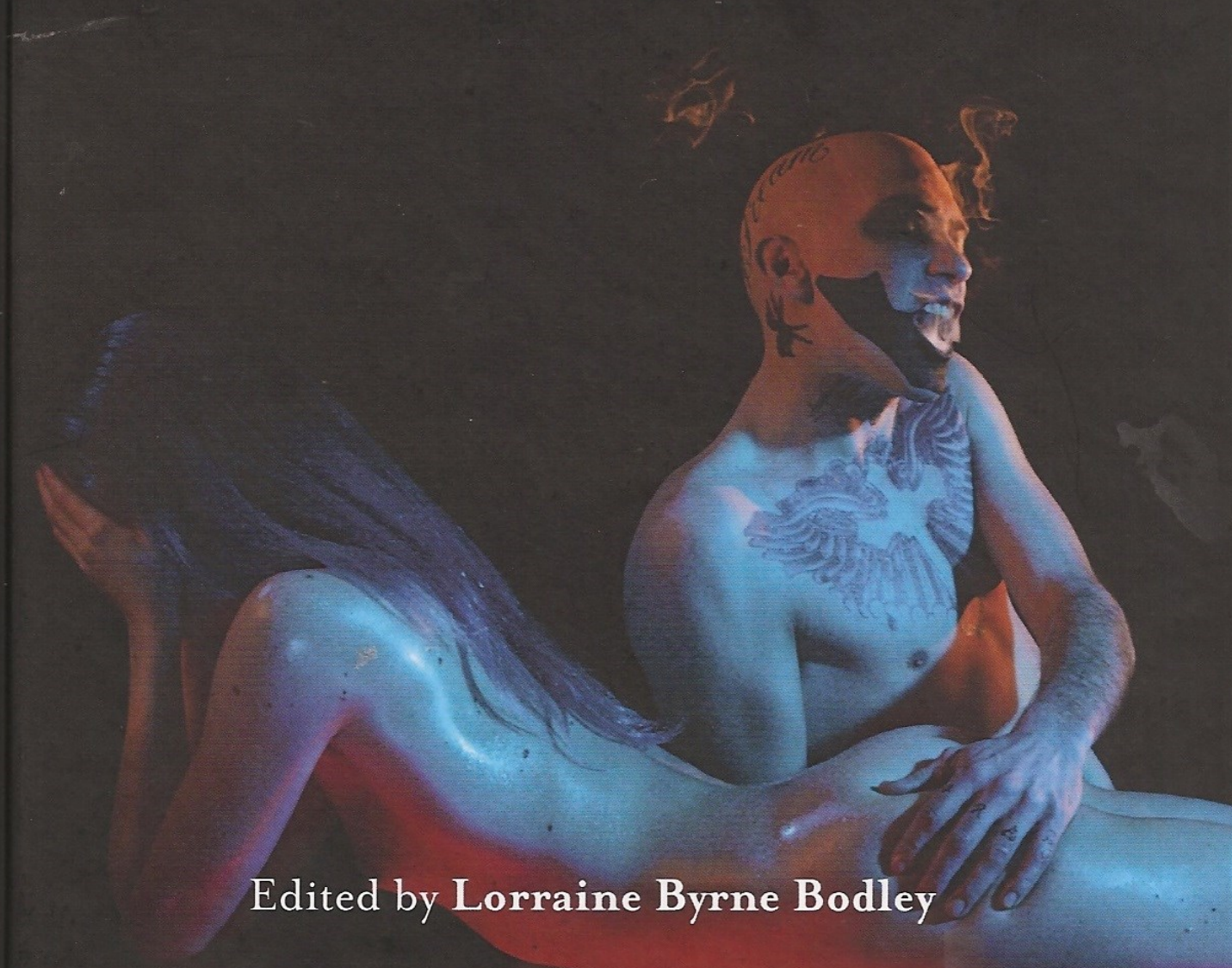


MUSIC IN GOETHE'S *FAUST*

Goethe's *Faust*
in Music



Edited by Lorraine Byrne Bodley

‘Devilishly good’

Rudolf Volz’s Rock Opera Faust and ‘Event Culture’

Waltraud Maierhofer

The Musical is the only form of music theatre that consistently attracts audiences to theatres without public subvention. Since the 1980s there has been a global commercial ‘musical boom’ from which Germany poses no exception. With productions of new musicals (especially those by Andrew Lloyd Webber) it was possible to have venues sold out for years with one and the same piece. Towards the end of the century this boom caught up with Goethe’s *Faust*: the German mathematician turned free-lance composer Rudolf Volz (born 1956 in Ulm) compiled the lyrics and wrote the music for *Faust – Die Rockoper* [Faust – The Rock Opera]: twenty-five numbers based on text from Goethe’s drama. The piece was first performed in 1997 in Ulm by a ‘free group of artists from Southern Germany’ with experience of rock music and recorded on CD.¹ Opening in 2005, a professional management company (the Berlin ‘Event and Management Agency’ *Manthey Event*) brought the show to different theatres. *Faust – Die Rockoper* is one of several early twenty-first-century musical realizations of Goethe’s *Faust*. It has already attracted some scholarly attention, albeit only among English-language *Faust* scholarship. In his 2004 article on *Faust* as rock opera, Paul M. Malone gives an overview of the work, its musical background and compositions.² In another article he places Volz’s production within several adaptations of the *Faust* theme or ‘Faustian Rock Musicals’.³ The following will therefore focus on aspects of marketing, performance and reception. It is particularly in these areas

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- 1 *Faust: die Rockoper* <www.faust-rockoper.de> (last accessed, as for all following websites unless noted otherwise, in April 2012). This page replaced the earlier one: <www.faust.cc>. Michael Wagner was musical director of the *Faust* project from the beginning (according to <micha-wagner.eu>); on his website he names not only himself, but also Matthias Kohl and Uwe Rublack as co-composers, and for *Faust II* Uwe Rodi.
 - 2 Paul M. Malone, ‘“You’ll Always Be the One You are”. *Faust* as Rock Opera’, in *Faust: Icon of Modern Culture*, ed. Osman Durrani (London: Helm, 2004), 263–75.
 - 3 Paul M. Malone, ‘They Sold Their Soul for Rock ‘n’ Roll. Faustian Rock Musicals’, in *International Faust Studies. Adaptation, Reception, Translation*, ed. Lorna Fitzsimmons (London and New York: Continuum, 2008), 216–30.

that the way in which national myths are popularized for the benefit of mass audiences is revealed.

