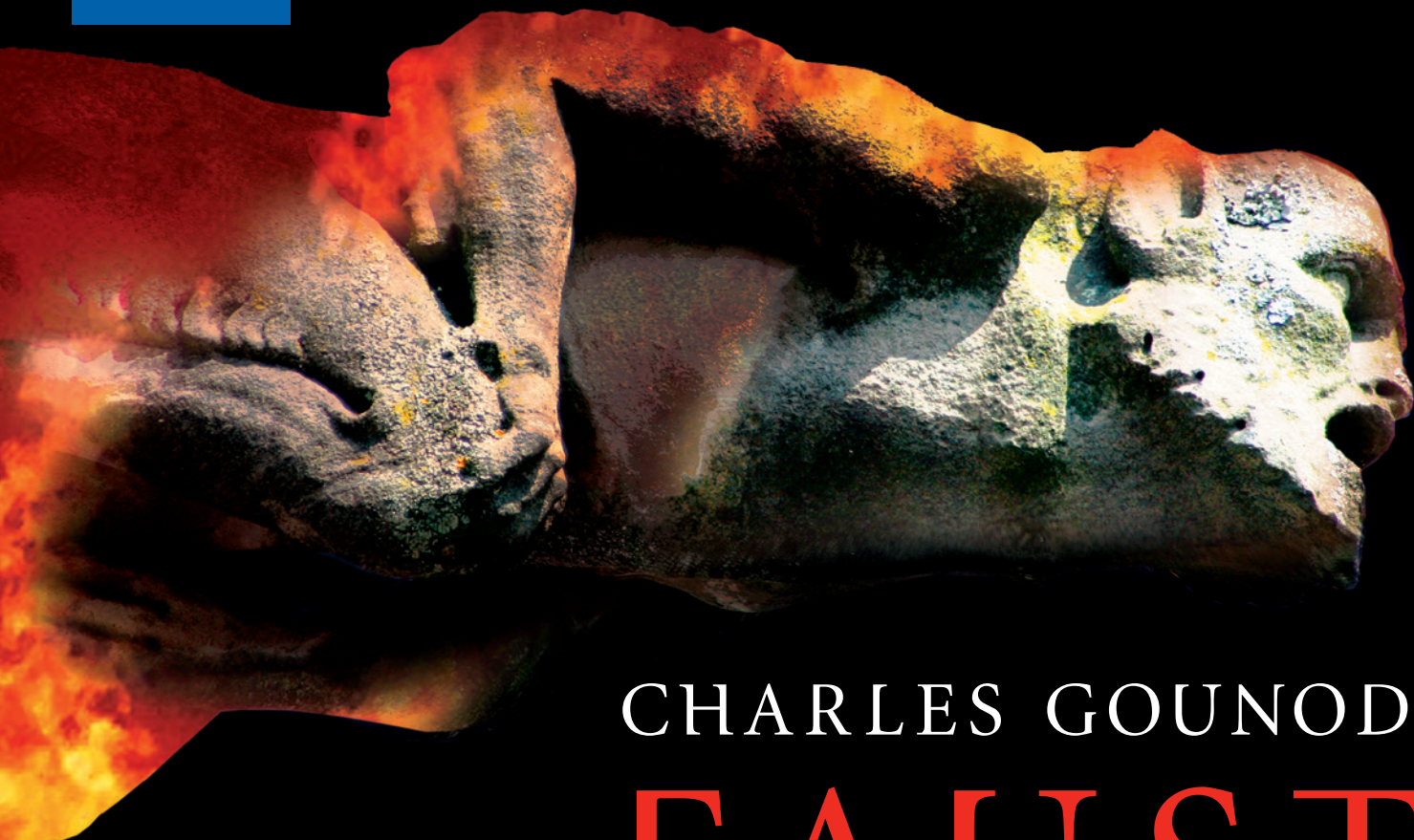


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1864 VERSION



CHARLES GOUNOD

FAUST

ALJAŽ FARASIN • CARLO COLOMBARA • MARJUKKA TEPPONEN
LUCIO GALLO • DIANA HALLER • IVANA SRBLJAN • WALTERI TORIKKA
CROATIAN NATIONAL THEATRE IN RIJEKA
OPERA ORCHESTRA AND CHOIR
VILLE MATVEJEFF

**Charles
GOUNOD**
(1818–1893)

Faust

Opera in five acts (1858) (London version, 1864)

Libretto by Jules Barbier (1825–1901) and Michel Carré (1822–1872)

Additional text by Onésime Pradère (1825–1891)

Sung in French

Faust Aljaž Farasin, Tenor
 Méphistophélès Carlo Colombara, Bass
 Marguerite Marjukka Tepponen, Soprano
 Valentin Lucio Gallo, Baritone
 Siébel Diana Haller, Mezzo-soprano
 Marthe Ivana Sribljan, Mezzo-soprano
 Brander (Wagner) Waltteri Torikka, Baritone
 Citizens, Demons, Labourers, Maidens, Matrons, Soldiers, Will-o'-the-wisps

