

divine art

HISTORIC SOUND

FAUST

by Charles Gounod
in Italian



Chorus and Orchestra of La Scala, Milan
conducted by Carlo Sabajno

Romagnoli, Bosini, Autori, Pacini, Timitz, Limonta, Garrone

original recording - 1920

digitally remastered

FAUST: an opera in five acts by Charles Gounod

in Italian: libretto by Achille de Lauzières

CD 1:

ACT I

- | | | | | |
|---|--|----------------------|---------------------------|--------|
| 1 | Preludio (<i>Orchestra</i>) | <i>Act I Prelude</i> | <i>orchestra</i> | [4.22] |
| 2 | No! Interrogo invan (<i>recit.: Rien! En vain j'interroge</i>) | | <i>Faust</i> | [4.17] |
| 3 | Ah! Vieni estremo (<i>Salut! O mon dernier matin</i>) | | <i>Faust, chorus</i> | [3.47] |
| 4 | Ma il ciel che può (<i>recit.: Mais ce Dieu que peut-il</i>) | | <i>Faust, Mefistofele</i> | [1.25] |
| 5 | Sono qua! (<i>Me voici</i>) | | <i>Mefistofele, Faust</i> | [3.29] |
| 6 | Sta ben! (<i>Fort bien!</i>) | | <i>Mefistofele, Faust</i> | [5.42] |

ACT II

- | | | | |
|----|---|--|--------|
| 7 | Su, da bere ("Kermesse")(<i>Vin ou bière</i>) | <i>Wagner, students, soldiers, townspeople</i> | [3.56] |
| 8 | O santa medaglia (<i>O sainte medaille</i>) | <i>Valentino, Wagner, Siebel, chorus</i> | [2.03] |
| 9 | Dio possente ("Cavatina") (<i>Avant de quitter ces lieux</i>) | <i>Valentin</i> | [4.04] |
| 10 | Andiam, partiam (<i>Alons, amis</i>) | <i>Wagner, chorus, Mefistofele</i> | [1.30] |
| 11 | Dio dell'or (<i>Le veau d'or</i>) | <i>Mefistofele</i> | [1.50] |
| 12 | È strana assai (<i>Merci de la Chanson</i>) | <i>Valentino, Mefistofele, Siebel, chorus</i> | [5.29] |
| 13 | Ci rivedremo (<i>Nous nous retrouverons</i>) | <i>Mefistofele, Faust</i> | [1.29] |
| 14 | Walzer – Come allor (<i>Ainsi que la brise</i>) | <i>Mefistofele, Faust, Siebel, chorus</i> | [2.50] |
| 15 | Permette reste a me (<i>Ne permettez-vous pas</i>) | <i>Margherita, Faust, Siebel, Mefistofele</i> | [5.45] |

ACT III

- | | | | |
|----|--|-----------------------------------|--------|
| 16 | Intermezzo | <i>orchestra</i> | [1.32] |
| 17 | Le parlate d'amor ("Flower Song") (<i>Faites-lui mes vœux</i>) | <i>Siebel</i> | [2.52] |
| 18 | Giunti siamo? (<i>recit.: C'est ici?</i>) | <i>Faust, Mefistofele, Siebel</i> | [3.11] |
| 19 | Salve dimora (<i>Salut! Demeure chaste et pure</i>) | <i>Faust</i> | [4.27] |
| 20 | All'erta! Eccola qua! (<i>recit.: Alerte! La voila</i>) | <i>Mefistofele, Faust</i> | [0.45] |
| 21 | Come vorrei saper (<i>Je voudrais bien</i>) | <i>Margherita</i> | [4.28] |
| 22 | O ciel! ("The Jewel Song") (<i>O Dieu!</i>) | <i>Margherita</i> | [5.13] |

CD2:

- 1 Giusto ciel! Che vegg'io? (*Seigneur Dieu, que vois-je?*) Marta, Margherita [0.32]
- 2 Sì, un dono quest'e (*Oui, c'est là, le cadeau*) Margherita, Marta, Faust, Mefistofele [2.45]
- 3 V'appoggia te al braccio mio (*Prenez mon bras*) Margherita, Marta, Faust, Mefistofele [7.14]
- 4 È tempo alfin! (*recit.: Il était temps!*) Mefistofele [1.39]
- 5 Tardi si fa, addio! (*Il se fait tard, adieu!*) Margherita, Faust [3.55]
- 6 Notte d'amor ("Love Duet") (*O nuit d'amour*) Margherita, Faust [3.13]
- 7 Divina purità (*Divine purité*) Faust, Margherita [2.14]
- 8 Vedete! (*Tenez!*) Margherita, Faust, Mefistofele [3.35]