The production announcement promises a 'Spektakel zwischen Rockkonzert, Musical und Volkstheater' [spectacle between rock concert, musical and popular theatre].⁴ In an attempt to reach a young audience, promotional videos on YouTube were part of the advertising.⁵ *Faust II – Die Rockoper* swiftly followed. It had its premiere at the Landestheater in Marburg in 2003.⁶ The music was produced as a set of Audio CDs (Part 1 1997, Part 2 2004, issued together in 2007) and Part I of the show was also released on DVD (2007).⁷ Through select 'original' locations and familiar tourist marketing ideas, the *Faust* performance is enhanced and made into a mini vacation: such as on the Brocken with a short train journey up the mountain, especially on Walpurgis night or at Carnival time; in Leipzig's Auerbach's Cellar restaurant, complete with dinner and an additional 'original scene' adapting the play's 'Auerbach's Cellar' drinking and flight on the barrell scene; or as a summer deal with an open air performance in a Neuruppin lakeside resort.⁸

The organizer promotes both parts of the *Faust* rock opera with the slogan 'Das teuflisch gute Event' [the devilishly good event].⁹ The organizers rely on the flair of the location: Auerbach's Cellar advertises packages with lunches and evening meals – including a 'diabolischen "Rocktail"' [diabolical 'Rocktail'] – to complement the show, an 'event journey' complete with an overnight stay in an exclusive hotel. The website promises that 'Passend zur Aufführung serviert das Team um Küchenchef Sven Hofmann den Gästen himmlische Gaumenfreuden' [in tune with the performance, the team around head chef Sven Hofmann serves the guests heavenly joys for the palate].¹⁰ During the railway journey to the top of the mountain on the 'Mephisto Express' (a train of the company HSB Harzer

4 Promotional leaflet for the performances of 16–24 July 2010 in Weimar.

5 <Youtube.com> 'Faust – Die Rockoper auf dem Brocken', uploaded from Mantheyevent, 7 May 2010 <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WpIPUa-kDqs>>; 'Rockoper Faust Promovideo', uploaded from crocknroll, 3 December 2008 <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LWdBjrlhoiE>>; 'Faust – Die Rockoper 2011 in Auerbachs Keller Leipzig', uploaded from AuerbachsKellerLE, 4 November 2010 <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YF3Hb924aWQ>>. At the time of this article going to print (Dec. 2016), the rock opera Faust is still going strong with regular performances of both parts. There are now more promotional videos and facebook postings available which could not be incorporated into this article.

6 For details on the production history see Malone, 'They Sold Their Soul', 226–7.

7 *Faust – Die Rockoper*, CDs. (Hamburg: Whale Songs Communications, 2004; orig. 1997); *Faust – Die Rockoper* Part 2, 2 Audio CDs (Munich: Sony Music Disc, Hamburg, 2004); *Faust – Die Rockoper*, with original texts of Goethe from *Faust I* and *II* (4 CD set, composer Rudolf Volz ([Dornstadt:] Xdra-Production; Membran, 2007)); *Faust – Die Rockoper*, directed by Rudolf Volz, performers Alban Gaya, Falko Illing, Miriam Riemann and Paul Miller, DVD recording of feature film and specials ([Dornstadt:] Xdra Production, 2007).

8 'Partnerlinks' on the website *Faust – die Rockoper*.

9 Thus in the event announcements <www.nordhausen-tourist.de>.

10 Quoted from "'Faust – Die Rockoper' kommt erneut nach Leipzig', <Onlinepresse.info>, OPI Pressedienst für Pressemitteilungen, 28 June 2010.

Schmalspurbahnen, Wernigerode) the elated mood is enhanced by shots of high-proof 'Mephisto-Tropfen' [Mephisto Drops] and by hostesses dressed as witches.¹¹ The musician Jürgen Pfeffer suggests in his interview on the bonus DVD that the visitors to these events are enthusiastic as a rule, even without such additional inducements.¹²

Audience participation is encouraged. At one of these events, which I visited in July 2010 in Weimar, the audience, in unison, participated in the scene 'Easter Walk', which is not on the recording: after Faust's words 'Hier bin ich Mensch!' [Here I am human] the audience chanted the completion of the verse 'Hier darf ich's sein!' [Here I can be!]. A Brandenburg tour operator promised for *Faust II* fabulous outfits and effective stage sets and props for a heightened theatrical experience and an even more total sensation than in *Faust I*, and to bring the spectator on Faust's journey into the illusory grand world from antiquity to the middle ages and modernity, between dream and utopia, between war and creativity, and reaching as far as divine redemption.¹³

The success of the 'Event' is seen in its continuing performances. In 2010 the first part went on tour throughout Germany. According to its own website, *Faust – Die Rockoper*, there have since been forty to fifty shows per year and a total of nearly 500 performances since the premiere.¹⁴ The texts are available in English, Spanish, Italian, French and Japanese and can be used as surtitles. The DVD, with subtitles in German, English, French, Spanish and Italian, is designed for a broad international audience and can also be used for teaching *Faust* to non-German audiences. The *Specials*-DVD contains a 'Carnival' scene as a preview of *Faust 2* and interviews with the composer and librettist Rudolf Volz and the main actors and musicians.

The marketing clearly prefers the term 'Rockoper' to that of 'Musical', though catchy pop sounds and lyricism dominate, especially in Margarete's songs. In Mephisto's 'heavy to death metal' rock (according to the product description of the DVD) the texts are still astoundingly comprehensible. Spoken text (all lines from the play, but most severely edited and rearranged) advances the plot. Website and recordings stress that 'the text and plot are those of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's original', though much abridged.¹⁵ According to the website advertisement, not only is the rock opera *Faust* 'hochaktuell und die meist gespielte FAUST-Interpretation (mit Goethe-Texten) aller Zeiten' [highly topical and the most performed *Faust* interpretation (with Goethe's own text) of

11 Reproduced on <hsb-wr.de>, according to a report by Sabine Kempfer: 'Rauf auf den Berg, um den Brocken zu rocken', *Goslarsche Zeitung*, 26 February 2010. The train company is a promotional partner of the musical.