Croatian National Theatre in Rijeka – Opera Orchestra and Choir

Chorus Master: Nicoletta Olivieri

Ville Matvejeff

Act I		24:56	14	Scene 6: Récitatif: Je voudrais bien (<i>Marguerite</i>)	1:32
1	Introduction	6:39			
2	Scene 1: Rien!... En vain j'interroge – Chorus: Ah! Paresseuse fille (<i>Faust, Maidens, Labourers</i>)	8:27	15	Scene 6: Chanson du Roi de Thulé: Ile était un roi de Thulé (<i>Marguerite</i>)	6:16
3	Récitatif: Mais ce Dieu (<i>Faust</i>)	1:09	16	Air des bijoux: Ah! Je ris de me voir (<i>Marguerite</i>)	3:57
4	Scene 2: Duo: Me voici! (<i>Méphistophélès, Faust</i>)	8:41	17	Scene 7: Scène: Seigneur Dieu... – Scene 8: Dame Marthe Schwerlein (<i>Marthe, Marguerite, Méphistophélès, Faust</i>)	2:57
Act II		27:15			
5	Scene 1: Chœur: Vin ou bière (<i>Students, Wagner, Soldiers, Citizens, Maidens, Matrons</i>)	4:45	18	Scene 8: Quatuor: Prenez mon bras un moment! (<i>Faust, Marguerite, Méphistophélès, Marthe</i>)	7:22
6	Scene 2: Scène: O sainte médaille – Récitatif: Ah! Voici Valentin – Invocation: Avant de quitter ces lieux – Scene 3: Pardon! (<i>Valentin, Wagner, Siébel, Students, Méphistophélès</i>)	6:47	19	Scene 10: Scène: Il était temps! (<i>Méphistophélès</i>)	1:47
7	Ronde du Veau d'or: Le veau d'or est toujours debout! (<i>Méphistophélès, Siébel, Wagner, Chorus</i>)	1:56	20	Scene 11: Duo: Il se fait tard – Scene 12: Scène: Tête folle! – Scene 13: Il m'aime (<i>Marguerite, Faust, Méphistophélès</i>)	13:53
8	Récitatif: Merci de ta chanson! – Choral des Epées: De l'enfer qui vient émuresser – Scene 4: Nous nous retrouverons (<i>Chorus, Valentin, Wagner, Méphistophélès, Siébel, Faust</i>)	6:35	Act IV 46:13		
9	Scene 5: Valse et Chœur: Ainsi que la brise légère (<i>Chorus, Méphistophélès, Faust, Siébel, Marguerite</i>)	7:13	21	Scene 1: Marguerite au Rouet: Elles ne sont plus là (<i>Marguerite, Maidens</i>)	8:05
Act III			22	Scene 2: Marguerite! – Récitatif: Mais ce n'est pas (<i>Siébel, Marguerite</i>)	1:23
10	Entr'acte – Scène 1: Couplets: Faites-lui mes aveu (<i>Siébel</i>)	4:40	23	Romance: Si le bonheur (<i>Siébel</i>)	2:51
11	Scene 2: Scène: C'est ici? – Scene 3: Récitatif: Attendez-moi là (<i>Faust, Méphistophélès, Siébel</i>)	3:26	24	Scene 2: Soyez béni, Siébel (<i>Marguerite</i>)	1:43
12	Scene 4: Cavatine: Salut! demeure chaste et pure (<i>Faust</i>)	4:40	25	Scene 3: Scène de l'Eglise: Seigneur, daignez permettre... (<i>Marguerite, Méphistophélès, Demons, Religious Chorus</i>)	10:18
13	Scene 5: Scène: Alerte! la voilà (<i>Méphistophélès, Faust</i>)	0:39	26	Scene 4: Chœur des Soldats: Ecoutez! Les voici! Venezvite! (<i>Marthe, Soldiers, Valentin, Siébel</i>)	6:24
			27	Scene 5: Récitatif: Allons, Siébel – Scene 6: Qu'attendez-vous encore? (<i>Valentin, Siébel, Méphistophélès, Faust</i>)	2:03
			28	Scene 6: Sérénade: Vous qui faites l'endormie (<i>Méphistophélès</i>)	2:40

29	Scene 7: Trio du Duel: Que voulez-vous, messieurs? (<i>Valentin, Méphistophélès, Faust</i>)	4:01	30	Scene 2: Chant bachique: Doux nectar, dans ton ivresse – Scene 3: Qu’astu donc? (<i>Faust, Chorus, Méphistophélès</i>)	3:41
30	Scene 8: Mort de Valentin: Par ici, par ici... (<i>Marthe, Valentin, Marguerite, Siébel</i>)	6:45	34	Scene 4: Scène de la Prison: Vat'en! – Le jour va luire – Scene 5: Mon cœur est pénétré d'épouvante! (<i>Faust, Méphistophélès, Marguerite</i>)	11:47
	Act V	29:02	35	Scene 6: Finale: Trio: Alerté! (<i>Méphistophélès, Marguerite, Faust</i>)	3:18
31	Scene 1: La nuit de Walpurgis: Dans les bruyères (<i>Will-o'-the-wisps, Faust, Méphistophélès</i>)	3:22	36	Apotheose: Sauvée! (<i>Chorus</i>)	2:39
32	Scene 2: Scène: Jusqu'aux premiers feux du matin – Chœur: Que les coupes s'emplissent (<i>Méphistophélès, Chorus, Faust</i>)	4:15			

Charles Gounod (1818–1893) Faust

The composer Charles Gounod was born in Paris, in 1818. His father was an artist and his mother a pianist. She became his first piano teacher and he flourished under her tuition. His formal education took place at the Lycée Saint-Louis where he was a pupil until 1835. He studied music with the Bohemian composer Anton Reicha, and following Reicha's death, in 1836 he entered the Paris Conservatoire. Here he was a pupil of the operatic composer Fromental Halévy, as well as Jean-François Le Sueur and Pierre Zimmerman, whose daughter Anne he later married. His cantata *Fernand* won the coveted Prix de Rome in 1839, which allowed the winner to stay for three years in Rome at the French government's expense. While in Rome, Gounod studied the music of Palestrina and other composers of sacred music active during the 16th century. After completing his time in Rome he moved to Vienna where a Mass and a Requiem, which had been composed in Rome, were performed in 1842 and 1843. On his journey back to Paris, he visited Prague, Dresden, Berlin and Leipzig, where he met Mendelssohn. Settling in Paris he became the organist and choirmaster at the Church of Foreign Missions while also studying theology. He gave serious consideration to joining the priesthood, entering the seminary of Saint-Sulpice in 1846. During the following year he decided against taking holy orders, left a Requiem and a Te Deum unfinished, and turned to composing for the operatic stage.

