistopheles in the 1996 Welsh National Opera production of Gounod's *Faust*.
Photo by Bill Cooper

Janice Watson as Marguerite and Paul Charles Clarke as Faust in the 1996 Welsh National Opera production of Gounod's *Faust*.
Photo by Bill Cooper

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GOUNOD: FAUST

20 bit

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Charles Gounod (1818–1893)

Faust

Opera in five acts (with ballet music)
Libretto by Jules Barbier and Michel Carré
English translation by Christopher Cowell

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Mephistopheles ..... Alastair Miles *bass*
Marguerite ..... Mary Plazas *soprano*
Valentin, Marguerite's brother, a soldier ..... Garry Magee *baritone*
Siébel, a village youth, in love with Marguerite ..... Diana Montague *mezzo-soprano*
Wagner, a student ..... Matthew Hargreaves *bass-baritone*
Martha, Marguerite's neighbour ..... Sarah Walker *mezzo-soprano*

Geoffrey Mitchell Choir
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