12 Statement by Jürgen Pfeffer in *Faust – Die Rockoper*, Bonus DVD.

13 Three-day packages combining hotel, train, and show are available on many websites, including the travel agency Ameropa (<<https://www.ameropa.de/bahnreisen/bahner-lebnisreisen/in-europa/in-deutschland/faust-die-rockoper-auf-dem-brocken>>).

14 Website *Faust – die Rockoper* (last accessed 13 December 2013). See also the internet page of Manthey Event, whose Faust promotional merchandise is advertised: <www.manthey-event.de>. Following on from this success, the company has marketed similar musicals.

15 See Malone, 'You'll always be the one', 268–9.

all time], but it also claims to set 'ganz neue Maßstäbe im Bereich der Rock-/Pop-Unterhaltung mit klassisch-literarischen Texten' [completely new standards for rock-pop-entertainment with classical literary texts]. On the pedagogy link the following is addressed to teachers:

FAUST – Die Rockoper ist viel mehr als 'nur' ein historisches Bühnenstück im Rock-Gewand, es ist auch eine Lernhilfe für Schüler, welche den im Original doch sehr schwer verdaulichen Text oft als belastend empfinden. Durch die *Rockoper* wird ihnen Goethes Klassiker auf vergnügliche Weise mit der für Jugendliche nötigen Unverkrampttheit nahegebracht und trägt somit dazu bei, die im *FAUST* transportierte Moral und den ewig währenden Konflikt zwischen Gut und Böse zu vermitteln.¹⁶

[*FAUST – THE ROCK OPERA* is much more than 'just' a historical theatre piece in rock costume; it is also a teaching aid for pupils who often find the text of the original burdensome, difficult to digest. The rock opera communicates Goethe's classic to young audiences in a relaxed fashion and thus contributes to conveying the drama's message and the everlasting conflict between good and evil.]

Both DVD and CD recordings contain extensive booklets with complete lyrics as well as short summaries and photos of every scene. In addition, the website offers a didactic guide/compendium and there are excerpts from fan mail testifying to the musical's popularity with the younger generation. The pedagogical impetus behind the project of bringing *Faust* to young people and other types of audience is worthy of recognition. The fact that there are regularly performances for schools suggests that the rock opera does in fact reach young audiences.

The Production

The most important fact to consider when evaluating *Faust – Die Rockoper* is that the scale of its production is low-budget, easily transportable, and overall very modest in comparison with many major long-running musicals. The recording is not a high-profile film musical but a recording of the stage production. A look at the set, props, and costumes will show this.

The performers had not been stars before they were hired for the production, and they are still low-key as regards their visibility in the media and on social media pages. The major roles are performed by Alban Gaya (Faust; also the voice of the Lord in the scene 'Prologue in Heaven'), Falko Illing (Mephisto),¹⁷ and Miriam Riemann (Grete,¹⁸ Helena).

16 <<http://www.faust-rockoper.de/paeda.html>>.

17 See his webpage, <www.falkoilling.de>. He was previously a member of the hard rock bands, Beast (1986) and Wildthinx (1991).

18 Listed as such in both DVD and CD booklets, not as 'Margarete' or 'Gretchen'. Likely part of the attempt to modernize. In the English subtitles, she is called Marguerite.

Several of the other eight ensemble members of Part I perform multiple roles, such as Conny Schwediewie as the Earth Spirit, the student, the witch in the kitchen, Marthe and a witch in the Walpurgis Night scene. The booklet for part II lists an additional seventeen performers. The band consists of no more than four members (keyboards, Uwe Rodi; guitar, Herb Bucher and Christian Singer [in part II, guitar and bass]; Michael Wagner, percussion, Volker Schreiber). The musicians are in full sight on the stage, only a few steps from the action. In most of the production they wear black T-shirts with large Goethe portraits, evoking a rock concert atmosphere. In several scenes, such as the final one, they wear minimalist costumes and fill in as extras. The stage is nearly empty; there are only very few props. By evoking the look of cardboard placeholders they add a humorous, extemporaneous touch. Bold coloured lighting and fog help to create a dramatic atmosphere. Plot and character development are adapted (i.e. severely reduced) to suit the format, as an overview of the scenes and songs of *Faust I* will illustrate.

Mephisto dominates the production. He wears colours traditionally associated with the devil, namely a long black cloak lined in striking red, and red shoes softening his Heavy Metal look. With his massive mane of dark blonde waves, white face paint with black lips and bat design around the eyes, studded leather pants, and bold skull print on his shirt, he is not only visually reminiscent of the American rock band KISS, in particular Gene Simmons, 'The Demon',¹⁹ but he also gets to sing the most 'skillfully executed hard rock songs based on solid riffs', to cite Paul Malone's description of the compositions.²⁰

In the recording (as in performances so far), the composer and producer Rudolf Volz appears and, dressed in faintly eighteenth-century fashion so as to indicate that he is meant to represent both the theatre director and the author Goethe, recites a part of the 'Vorspiel auf dem Theater' [Prelude on the Stage], addressing the audience. In the opening scene from 'Prologue in Heaven', Mephisto introduces himself and Faust, fiddling and singing 'Tierischer als jedes Tier' [Beastlier than any beast]²¹ while the scene is bathed in red light and fog. Two female dancers dressed in black bikini tops, leggings and boots, adorned with carnevalesque red devil horns and red tripods, perform a devil worship. The costumes convey a sense of self-irony and reflect a playful use of symbolism and cultural iconography. In the following 'Wette' [wager] between Mephisto and the Lord, the spotlight is on Mephisto, while the Lord is only to be heard. In the next scene Faust appears on a bicycle, and his study consists of a few greenish shelves with books, a lab coat, a skull, a desk, and a chair. Lounging in his chair, Faust confesses his despair and his surrender to magic. He wears his long dark hair in a ponytail but otherwise looks mousy and nerdy in his muted

19 The reference to KISS was pointed out by Volz himself; see also Malone, 'You'll always be', 266.

20 *Ibid.*, 269–70.