Gounod's first two operas, *Sapho* of 1851 and *La Nonne sanglante* ('The Bloody Nun') of 1854, were not successful despite positive reviews from Berlioz. In 1855 his *Mass for Saint Cecilia* was first performed at the Church of Saint-Eustache in Paris. In this he blended the sacred with the secular to great effect; its success established him as a composer of note. His next opera, first performed in 1858 and based on Molière's play *Le Médecin malgré lui* ('The Mock Doctor'), was comic. More significant was the first performance of his opera *Faust*, given in 1859. This was to become extraordinarily popular and held the stage for many years. Its international success overshadowed all his subsequent operas, despite their undoubted quality: *Philémon et Baucis* (1860), *La Colombe* ('The Dove') (1860), *Mireille* (1864), and *Roméo et Juliette* (1867). Between 1870 and 1874 Gounod lived in London, where he formed a choral society that was to become the Royal Choral Society. He returned to his early religious leanings later in life, and composed much sacred music, notably the two oratorios *La Rédemption* (1882) and *Mors et Vita* ('Life and Death') (1885). He was made a Grand Officer of the Legion of Honour in 1888. Shortly after completing a Requiem for his grandson, he died of a stroke at Saint-Cloud in 1893. Gounod had a gift for writing memorable melodies, understood the voice well and was a most skilful orchestrator. While the religiosity in his sacred works has been criticised as at times superficial, these

compositions undoubtedly spoke with great power to his contemporaries. His operas similarly represent French 19th-century operatic culture at its peak.

Gounod first discovered Goethe's masterpiece *Faust* in 1838, but his interest in this subject as an opera was fired when a dramatised version of the Faust legend by Michel Carré entitled *Faust et Marguerite* was presented in Paris in 1850 at the Théâtre du Gymnase-Dramatique. Shortly afterwards the writer Jules Barbier approached Gounod with the idea of Faust as a subject for an opera and Gounod responded positively. Barbier used Carré's version as the basis for the libretto which was subsequently supplied to Gounod. This first version of the opera used spoken dialogue to link Gounod's musical numbers. Rehearsals began in 1858 at the Théâtre-Lyrique, which was run by the impresario Leon Carvalho, who put Gounod under great pressure to make numerous changes. When the first performance of the opera took place on 19 March 1859, it already differed significantly from Gounod's original version. The work was revived by Carvalho in the autumn of the same year, when further revisions were made to accommodate popular taste. In 1862 the Théâtre-Lyrique moved its operations to a smaller theatre in the Place du Châtelet, which necessitated further major adjustments. These alterations, and changes driven by further productions in the French provinces and elsewhere, created a constantly varying text. For instance, for the London production of 1864 Gounod added the aria 'Avant de quitter ces lieux' to the second act for the popular baritone Charles Santley. In 1866 the spoken dialogues were taken out and in 1869 the opera reached its final form as a grand opera when it was produced by the Paris Opéra, where all productions had to be sung in their entirety and a ballet was also mandatory, to satisfy the members of the Jockey Club who pursued a keen interest in the Opéra's corps de ballet.

Barbier and Carré's libretto contains three basic themes. The first of these is the love affair between Faust and Marguerite. Here Faust, following the lead of the deceiver Méphistophélès, is ambiguous in his declarations of love for Marguerite, which she, being naïve and devout, completely believes. Eventually Faust loses faith in Méphistophélès and recognises the error of his ways. The second element is moral, in the warning on sin symbolised through the example of Marguerite. She surrenders to Faust, and bears him a child, which she murders to cover

up her 'crime'. Her contrition enables her to unmask Méphistophélès and to triumph over his power and influence. Her reward is salvation and an apotheosis that recalls the assumption of the Virgin Mary. The final theme of the libretto is the fantastic. Since the first performance of Meyerbeer's opera *Robert le diable* in 1831 Parisian audiences had been bewitched by works which referenced the supernatural, and Faust benefited greatly in terms of popularity from this fascination. Through the depiction of the fantastic, Gounod's opera in addition offers numerous opportunities for spectacular stage effects, such as the vision of Marguerite and Faust's transformation from an old to a young man in the first act, and Marguerite's redemption in the final act. These themes and their spectacular realisation on the stage both explain the attraction of the work for 19th-century audiences and its subsequent decline in popularity during the 20th century.

Synopsis

Act I

Faust is set in Germany during the 16th century. The first act talks place in Faust's study. After having spent all his life in intellectual pursuits, Faust now realises that he has achieved nothing of significance, as well as missing his chances of love and his youth. He considers suicide, pouring poison into a cup. He is about to drink this twice but stops each time when he hears a pastoral chorus outside his window. Highly frustrated he damns happiness, science and faith and calls upon Satan to help him. Moments later Méphistophélès magically appears before Faust. Faust confesses to him that, more than wealth, glory or power, what he yearns for is youth. Méphistophélès tells him that he can experience youth again but in exchange for forfeiting his soul to him (Méphistophélès). Faust hesitates but Méphistophélès persuades him by conjuring up a vision of the young Marguerite sitting at her spinning wheel. Persuaded Faust agrees to the pact proposed by Méphistophélès, who magically transforms the poison that Faust was about to drink into an elixir of youth. Faust drinks down the magic concoction and is transformed into a handsome young man. The two then leave Faust's study in search of the young Marguerite.

Act II

The second act is set at the city gates where a carnival is taking place. Soldiers, students, young girls and older women are all enjoying themselves. One of the soldiers, the young Valentin, asks his friend Siébel to look after his sister Marguerite while he is away fighting. Siébel agrees, and as the chorus begin to sing another boisterous song, Méphistophélès appears. He sings of the golden calf, praising gold and greed. He magically conjures up wine from old barrels and provides alcohol for everybody. He talks lightly of Marguerite, which angers Valentin, who draws his sword, but this shatters before it can touch Méphistophélès. Valentin realises that he is dealing with the devil and holds his sword up as a cross. After being alone for a short while, Méphistophélès is joined by Faust and a group of villagers who dance an energetic waltz. Marguerite appears: Faust tells her that he greatly admires her and offers her his arm, but she refuses modestly and departs.