21 This scene is available in English on YouTube, 'Beastlier than a Beast': <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kz-lOayab4A>> (posted 12 November 2008, last accessed 10 December 2013).



Figure 18.1 Screen Shot 'Faust in his study' from *Faust – Die Rockoper*, directed by Rudolf Volz, performers Alban Gaya, Falko Illing, Miriam Riemann and Paul Millen, DVD recording, [Dornstadt] Xdra Production, 2007. Used by kind permission.

and oversized contemporary clothes, a book worm with large, round glasses and comfortable shoes, an aged hippie more than a rocker, though in most of his songs he shares with Mephisto the rock sound with its massive expression of rebelliousness. In 'Mondenschein' ('Weh! Steck ich in dem Kerker noch?') [moonshine (God, how these walls strangle my soul)] he melancholily addresses the moon as his only friend, and the 'slower form of the so-called "heavy ballad"', '[c]ulminating in an orgasmic guitar solo',²² conveys his deep longing.

When Faust evokes the Earth Spirit on the computer, she appears as a moving and flickering dancer, wearing a pointed fairy hat with veil, messy hair, glittering light dance top and full skirt, accompanied by three more dancers. Her song 'Erdegeist' ('Wo bist du, Faust, des Stimme...') [Earth Spirit, (Where are you, Faust, whose voice . . .)] expresses her character with an 'earthy rock boogie'.²³

Rejected by the Earth Spirit, Faust then gives in to despair ('Das Leben mir verhasst' [Damned be Mammon]) and reaches for a large bottle of poison. Death approaches him in the guise of a hooded monk with a skull in place of a face who carries the common attribute of death, a scythe. His miming action is interrupted by the 'Geistergesang' [Song of the Spirits], ('Schwindet, ihr dunklen / Wölbungen droben!' [Now let the blue / Of the ether, gaze in gently!]) Here Mephisto introduces himself as 'Das Böse' [Evil]: ('Ich bin der Geist, der stets verneint!' [I am the spirit which endlessly denies!]), offers his services for a new way of life, and they seal the deal with blood ('Du bleibst doch immer' [You are just what you are]),²⁴ surrounded again by the dancing demons. The wager itself and its conditions are not fleshed out. An oversized pump with which Mephisto draws blood from Faust creates a humorous effect and is at the same time designed to be visible in a large venue. When Mephisto plays his hoax with the student ('Grau ist alle Theorie' [Grey is all theorizing]) – as well as later when he visits Marthe – he exchanges his cape for

22 Malone, 'You'll always be', 270.

23 *Ibid.*, 271.

24 See the analysis of this song in *ibid.*, 268–9.

a red jacket and wears a baseball cap, again adapting a relaxed contemporary look. Mephisto takes Faust to the witches' kitchen on the bicycle, over blue light pentagrams swirling on the floor. Set and costumes for the scene are reminiscent of children's book illustrations: the hunchbacked witch with pointed hat and ragged dress and her animal-masked helpers dance around a pot hanging over a stylized open fire as she sings her formula for the magic potion, 'Hexen-Einmaleins' [The Witches, one-by-one]. Faust's transformation happens while the camera is on Mephisto, and it is simple enough: he steps forth with his long hair down, a glittery green jacket and wide-brimmed hat, which signal his regained youthfulness and sense of adventure, and he jumps around uncontrollably so as to show off his energy and rejuvenation. After the witch sings her homage to science, 'Wissenschaft', and the apparition of Helena bathed in bright light, Faust and his servant drive off on a scooter decorated with aluminium foil.

Nearly one hour into the opera (of just over two hours in total) the Margarete plot begins, with the young woman receiving a blessing from a hooded monk, accompanied by organ sounds. (In this scene, the musicians also don hooded cowls.) Her outfit is simple and contemporary. She has braided blonde hair, walks barefoot and wears a simple light blue fitted peasant's blouse and knee-length skirt. On her way home she refutes Faust's attempt at conversing with her, and in her room she sings *König in Thule* while undressing to a camisole and boxer shorts. A plain wooden shelf and cupboard, an undersized bed with duvet, a Madonna statue and a candle are enough to suggest to the audience her environment. She then finds a small chest with 'treasures' in her cabinet ('Am Golde hängt doch alles' [All you want is ... gold]), oversized fashion accessories that can be seen from a distance. In the next scene Mephisto is lying in a park, daydreaming of Grete; on an oversized, boxy mobile phone he receives a call from Mephisto, who shouts to Faust his anger over jewels lost to the church ('Kein Teufel wär' [... weren't the devil myself]). In the next scene Grete brings the new treasures to her neighbour Marthe, and Mephisto testifies to her husband's death ('Ihr Mann ist tot' [Her husband is dead]). On a park bench under a street light with a few flowers Faust and Grete meet again, the flower oracle convinces the young woman that she is loved by Faust and he joins her in a duet ('Er liebt mich' [He loves me]). Back in her room she continues to think about him ('Meine Ruhe ist hin' [My peace is gone]) and during their next *tete-a-tete* confronts him about his companion Mephisto ('Heimlich Grauen' [Evil spell]).

Very different from Goethe's play, the rock opera is explicit about the sexual encounter in a mimed scene, a concession to today's consuetudinary exposure in the media, albeit to a modest extent. Volz's adaptation includes Grete giving sleeping drops to her mother; the mother – mimed by a male actor – is shown as very old, wearing a white wig and a stereotypical old woman's vest. She dies – still in the spotlight – while Gretchen goes to bed, where she is joined by Faust under an enormous duvet. The accompaniment repeats the melody of 'Er liebt mich' while intercourse is suggested. The production does not shy away from kitsch elements: here it is the rooster that crows before Faust leaves and Grete

discovers her mother dead in her chair. Again omitting important scenes of the tragedy, Grete's lament, 'Wie wehe' [What woe], and her prayer to the Madonna (both spoken) follow immediately, here in her room rather than in the cathedral, and hooded monks circle her while a distorted voice, seemingly coming from all sides, accuses and terrifies her.