Act III

The setting of the third act is Marguerite's garden. Siébel is in love with Marguerite and has brought her a bouquet of flowers. Faust and Méphistophélès enter. Faust, seeing Siébel's bouquet, sends Méphistophélès off to search for a finer gift for Marguerite. Faust sings of his devotion to Marguerite, whose modesty he finds irresistible. Méphistophélès returns with a casket of jewels for Marguerite, which they leave at her door, beside Siébel's bouquet. Marguerite returns, wondering who the young man was whom she had encountered earlier. She sings a ballad about the king of Thulé and, finding both the bouquet and the jewels, tries on the latter which she falls in love with. Her governess, Marthe, tells her that the jewels are the gift of a rich admirer. Méphistophélès and Faust return. Méphistophélès begins to seduce Marthe, thus enabling Faust to draw Marguerite, who is still extremely shy, away from her protection. They enjoy a brief kiss before Marguerite steps back and sends Faust away. Faust is now convinced that his project has failed and decides to abandon it. However he is stopped by Méphistophélès who commands him to listen to Marguerite. She has come to the window of her room, wishing that Faust will quickly return to her. Hearing this Faust immediately comes forward and

takes her hand. She places her head on his shoulder while Méphistophélès cynically laughs at the frailty of humanity.

Act IV

The fourth act commences in Marguerite's room. She has given birth to a child by Faust. She is ostracised by society and has been abandoned by Faust. She sits by her spinning wheel, convinced she will not see him again. Siébel tries to cheer her up. The scene changes to a square. Soldiers, including Valentin, are returning from the wars. Siébel is evasive when Valentin asks her about his sister; concerned, he rushes to Marguerite's house. While Valentin is inside, Méphistophélès, accompanied by Faust, sings a satirical serenade underneath Marguerite's window. Valentin reappears and demands to know who has seduced his sister. Faust draws his sword and the two men fight. Blocked by Méphistophélès, Valentin is lethally wounded by Faust. Dying, Valentin absolves himself of responsibility for Marguerite and damns her for eternity. The scene changes once again, this time to a cathedral. Marguerite is trying to pray, but is distracted firstly by Méphistophélès and then by a chorus of devils. She finally completes her prayers, but then faints when Méphistophélès curses her.

Act V

The fifth and final act opens in the wild Harz Mountains. As a chorus of will-o'-the-wisps sings, Faust and Méphistophélès appear. They are surrounded by witches. Faust tries to flee but Méphistophélès transports him to a luxurious banquet populated by courtesans from antiquity. Faust imagines that he sees Marguerite and calls for her. As Faust and Méphistophélès leave, the mountains close around them and the witches return. The scene changes to the interior of a prison. Marguerite has been imprisoned for the murder of her child. With the assistance of Méphistophélès, Faust has obtained the keys to her cell. Marguerite wakes to the sound of Faust's voice and they sing of their love. Faust asks her to flee with him. Méphistophélès appears and tries to persuade Faust and Marguerite to accompany him. Marguerite resists and calls for divine protection. In desperation Faust sinks to his knees in prayer while Marguerite's soul rises to heaven.

David Patmore



Photo: Darja Šmaus Tisur

Aljaž Farasin

Aljaž Farasin studied opera singing at the Music Academy in Ljubljana with Vlatka Oršanić and received a degree *summa cum laude*. As a leading soloist of the Ljubljana Opera he appeared in numerous performances as Alfredo (*La traviata*), Duca di Mantova (*Rigoletto*), Ismaele (*Nabucco*), Macduff (*Macbeth*), Rodolfo (*La Bohème*), Pinkerton (*Madama Butterfly*), Boris (*Káťa Kabanová*) and Don Jose (*Carmen*). He also performs tenor roles in German repertoire, including *Salome*, *Fidelio* and *Der fliegende Holländer*, among others. Currently, he is a principal soloist at the Croatian National Theatre 'Ivan Zajc' in Rijeka where he added Lenski (*Eugene Onegin*), Werther (*Werther*), Fenton (*Falstaff*), Romeo (*Roméo et Juliette*), and the title role in Gound's *Faust* to his repertoire. In 2015 he sang the role of Don Jose in *Carmen* on tour in Japan, with Vesselina Kasarova in the title role. In the same year he debuted as Godefroy de Vaudemont in *Iolanta* at the Opera of the National Theatre in Prague. In January 2018 he appeared as Boris in *Káťa Kabanová* at the Opera de Rennes, and in September the same year as Don Jose in *Carmen* on tour in Belgium and the Netherlands. www.aljazfarasin.com

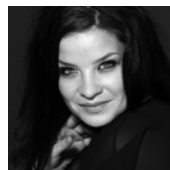
Carlo Colombara

Bass Carlo Colombara performs in the most prestigious theatres in the world, including the Wiener Staatsoper, the Metropolitan Opera in New York, the Bolshoi Theatre, the Theater Colón, the Opéra national de Paris, the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, the Teatro dell'Opera di Roma and the Tokyo Opera. He has also performed in concert halls such as Carnegie Hall, the Royal Festival Hall, Wigmore Hall, the Konzerthaus and Musikverein in Vienna and the Concertgebouw, Amsterdam. Colombara has collaborated with conductors including Riccardo Chailly, Myung-Whun Chung, Sir Colin Davis, Lorin Maazel, Zubin Mehta, Riccardo Muti, Antonio Pappano, Giuseppe Sinopoli and Sir Georg Solti. www.carlocolombara.com



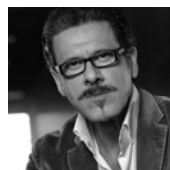
Marjukka Tepponen

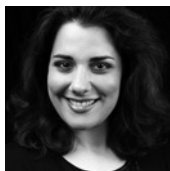
Soprano Marjukka Tepponen was born into a musical family in Kuopio, Finland. She studied at the Sibelius Academy with Marjut Hannula and graduated with the highest honours in 2012. She also studied privately with Hilde Zadek in Vienna. She has won two of the biggest national singing competitions in Finland. Tepponen has been a frequent guest at the Finnish National Opera and the Savonlinna Opera Festival with many major roles, such as Mimì, Fiordiligi and Marguerite. She made her international debut in Graz with the role of Mimì in *La Bohème*. Tepponen has also appeared as a guest at Seattle Opera, the Brengener Festspiele and the Rijeka Opera Company. www.marjukkateppeponen.com



Lucio Gallo

Born in Taranto, Lucio Gallo graduated from the Conservatorio Statale di Musica 'Giuseppe Verdi' di Torino. He is a regular guest of the world's leading opera houses and concert halls including the Metropolitan Opera in New York, the Wiener Staatsoper, the Konzerthaus and Musikverein in Vienna, the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, the Salzburg Festival, the Teatro alla Scala, the Staatsoper Hamburg, the Bayerische Staatsoper and the Opernhaus Zürich among others. He has worked with eminent conductors such as Claudio Abbado, Daniel Barenboim, Riccardo Chailly, Myung-Whun Chung, Sir Colin Davis, John Eliot Gardiner, Bernard Haitink, Nikolaus Harnoncourt and Zubin Mehta.





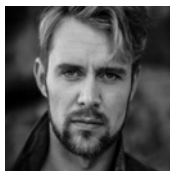
Diana Haller

Croatian mezzo-soprano Diana Haller holds a Master's degree from the Royal Academy of Music in London and has studied with Brigitte Fassbaender. Her operatic repertoire includes the lead roles in Handel's *Ariodante*, *Giulio Cesare* and as Ruggiero in *Alcina*, Rossini's *La Cenerentola* (Angelina), *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (Rosina) and *Tancredi*, Bellini's *Norma* (Adalgisa) and *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* (Romeo), and Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos* (Composer) which she performed at the Staatsoper Stuttgart, the Semperoper Dresden and the Salzburger Festspiele. Haller has worked with conductors such as Helmuth Rilling, Philippe Herreweghe and Fabio Luisi at the Teatro alla Scala and the Teatro del Maggio Fiorentino, among others. She was awarded Best Young Singer by *Opernwelt* in 2013 and won the Hugo Wolf Song Competition in 2012. www.dianahaller.com



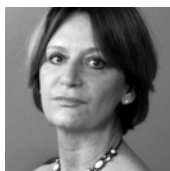
Ivana Srbljan

Ivana Srbljan is a Croatian mezzo-soprano born in Zagreb, currently a member of the Opera ensemble and a leading soloist of the Croatian National Theatre in Rijeka. She has performed with the Croatian Radiotelevision Symphony Orchestra and Choir, the RTS Symphony Orchestra and Choir with Bojan Sudjic, the Zagreb Philharmonic Orchestra and Dimitrij Kitajenko, the Jyväskylä Sinfonia and Ville Matvejeff, the Croatian Chamber Orchestra, the Pannonian Philharmonic Orchestra and Tibor Bogányi, the Wiener Concert-Verein Orchestra, and I Solisti Veneti and Claudio Scimone, among others. Her major roles include *Carmen*, *Charlotte (Werther)*, *Adalgisa (Norma)*, *Stéphano* (Gounod's *Roméo and Juliette*), *Dalila* (Saint-Saëns's *Samson et Dalila*) and *Dido* (*Dido and Aeneas*).



Walteri Torikka

Baritone Walteri Torikka is quickly establishing himself as one of the most promising new talents in the next generation of opera singers from Finland. He is the 2013 recipient of Martti Talvela Award. He won the First Male Prize in the Lappeenranta National Singing Competition in 2010 and was awarded the 2009 HSBC Laureates prize at the prestigious Mozart Academy at the Festival International d'Art Lyrique d'Aix-en-Provence, which included several concerts in France and at the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence. Torikka has also performed at the BBC Proms in the Royal Albert Hall as well as widely in Northern Europe. www.walteritorikka.fi



Nicoletta Olivieri

Nicoletta Olivieri is currently chorus master and vocal coach at the Rijeka National Opera House 'Ivan Zajc'. She previously worked at the National Opera House in Izmir, Turkey, the Teatro Coccia, Novara, the Symphonic Orchestra of Fidenza, the Arena di Verona and the Teatro alla Scala, Milan. She studied at the Conservatorio di Musica Giovan Battista Martini Bologna. Olivieri has worked with conductors such as Lorin Maazel, Antonio Pappano, Claudio Abbado, Myung-whun Chung, and Riccardo Muti, and artists including Luciano Pavarotti, Montserrat Caballé, José Carreras, Plácido Domingo and Cecilia Bartoli. In 2017 Olivieri was awarded the Cavaliere dell'Ordine della Stella d'Italia by Sergio Mattarella.



Ville Matvejeff

Born in 1986 in Finland, Ville Matvejeff has established himself as an exceptionally wide-ranging musician enjoying success as a conductor, composer and pianist. He trained at the Sibelius Academy and the Espoo Music Institute, and has performed throughout Europe as well as in the US, China, Japan and Mexico. Matvejeff is the chief conductor of the Jyväskylä Sinfonia and principal guest conductor and music advisor for the Rijeka National Opera House 'Ivan Zajc'. Recent and upcoming season highlights include repeat invitations from the Duisburg and Tampere Philharmonic Orchestras and the Tapiola Sinfonietta, as well as the RTV Slovenia Symphony Orchestra, the Ulster Orchestra and the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra and Choir. Matvejeff was recently appointed the designate artistic director of the Savonlinna Opera Festival as of September 2019, and served as the artistic director of the Turku Music Festival from 2016 to 2018. Matvejeff conducts a diverse repertoire of opera and performances in Rijeka. www.matvejeff.com