The recording cuts to darkness and dense fog. Faust and Mephisto, flooded in blue light, are making their way up the Brocken ('Zum Brocken' [To the Broken Mountain]), where they are received by a group of witches in fantastic costumes around a firepit with an artificial fire ('Hexenelement' [Witches' element]). While the 'Domina' witch and Mephisto sing the slightly raunchy 'Walpurgisnacht' ('Einst hatt ich einen schönen Traum' [Once I had a lovely dream]), they are at the centre of an erotically charged dance by three young women in bikinis with animal head masks and another one in a shiny lizard costume, observed by a Santa persiflage with long nose and two further extras in a Renaissance costume and a modern business suit respectively.²⁵ The Walpurgis Night scene is the most swarming one of the production, with the most people on stage, dancing, running and singing; the dance comes to an abrupt end when Grete, now in a ripped striped shirtdress and with her hair down, appears a few steps away in a beam of white light, and Faust reminisces about Grete ('Phantombild Grete' [Magic image of Grete]).

In the final scenes a divider with gigantic spiderwebs throwing shadows on the ground indicates the prison, with the guitarists standing in front of it donning hangmen's masks. Only in her spoken lament does Grete, in the same sexy yet fake prison look, mention the infanticide for which she has been or will be condemned to die, before she sings the final song, 'Meine Mutter hab ich umgebracht' [I sent my mother to her grave], in which the murder of her mother, fond memories of Faust, anticipation and acceptance of the execution dominate.²⁶

In his analysis of the pact song Paul Malone has pointed out how Volz has manipulated Goethe's verses to 'adapt the text to the form of the popular song ('Born to be wild'), including abridging lines or repeating sections of lines [...] and transposing or interpolating lines or whole passages'.²⁷ It is noteworthy that Volz decided not to put the final lines of the play to music, to end not bombastically with a finale, but in a quiet way with spoken words only. The final dialogue is reduced to a bare minimum and rushes to the well-known last words, eliminating Margarete's account of the murder, her insights into her feelings, her guilt and responsibility, her inner conflict, struggle and decisionmaking. It consists of no more than the following few lines (abridged lines are indicated by an asterisk). Faust and Mephisto approach Grete, who is kneeling next to her 'prison wall', and the latter cuts the web with an exaggerated gesture so that Faust can enter (the inserted stage directions are not Goethe's, but related to the performance):

25 Malone's description of an earlier performance varies slightly; see *ibid.*, 266.

26 The translations of song titles/beginnings provided are the ones used in the subtitles.

27 *Ibid.*, 268.

Figure 18.2 Screen Shot
'Grete in Prison' from *Faust*
– *Die Rockoper*, directed by
Rudolf Volz, performers
Alban Gaya, Falko
Illing, Miriam Riemann
and Paul Millen, DVD
recording, [Dornstadt] Xdra
Production, 2007. Used by
kind permission.



FAUST: Still, still. Ich komme, Dich zu befreien.	4424
Komm, folge mir!	4498*
GRETE: Und bist du's denn? Bist du's auch gewiß?	4501
FAUST: Ich bin's. Komm mit.	4470*, 4479*
GRETE <i>wendet sich ab</i> : Fasse mich nicht so mörderisch an!	4577
Sonst hab ich dir ja alles zulieb getan.	4578
FAUST: O, wär ich nie geboren.	4596
MEPHISTO <i>tritt heran</i> : Auf, oder ihr seid verloren.	4597
GRETE: Der! Der! Schick ihn fort!	4601
Was will der an dem heiligen Ort?	4602
Er will mich.	4603
FAUST: Du sollst leben!	4604
GRETE <i>ist auf die Knie gefallen, klammert sich an das Netz</i> :	
Gericht Gottes! Dir hab ich mich übergeben.	4605
MEPHISTO: <i>winkt Faust zu sich</i>	
FAUST: Komm! Komm! Ich lasse Dich mit ihr im Stich.	4606
GRETE: Dein bin ich Vater, rette mich!	4607
Ihr Engel, ihr heiligen Scharen,	4608
Lagert euch umher, mich zu bewahren!	4609
<i>Sie blickt noch einmal zu Faust um</i>	
Heinrich! Mir graut's vor dir.	4610
<i>Grete steht auf, geht zu Mephisto, der seinen Umhang über sie legt; sie bricht zusammen und bleibt am Boden liegen.</i>	
MEPHISTO <i>triumphierend mit Blick zum Himmel</i> : Sie ist gerichtet.	4611
STIMME: Ist gerettet.	

[FAUST: Quiet! Quiet! I've come to set you free!

Come, follow me!

GRETE: And is it you? Is it you indeed?

FAUST: Yes, its I! Come with me!

GRETE: With murderous hands don't touch me!

After all, I did everything else you asked!

FAUST: Oh, if only I had not been born!
 MEPHISTO: Come on, or you are lost.
 GRETE: He! He! Send him away!
 What does he want in this holy place?
 He wants me.
 FAUST: You shall live.
 GRETE: Judgement of God! I give myself to you!
 MEPHISTO: Come! Come! I shall abandon you with her!
 GRETE: Oh father, save me, I am yours.
 Oh holy angels,
 Surround me, protect me.
 Henry! You frighten me.
 MEPHISTO: She is condemned.
 VOICE: She is redeemed.²⁸

Strangely, Grete seems already dead or unconscious, sparing her the deep fear with which she calls after Faust in Goethe's last line ('Heinrich, Heinrich!' l. 4614). The audience – now eager to applaud and leave – is left not with Faust and Mephisto taking off together, but with a last sleazy smile by Mephisto.

According to Malone, most of the songs by Mephisto and Faust are 'skilfully executed hard rock songs based on solid riffs'.²⁹ He describes the basics of hard rock:

[T]he use of keyboards, and particularly the sound of the Hammond organ, in the score of *Faust* recalls Deep Purple, while the electric guitars make use of such well-tried effects as distortion, compression, phasing/flanging, the vibrato unit (also known as the 'tremolo arm' or 'whammy bar'), and the 'wah-wah' pedal (a foot-controlled band pass filter) with its Jimi Hendrix associations, in a manner common to both Deep Purple and Scorpions [...].³⁰

In the first half of *Faust – Die Rockoper* only Mephisto, Faust, the Earth Spirit and the witch have songs in slight variations of this style. In contrast, in the second half Margarete's (here Grete's) innocence and childlikeness are expressed in more formulaic patterns of pop songs. Malone characterizes them as 'folk-rock stylings' combined with 'the dynamics of the heavy ballad' (*König in Thule*), a 'rather dreary slow rock waltz with a slight country-pop flavour' ('Meine Ruh ist hin'), or a 'slow power ballad' ('Meine Mutter hab' ich umgebracht'), and he posits that select songs are derivations from a 'Falco disco tune' ('Am Golde hängt doch alles') with an excessively sweet effect and from one of the highlights of *Jesus Christ Superstar* ('Er liebt mich').³¹

28 The English translation here follows Volz's subtitles. It is not always accurate.

29 Malone, 'You'll always be', 269–70.

30 *Ibid.*, 267.