Croatian National Theatre in Rijeka – Opera Orchestra and Choir

The history of opera in the city of Rijeka dates back to the first half of the 19th century. The turning point was opening of the Teatro Comunale on 3 October 1885. The inaugural performances of *Aida* and *La Gioconda* featured famous names – Medea Borelli, Clotilde Sartori and Mary Guttenberg. Ever since, numerous renowned opera artists have made guest appearances on the stage of the Rijeka Opera Theatre. In the beginning these included the young Giacomo Puccini and Pietro Mascagni, Enrico Caruso, Arturo Toscanini and Beniamino Gigli. Today's Opera Company in Rijeka was established in 1946 as part of the Croatian National Theatre in Rijeka, alongside the Ballet, Croatian Drama and Italian Drama companies. The Opera Company consists of a symphony orchestra, chorus and ensemble of soloists. Besides the wide-ranging operatic and ballet repertoire, the Rijeka Opera Symphony Orchestra is also dedicated to an extensive programme during its concert season. Throughout its history many distinguished Croatian and international conductors (Boris Papandopulo, Lovro von Matačić, Ivo Malec, Vladimir Benić and, more recently, Nikša Barezka, Vjekoslav Šutej, Ivan Repušić, Tibor Bogányi, Marco Boemi, Philipp von Steinaecker, Jan Willem de Vriend, and Ville Matvejeff, the orchestra's principal guest conductor since 2014), soloists (Sumi Jo, Maria Guleghina, Dunja Vejzović, Elena Mošuc, José Carreras, Yusif Eyvazov, José Cura, Carlo Colombara, Lucio Gallo, Giorgio Surian and Luis Chapa, among others) and instrumentalists (Federico Colli, Dan Zhu, Monika Leskovar, Enrico Bronzi, Michail Lifits, Aljoša Jurinić, Goran Filipce, Petrit Çeku, and others) have collaborated with the Rijeka Opera and its orchestra. In 2018 Yordan Kamdzhhalov was appointed chief conductor. The orchestra has also a prolific recording schedule. Recent projects include Boris Papandopulo's *Piano Concerto* and *Violin Concerto* (cpo) and Suppè's *Il ritorno del marinaio* (cpo).

Charles Gounod (1818–1893) Faust

Le compositeur Charles Gounod naquit à Paris en 1818. Son père était peintre et sa mère pianiste. Elle devint son premier professeur de piano et il s'épanouit sous sa tutelle. Il mena ses études au lycée Saint-Louis, où il fut élève jusqu'en 1835. Il étudia la musique avec le compositeur de Bohême Anton Reicha, et après le décès de Reicha, survenu en 1836, il entra au Conservatoire de Paris. Il y suivit les cours du compositeur d'opéra Fromental Halévy, ainsi que ceux de Jean-François Le Sueur et Pierre Zimmerman, dont il finit par épouser la fille Anne. En 1839, sa cantate *Fernand* remporta le très convoité Prix de Rome, dont les lauréats séjournaient pendant trois ans dans la capitale italienne aux frais du gouvernement français. Alors qu'il se trouvait à Rome, Gounod étudia la musique de Palestrina et d'autres compositeurs de musique sacrée en activité au XVI^e siècle. À la fin de son séjour romain, il se fixa à Vienne, où une messe et un requiem qu'il avait composés en Italie furent exécutés en 1842 et 1843. Rentrant à Paris, il fit halte à Prague, Dresde, Berlin et enfin Leipzig, où il rencontra Mendelssohn. Une fois installé dans la capitale française, il devint organiste et chef de chœur de l'église des Missions-étrangères et mena parallèlement des études de théologie. Il envisagea sérieusement de prendre les ordres, entrant au séminaire de Saint-Sulpice en 1846. Au cours de l'année suivante, il renonça à devenir prêtre, laissant un requiem et un Te Deum inachevés, et se mit à composer pour la scène lyrique.

Les deux premiers opéras de Gounod, *Sapho* (1851) et *La Nonne sanglante* (1854), furent tièdement reçus, en dépit des critiques élogieuses de Berlioz. En 1855, sa *Messe pour Sainte Cécile* fut donnée en l'église Saint-Eustache de Paris. Il y mêlait savamment le sacré au profane, et le succès obtenu fit sa renommée. Son opéra suivant, créé en 1858 et inspiré par la pièce de Molière *Le Médecin malgré lui*, était un ouvrage comique. En 1859, la création de *Faust* fut un événement plus marquant. Cet opéra devait devenir extraordinairement populaire et fut représenté sans interruption pendant de nombreuses années. Son succès international fut tel qu'il éclipsa tous ses opéras suivants, nonobstant leurs indéniables qualités : *Philémon et Baucis* (1860), *La Colombe* (1860),

Mireille (1864) et *Roméo et Juliette* (1867). Entre 1870 et 1874, Gounod vécut à Londres, où il fonda une société chorale destinée à devenir la Royal Choral Society. Vers la fin de sa vie, il renoua avec les inclinations religieuses de sa jeunesse et composa quantité de musique sacrée, notamment les deux oratorios *La Rédemption* (1882) et *Mors et Vita* (« Vie et mort ») (1885). Il fut fait Grand Officier de la Légion d'Honneur en 1888. Peu après avoir achevé un requiem pour son petit-fils, il mourut d'une crise d'apoplexie à Saint-Cloud en 1893. Gounod avait le don d'écrire des mélodies mémorables, comprenait bien la voix et était un orchestrateur hors pair. Si on a parfois taxé la piété de ses œuvres sacrées de superficialité, ces compositions parlaient sans doute avec une grande éloquence à ses contemporains. De la même manière, ses opéras illustrent la culture lyrique française du XIX^e siècle à son zénith.