31 *Ibid.*, 270–71.

Stylistically the rock opera mixes the *Faust* classical theatre tradition with rock and pop music in the style of the 1970s. The composer Volz does not entirely live up to his own claim of being up to date in his work.³² The music would appeal mainly to people whose musical taste was formed in the 1970s. Malone also claims that the composition is an odd regression, an essentially nostalgic view of the 1970s and, instead of taking up the musical taste of the youngest generation of *Faust* readers, i.e. instead of being radically contemporary, its music corresponds more to the taste of the parents' and teachers' generation than to that of teenagers.³³ It is probably the parents' and teachers' generation that shares the nostalgia of the composer and makes the whole project lucrative. In addition, there has been a revival of interest in music of the '60s, '70s and '80s which the younger generation shares, and that plays into the musical's success. The rock opera is, by its very nature, much more of a museum piece than Goethe's text ever was.³⁴ In his DVD interview the composer Volz indeed admits that his *Faust* came 'kulturgeschichtlich 25 Jahre zu spät' [25 years too late in terms of cultural history] but says it still represented a good expression of the spirit of the 1990s.³⁵ Even the term 'rock opera' is rooted in the 1980s and has since fallen out of fashion.³⁶

German *Eventkultur*

Towards the end of the twentieth century in Germany Goethe had already become an *Event*. According to Margit Raders, the 250th birthday of the 'Dichterfürst' [Prince of Poets] was celebrated with

hochkarätigen Staraufführungen seines Werks [...] – eine Event-Kultur, die mit Peter Steins Mammutinszenierung des *Faust I* und *Faust II* im Jahre 2000 ihren krönenden Abschluß fand

[top-flight star performances of his work – an event culture which, in the year 2000, found its crowning conclusion with Peter Steins's mammoth staging of *Faust I* and *Faust II*].³⁷

32 On his website the composer and librettist affirms: 'Faithful to the intention, but an up-to-date and comprehensible version'; <rudolf-volz.de. Rudolf Volz>.

33 See Malone, 'They Sold Their Soul', 227: 'essentially a nostalgic vision', 'odd musical regression'.

34 *Ibid.*: 'already in its conception, his rock opera is more a museum piece than Goethe's original.'

35 Statement by Dr Rudolf Volz, in *Faust – Die Rockoper*. Bonus DVD.

36 Elizabeth L. Wollman, *The Theater Will Rock. A History of the Rock Musical. From Hair to Hedwig* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006), 124.

37 Margit Raders, 'Der Titel in der Faust-Tradition. Konventionalität, Marginalität und Intertextualität', in *Titel, Text, Kontext. Randbezirke des Textes. Festschrift für Arnold Rothe*, ed. Arnold Rothe, Jochen Mecke and Susanne Heiler (Berlin: Galda & Wilch, 2000), 73–106, here 73.

The concept of 'Event culture' became established over the first decade of this century in German everyday language and in scholarly discussion. Even the concept of organizing and marketing cultural productions as hip 'events', shows up in media headlines and book titles.³⁸ The event culture trend is international and has penetrated even religious and relatively private occasions such as weddings and birthdays. 'Event' is also a concept aimed at selling history and art and also making religious occasions more attractive.³⁹ There is a considerable feel-good factor associated with it, which the sociologist Gerhard Schulze has analysed in his study *Streifzüge durch die Eventkultur* [Prowls through Event Culture].⁴⁰ There are also psychological studies devoted to this trend.⁴¹ In the world of consultants, event organisers and manuals devoted to staging memorable occasions, the term and concept have become common currency,⁴² and even cultural studies go to battle for the arts under this banner.⁴³ Of course, event culture has also been sharply criticized. The economics journalist Klaus Werle considers a cultural event that is staged and marketed to be a form or extension of economic optimization using the tools of mass culture: one's reality is perceived as imperfect, whereas the 'event's' aesthetically impeccable appearance conveys the illusion of perfection. Any such event must surpass the previous one in order to be perceived as equally convincing and intense.⁴⁴

Musical tourism in particular, promoted by intensive marketing and collaboration with hotels, etc., has been developed into a lucrative industry, in Germany especially since the premiere of *Cats* in Hamburg in 1986. While many bemoan the decline of music culture in favour of commerce, critics such as Günter Bartosch defend the musical as an art form that combines art with commerce.⁴⁵ In addition, musicals have not only led to the construction of dedicated venues or to the adaptation of existing buildings (a good example is the *Starlight Express Theater* in Bochum), but they are being increasingly performed in public theatres, filling these houses and thus cross-subsidising other productions.⁴⁶ This applies also to *Faust – Die Rockoper* as discussed above.

38 Ronald Hitzler, *Eventisierung. Drei Fallstudien zum marketingstrategischen Massenspaß* (Wiesbaden: VS-Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2011).

39 Julian Blomann, *Geschichte verkaufen. Eventkultur als Arbeitsfeld* (Saarbrücken: VDM, 2007), and Gerhard Wegner: *Kirche und Eventkultur. Wenn Christentum sich exponiert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 2002).

40 Gerhard Schulze, *Kulissen des Glücks. Streifzüge durch die Eventkultur* (Frankfurt a. M.: Campus, 1999).

41 Wolfgang Schmidbauer and Harald Pühl (eds), *Eventkultur* (Berlin: Leutner, 2007).

42 For example, Ulrich Holzbaur, Edwin Jettinger et al., *Eventmanagement – Veranstaltungen professionell zum Erfolg führen*. 3rd edn (Berlin: Springer, 2006).