Gounod découvrit *Faust*, le chef-d'œuvre de Goethe, en 1838, mais son intérêt fut décuplé quand une version théâtrale tirée du mythe faustien par Michel Carré intitulée *Faust et Marguerite* fut présentée à Paris en 1850 au Théâtre du Gymnase-Dramatique. Peu de temps après, l'écrivain Jules Barbier proposa à Gounod de tirer un opéra de *Faust* et le compositeur accepta. Barbier utilisa le texte de Carré comme point de départ pour le livret qu'il fournit ensuite à Gounod. Cette première version employait des dialogues parlés pour relier les numéros musicaux du compositeur. Les répétitions débutèrent en 1868 au Théâtre-Lyrique, qui était alors dirigé par Léon Carvalho, mais celui-ci exigea que de nombreuses modifications soient apportées à la partition. Ainsi, quand l'opéra fut créé le 19 mars 1859, il différait déjà largement de la version conçue au départ par Gounod. L'ouvrage fut repris par Carvalho à l'automne de la même année, et de nouvelles révisions y furent apportées afin de l'adapter au goût du public. En 1862, le Théâtre-Lyrique transféra ses activités dans un plus petit théâtre sur la place du Châtelet, et de nouveaux ajustements furent nécessaires. À cause de ces différentes altérations, accentuées lors de nouvelles productions montées dans le reste de la France et à l'étranger, l'ouvrage changea constamment de forme. Par exemple, pour la production londonienne

de 1864, Gounod ajouta l'air « Avant de quitter ces lieux » au deuxième acte à l'intention du populaire baryton Charles Santley. En 1866, les dialogues furent supprimés, et en 1869, *Faust* parvint à sa forme définitive de grand opéra quand il fut produit par l'Opéra de Paris, où tous les spectacles devaient être entièrement chantés et obligatoirement accompagnés d'un ballet afin de satisfaire les membres du Jockey Club, qui s'intéressaient de très près au corps de ballet de l'Opéra.

Le livret de Barbier et Carré comportait trois thèmes principaux. Le premier est l'histoire d'amour de Faust et Marguerite. Ici, Faust, obéissant aux injonctions du fourbe Méphistophélès, se montre ambigu dans ses déclarations d'amour à Marguerite, tandis que la jeune fille, qui est naïve et dévote, le croit aveuglément. En fin de compte, Faust perd confiance en Méphistophélès et reconnaît ses errements. Le deuxième élément est moral, de par l'avertissement contre le péché que symbolise l'exemple de Marguerite. Elle cède à Faust et conçoit un enfant de lui, qu'elle assassine afin de couvrir son « crime ». Sa contrition lui permet de confondre Méphistophélès et de triompher de sa puissance et de son influence. Sa récompense est le salut, avec une apothéose qui rappelle l'assomption de la Vierge Marie. Le thème final du livret est le fantastique. Depuis la première représentation de l'opéra de Meyerbeer *Robert le diable* en 1831, les spectateurs parisiens étaient fascinés par les ouvrages faisant référence au surnaturel, et la popularité de *Faust* fut largement due à cette fascination. En outre, à travers sa description du fantastique, l'opéra de Gounod invite de nombreux effets de scène spectaculaires, comme la vision de Marguerite et la métamorphose du vieux Faust en jeune homme au premier acte, ou encore la rédemption de Marguerite au dernier acte. Ce sont ces thèmes et leur spectaculaire réalisation scénique qui expliquent l'attrait de l'ouvrage pour le public du XIX^e siècle et le déclin subséquent de sa popularité au cours du XX^e.

Argument

Acte I

L'opéra se déroule en Allemagne au XVI^e siècle. Au premier acte, le rideau se lève sur le cabinet de travail de Faust. Après avoir consacré toute sa vie aux activités de l'esprit, Faust sent

qu'il n'a rien réalisé d'important et qu'il a laissé passer ses chances de profiter de l'amour et de la jeunesse. Il envisage le suicide et se verse du poison. Il s'apprête à le boire à deux reprises, mais il s'interrompt à chaque fois en entendant un chœur pastoral sous ses fenêtres. Frustré au plus haut point, il maudit le bonheur, la science et la foi et invoque l'aide de Satan. Quelques instants plus tard, Méphistophélès apparaît devant lui. Faust reconnaît que davantage que la richesse, la gloire ou le pouvoir, c'est la jeunesse qu'il désire le plus. Méphistophélès lui dit qu'il peut la lui rendre s'il lui promet son âme en retour. Faust hésite, mais Méphistophélès le convainc en lui montrant une vision de la jeune Marguerite assise à son rouet. Faust accepte alors le pacte que lui propose Méphistophélès, et celui-ci transforme le poison qu'allait boire Faust en élixir de jeunesse. Faust avale le breuvage magique et se métamorphose en un séduisant jeune homme. Les deux complices quittent le cabinet à la recherche de la belle Marguerite.

Acte II

Le deuxième acte se déroule aux portes de la ville où s'est établi un champ de foire. Des soldats, des étudiants, des jeunes filles et des femmes plus mûres sont tous en train de se divertir. L'un des soldats, le jeune Valentin, demande à son ami Siébel de veiller sur sa sœur Marguerite pendant qu'il sera à la guerre. Siébel s'y engage et le chœur entonne une nouvelle chanson tapageuse. C'est alors que survient Méphistophélès. Il chante l'air du veau d'or, à la louange de l'or et de la cupidité et fait apparaître du vin dans de vieux tonneaux, fournissant de l'alcool à tout le monde. Il parle avec légèreté de Marguerite, ce qui irrite son frère ; Valentin tire son épée, mais celle-ci se brise avant d'atteindre Méphistophélès. Valentin comprend qu'il a affaire au diable et utilise la garde de son arme pour lui opposer un signe de croix. Resté seul un instant, Méphistophélès est rejoint par Faust et un groupe de villageois qui se lancent dans une valse énergique. Marguerite paraît : Faust lui témoigne toute son admiration et lui offre le bras, mais elle refuse pudiquement et sort.