43 Erika Fischer-Lichte, Kristiane Hasselmann and Alma-Elisa Kittner (eds), *Kampf der Künste! Kultur im Zeichen von Medienkonkurrenz und Eventstrategien* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2012).

44 Klaus Werle, *Die Perfektionierer. Warum der Optimierungswahn uns schadet – und wer wirklich davon profitiert* (Frankfurt a. M.: Campus, 2010), 184.

45 Günter Bartosch, *Das ist Musical! Eine Kunstform erobert die Welt* (Bottrop: Pomp, 1997), 7.

46 See the chapter on 'Phänomen Musical-Tourismus', in Harald Dettmer, Elisabeth Glück and Thomas Hausmann, *Tourismustypen* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2000), esp. 65. See

The psychologist Wolfgang Schmidbauer explains the attractiveness of mass cultural events with the fact that they offer light entertainment, an exhilarating atmosphere and a vague sense of belonging.⁴⁷ The market expert Klaus Werle emphasizes that this fulfills the individualistic desire to be something special: 'Gerade weil so viele dabei sind, gibt eine Massenveranstaltung das gute Gefühl, bei der richtigen Sache dabei zu sein.' [Precisely because so many people are present, a mass event gives a good feeling of being in the right place.]⁴⁸ Especially in a crowded audience, the rock opera experience employs if not overpowers all senses and at the same time meets each member where he/she is, be it new to rock music or nostalgic, knowledgeable of Goethe's play or a novice. Successfully staged 'events' – according to the Wolfgang Schmidbauer – engage all the senses and in this way build a close relationship experienced as a kind of bond between the spectator and the performance/performers: 'sie stiften Geborgenheit, machen sich zur Ganzheit' [they give security, become a totality].⁴⁹ Schmidbauer finds an explanation for the collective hunger for ever new and bigger 'event' experiences in looser real-life social bonds combined with a flood of information and possibilities with the accompanying pressure to stand out. While it may sound contradictory that a rock musical is perceived as assuring, it is the state of presence and absorption that supports a state of familiarity and safety in spite of otherwise dominating experiences of insecurity and fragmentation.⁵⁰ *Faust – Die Rockoper* as a dinner show with the appeal of the location or as a mini theme park vacation easily overpowers rock music's initial rebellious motivation and impact. The effect is fleeting, though, and thus ironically reflects Faust's unfulfilled striving for the perfect moment.

The event character has thus displaced the existential questions of the drama and the serious implications of the Faustian character and of Margarete's choice. With regard to the combination of the classical *Faust* with rock music and its repackaging as a major entertainment 'event', it must be remembered that it was indeed rock music that originally made the link between art as commerce and art as protest. Of course, the original impetus that linked musical expression of protest contained in rock to its age, its rebelliousness and abandon, has long lost its urgency and cultural relevance.⁵¹ Sociologist Gerhard Schulze posits that what has remained is the 'Wunsch, einfach ein bisschen Spaß zu haben' [wish just to have a bit of fun] and – especially for those who share the experience of protest – 'nostalgische Erinnerungen' [nostalgic memories].⁵²

also Anna Schmittner, *Musical-Tourismus im deutschsprachigen Raum. Hintergründe und Perspektiven für den Tourismus- und Freizeitmarkt* (Saarbrücken: VDM, 2006).

47 See Schmidbauer, 'Vorwort', in Schmidbauer and Pühl, *Eventkultur*, 9.

48 Werle, 'Die Perfektionierer', 184.

49 Wolfgang Schmidbauer, 'Annäherung an den Event', in Schmidbauer and Pühl, *Eventkultur*, 13–39, here 28–9.

50 *Ibid.*, 30.

51 Gerhard Schulze, *Die Erlebnisgesellschaft. Kultursoziologie der Gegenwart*, 8th edn (Frankfurt a. M.: Campus, 1995), 547.

52 *Ibid.*, 547–8.

Reception and Assessment

The pupils' feedback in the form of 'Fanpost' excerpts on the website has clearly been selected for their advertising qualities. They stress positive characteristics of the production such as suspense, atmosphere and relatability. Others point out that they would like to see it again or recommend it as supplement to reading the play.⁵³

There were no reviews of the rock opera *Faust* in any of the major daily and weekly newspapers. This seems to be typical for the genre. On the other hand, there are often short reviews in local papers, which generally are half advertising and often repeat material from the promoters' press releases.⁵⁴ More in keeping with the event character are personal reports on blogs and in the social media. The 'Fanclub' page on *Facebook* currently has 141 members⁵⁵ – which is a small number for a musician or band, even compared to other German musicals such as *Elisabeth*. However, such comments generally do not contain relevant information or analysis of the production. 'Da muss man doch mit dabei sein' [One simply has to have been part of it] reads one typical short commentary on the Facebook page with the announcement of the production at the outdoor theatre Spremberg as a 'Public Event' in June 2012.⁵⁶ This comment reflects the predominance of the shared experience as described above. According to Schmidbauer and Pühl, 'events' generally lack sustainable engagement, depth and objective analysis.⁵⁷ Maybe therein lies the explanation of why the 'high culture' critics and media have ignored the success of *Faust – Die Rockoper*, while the Stein staging of the play, for example, was extensively discussed in the media and subsequently in Goethe scholarship.

On the German *Amazon* website there is only a single reader's evaluation of the DVD, which gives the impression of an authentic, albeit highly naïve, viewer who cites extensively from the text of the DVD advertisement and the website, adding a reference to a 'tolles Live-Erlebnis' [fantastic live experience] and the possibility of humming along.⁵⁸ The few reviews of the audio CDs, apart from

53 <<http://www.faust-rockoper.de/paeda.html>> (accessed 17 December 2013).

54 The most comprehensive of them, including negative points of criticism is Julia Hardt, 'Goethes Texte, rockige Töne und tanzende Teufelinnen. Faust – Die Rockoper auf Deutschlandtour', *blickpunkt musical*, 6 (2010), 28–9. A representative newspaper report is Frauke Adrians, 'So schwül. "Faust – Die Rockoper" als Mephisto-Musical', *TA Thüringer Allgemeine*, 19 July 2010.

55 <<https://www.facebook.com/groups/359712304062545>>.

56 'Da muss man doch mit dabei sein' [One simply has to be a part of it.], Andreas Bränzel, 'Faust – Die Rockoper', Public Event, 1 June 2012 (Facebook post, 8 December 2011). This post is no longer visible on Facebook, though. URL for newer postings is <<https://www.facebook.com/faustdierockoper/>>.

57 Schmidbauer and Pühl, *Eventkultur*, cover text.

58 Reader's review of *Faust – Die Rockoper* (2 DVDs, 2007): Heidi Zengerling, 'Bücherfreak' (Heyerode) <<http://www.amazon.de/review/RUZZ8C6KFS6T4>>, 9 September 2010.

one very critical one, have very little to add.⁵⁹ What testifies to the success of turning *Faust* into a major entertainment event is thus mainly the sheer number of performances and the level of attendance, which, even after six years running, is still high, much higher than for the two millennium productions of the play. Cross-overs into other aspects of the music market have not occurred, but this is not untypical for musicals in general.

In his book *Faust und das Faustische* (1962) Hans Schwerte put forward the hypothesis that in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the ideology of the 'Faustian German' had grown out of Goethe's tragedy, and that only with this ideology's destruction and retraction in World War II was it possible to regain an uncorrupted 'Blick auf das Dichtwerk und dessen eigene Konturen' [view of the poetic work and its own features].⁶⁰ According to Schwerte, *Faust* was first a legend, then a poetic work, then an ideology, and only after the destruction of the ideology could it become a work of literature once more. Many performances and interpretations of *Faust* during the following decades on both sides of the Iron Curtain suggest that ideology did not simply vanish. Literary scholar Willi Jasper, writing precisely at the time of the birth of the *Faust* musical, warned against the return of the Faustian as a symbol of the Germans' self-image.⁶¹ The political scientist Herfried Münkler points out in his monograph on the Germans and their myths that the Faust myth has remained a 'wichtiger Bezug für Selbstreflexion und Selbstperspektivierung' [an important point of reference for self-reflection and self-positioning].⁶² In conclusion, it is therefore appropriate to ask whether the rock opera contributes in some way to such self-interpretation. Based on Schmidbauer's psychological analysis of 'event' culture, the answer has to be negative. The inherent consumer attitude resists analysis and lasting impact. The Rock opera profits from and upholds the remains of the Faust myth but does not engage with its legacy and ideological implications. Moreover, the playful and self-ironical props and the dance choreography often reminiscent of (1980s) music videos, as well as the encouragement of communal chanting of well-known lines undermine critical analysis and reflexion.

The (young) audience of the *Faust* musical does not know, for the most part, of the ideologizing of the Germans as 'Faustian'; they don't attend the musical to gain education or to confirm their belonging to an educated social strata, but – if the above students' feedback may be taken as representative – they are open to

59 See reader's review of *Faust – Die Rockoper* (4 CDs): C. Schade: [translation: I found this "RockOpera" bad and not very entertaining. When I saw the cover I had envisaged an amusing and Rock type approach to opera and Faust. Unfortunately my expectations were dashed. The songs are not at all Rock songs and the voice of the main singer is unsuitable. I can't say much about the plot since, because it was not gripping, I was not fully attentive to it. So: a good idea but badly handled.] <Amazon.de/product-reviews/B000V6UX8C/ref=acr_search_hist_2?ie=UTF8&filterByStar=two_star&showViewpoints=0> (accessed 26 August 2010).

60 Hans Schwerte, *Faust und das Faustische. Ein Kapitel deutscher Ideologie* (Stuttgart: Klett, 1962), 8–12.

61 Willi Jasper, *Faust und die Deutschen* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 1998).

62 Herfried Münkler, *Die Deutschen und ihre Mythen* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 2009), 137.

being entertained by a radical transformation of a play that is still on schools' reading lists. For this very reason a *Faust* rock opera can attract a mass audience in Germany, even if it does not match international musical imports in terms of star quality and professionalism. It transforms prescribed reading and vague mythology into a stylish performance event.

Translated: Dan Farrelly

That Goethe's poetry has proved pivotal for the development of the nineteenth-century Lied has long been acknowledged. Less acknowledged is the seminal impact in musical realms of Goethe's *Faust*, a work which has attracted the attention of composers since the late eighteenth century and played a vital role in the evolution of vocal, operatic and instrumental repertoire in the nineteenth century. From Beethoven to Schubert, Schumann to Wagner and Mahler, and Gounod to Berlioz, a floodtide of musical interpretations of Goethe's *Faust* came into existence; and a broad trajectory can be traced from Zelter's colourful description of the first setting of Goethe's *Faust* to Alfred Schnittke's *Faust* opera (1993).

This book explores the musical origins of Goethe's *Faust* and the musical dimensions of its legacy. It uncovers the musical furore caused by Goethe's *Faust* and considers why his polemical text has resonated so strongly with composers. Bringing together leading musicologists and Germanists, the book addresses a wide range of issues including reception history, the performative challenges of writing music for *Faust*, the impact of the legend on composers' conceptual thinking, and the ways in which it has been used by composers to engage with other contemporary intellectual concepts. Constituting the richest examination to date of the musicality of language and form in Goethe's *Faust* and its musical rendering from the eighteenth to twenty-first centuries, the book will appeal to music, literary and Goethe scholars and students alike.

LORRAINE BYRNE BODLEY is Senior Lecturer in Musicology at Maynooth University and President of the Society for Musicology in Ireland.

"Few legends have inspired artists in modern times as much as Faust, and no interpretation has found richer responses in music than Goethe's *Faust*, a play—or, rather, a complex of several plays—that was itself already imbued with musical elements on various levels. Guided by Lorraine Byrne Bodley, eighteen scholars of literature and music here shed light on the diverse ways in which music is used in Goethe's *Faust* texts (and in their stagings) and on the even more diverse ways in which passages have resonated in musical works, including compositions by Schubert, Berlioz, Schumann, Gounod, Wagner, Mahler and Busoni. The book will be the standard by which efforts in addressing the inexhaustible topic will be measured in the future."

—**JÜRGEN THYM**, *Professor Emeritus of Musicology, Eastman School of Music, University of Rochester*

COVER IMAGE: Gounod's *Faust* under the direction of Alex Ollé May 2014.

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