Acte III

Le troisième acte a pour décor le jardin de Marguerite. Siébel, qui est épris de la jeune fille, vient lui apporter un bouquet de fleurs. Faust et Méphistophélès entrent.

Voyant les fleurs de Siébel, Faust envoie Méphistophélès chercher un plus beau cadeau pour Marguerite. Faust chante son affection pour la jeune fille, dont il trouve la pudeur irrésistible. Méphistophélès revient avec un coffret de bijoux ; ils le déposent devant la porte de Marguerite à côté du bouquet de Siébel. Marguerite rentre chez elle, se demandant qui était le jeune homme rencontré un peu plus tôt. Elle chante la ballade du roi de Thulé et, découvrant les fleurs et les bijoux, se pare de ces derniers, qui l'enchantent. Dame Marthe, sa gouvernante, lui dit que ce présent doit lui venir d'un riche admirateur. Méphistophélès et Faust reviennent. Le premier se met à faire la cour à Marthe, permettant ainsi à Faust de soustraire Marguerite, encore extrêmement intimidée, à la vigilance de sa gouvernante. Ils échangent un court baiser avant que la jeune fille ne se ressaisisse et renvoie Faust. Celui-ci est maintenant persuadé que son projet est un échec et il décide d'y renoncer, mais il est retenu par Méphistophélès, qui le somme d'écouter Marguerite. Elle s'est mise à la fenêtre de sa chambre et souhaite que Faust revienne vite la voir. À ces mots, Faust se montre aussitôt et lui prend la main. Elle pose la tête sur son épaule pendant que Méphistophélès se moque cyniquement de la fragilité humaine.

Acte IV

Le quatrième acte débute dans la chambre de Marguerite, qui a eu un enfant de Faust. Elle est ostracisée par la société et a été abandonnée par son amant. Assise à son rouet, elle est sûre de ne plus jamais revoir Faust. Siébel essaie de lui remonter le moral. Le décor change et montre une place. Des soldats rentrent de la guerre, et Valentin est parmi eux. Quand il demande des nouvelles de sa sœur à Siébel, celui-ci se montre évasif ; inquiet, Valentin se précipite chez Marguerite.

Alors qu'il se trouve dans la maison, Méphistophélès, accompagné de Faust, chante une sérénade narquoise sous la fenêtre de la jeune fille. Valentin sort et exige de savoir qui a séduit sa sœur. Faust dégage son épée et les deux hommes se battent. Entravé par Méphistophélès, Valentin est mortellement blessé par Faust. En mourant, Valentin renie Marguerite et la maudit à tout jamais. La scène montre maintenant l'intérieur d'une cathédrale. Marguerite essaie de prier, mais elle est d'abord distraite par Méphistophélès puis par un chœur de démons. Elle achève enfin ses prières, mais Méphistophélès la maudit et elle perd connaissance.

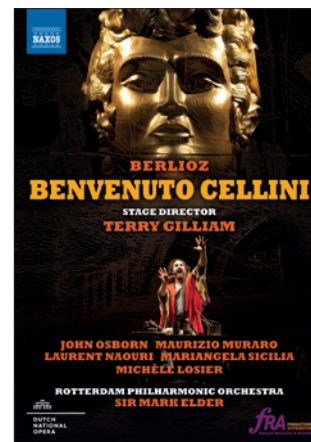
Acte V

Le cinquième et dernier acte s'ouvre sur les étendues sauvages des montagnes du Harz. Pendant que retentit un chœur de farfadets, Faust et Méphistophélès apparaissent. Ils sont environnés de sorcières. Faust essaie de fuir mais Méphistophélès le transporte à un plantureux banquet peuplé de courtisanes de l'Antiquité. Faust croit voir Marguerite et l'appelle. Alors que Faust et Méphistophélès repartent, les montagnes se referment autour d'eux et les sorcières reviennent. Un dernier changement de décor montre l'intérieur d'une prison. Marguerite a été incarcérée pour avoir tué son enfant. Avec l'aide de Méphistophélès, Faust s'est procuré les clés de sa cellule. Marguerite s'éveille en entendant la voix de Faust et tous deux se chantent leur amour. Faust lui demande de s'enfuir avec lui. Méphistophélès surgit et essaie de persuader Faust et Marguerite de le suivre. Marguerite résiste et invoque la protection divine. Désespéré, Faust tombe à genoux en prière tandis que l'âme de Marguerite monte au ciel.

David Patmore

Traduction française de David Ylla-Somers

Also available



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The international success of *Faust* after its premiere in 1859 completely overshadowed all of Gounod's subsequent operas. He had known Goethe's masterpiece for two decades and brought to the text his gifts for memorable melody and rich orchestration. Added to this, the plot of Faust's ageing and the heroine Marguerite's redemption, offered the opportunity for the most spectacular stage effects. Heard here in its 1864 London version with an additional air and without spoken dialogue or ballet, *Faust* represents 19th-century French opera at its peak.

**Charles
GOUNOD**

(1818–1893)

Faust

Opera in five acts (1858) (London version, 1864)

Libretto by Jules Barbier (1825–1901) and Michel Carré (1822–1872)

Additional text by Onésime Pradère (1825–1891)

Sung in French

Faust Aljaž Farasin, Tenor
Méphistophélès Carlo Colombara, Bass
Marguerite Marjukka Tepponen, Soprano
Valentin Lucio Gallo, Baritone
Siébel Diana Haller, Mezzo-soprano
Marthe Ivana Sribljan, Mezzo-soprano
Brander (Wagner) Waltteri Torikka, Baritone

Croatian National Theatre in Rijeka – Opera Orchestra and Choir

Chorus Master: Nicoletta Olivieri

Ville Matvejeff

1–4 Act I	24:56	10–20 Act III	51:13	31–36 Act V	29:02
5–9 Act II	27:15	21–30 Act IV	46:13	Playing Time	2:58:40

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