ACT IV

- 9 Scena della chiesa ("Church Scene") - Introduzione orchestra [2.13]
- 10 Signor, concesso sia (*Seigneur, deignes permettre*) Margherita, Mefistofele, chorus [3.34]
- 11 Ciel! Che voce odo mai? (*Dieu! Quelle est cette voix*) Margherita, Mefistofele, chorus [4.18]
- 12 Deponiam il brando (*Deposons les armes*) Chorus of soldiers, Siebel, Valentino [2.54]
- 13 O Gloria! ("Soldiers' Chorus") (*Gloire immortelle*) Chorus of soldiers [3.18]
- 14 Siebel! Nel mio tetto andiam (*recit.: Allons Siebel*) Valentino, Siebel [1.04]
- 15 Perchè tardate ancora? (*recit.: Qu'attendez-vous encore?*) Mefistofele, Faust [1.13]
- 16 Tu che fai l'addormentata ("Serenade") (*Vous que faites l'endormie*) Mefistofele [2.45]
- 17 Che fate qui, Signor ("Duel Trio") (*Que voulez-vous?*) Valentino, Mefistofele, Faust [4.07]
- 18 Per di qua venga ognun (*Par ici, mes amis*) Marta, Valentino, Margherita, Siebel [6.52]

ACT V

- 19 Va via! (*recit.: Va-t'en!*) Faust, Mefistofele [1.43]
- 20 Penetrato è il mio cor (*Mon cœur est pénétré*) Faust, Mefistofele [6.49]
- 21 All'erta! All'erta! (*Alerte, alerte*) Margherita, Mefistofele, Faust [2.46]
- 22 E salva! ("Final Chorus") (*Sauve!*) Chorus of Angels [1.22]

Faust: Giuliano Romagnoli Margherita: Gemma Bosini Mefistofele: Fernando Autori
 Siebel: Gilda Timitz Wagner: Napoleone Limonta Valentino: Adolfo Pacini Marta: Nelda Garrone
 Chorus and Orchestra of La Scala, Milan, conducted by Carlo Sabajno

Gounod and Faust

Charles François Gounod was born in Paris on 17 June, 1818. He received his first musical education from his mother who was a pianist; his father was a prominent painter.

Gounod entered the Paris Conservatoire in 1836, and there studied composition with Jean Lesueur and counterpoint with Jacques Halévy. He accomplished much quickly and in the following year won second place in the prestigious Prix de Rome awards, and the Grand Prix in 1839. This award provided him with the resource to study in Italy, where he became familiar with the choral music of Palestrina, who was to prove an enduring influence, even to the point of hindering the development, according to some, of Gounod's own choral writing. He travelled through Austria on his way back to Paris, taking the opportunity to become better acquainted with the Germanic Romantics, including Schumann and Mendelssohn.

Gounod studied theology, which was a dominant facet of his life for a while, and intended entering the priesthood. His other love, music, prevailed, and he returned to composition, specializing in opera, the dominant genre in mid 19th century France. He wrote twelve operas in all, of which the first, *Sapho* (1851) was only moderately successful, as was *Mireille* of 1864, although the latter work is much admired by musical connoisseurs. Indeed of all his operas, only two have remained in the popular repertoire – *Roméo et Juliette* (1864, première in 1867), famous principally for the love duets and Juliet's waltz aria – and *Faust*, his fourth opera, composed in 1859.

It was *Faust* which brought international recognition to Gounod despite charges that the music, and also the libretto by Jules Barbier and Michel Carré, oversimplified and sentimentalized Goethe's great drama. However, *Faust* established itself as the most popular French opera for over a century, and, with Bizet's *Carmen*, remains the most widely known. Of the many musical adaption's of the original supernatural tale, Gounod's is still among the best known and most masterful.

Today, it is sadly the case that Gounod's reputation with the wider public lies almost solely with this work, alongside his *Ave Maria* set to Bach's First Prelude from the '48'. Nevertheless, his output included, besides the operas, two Symphonies, the *Grand Messe Solennelle*, and much sacred choral music of quality. His last work, the *Grand Requiem*, was almost literally completed on his death-bed.

Gounod moved to London in 1870 and lived there for five years, where he promoted concerts and composed a number of his religious works; he also set up and managed the Gounod Choir which later evolved into the Royal Choral Society. In his later life, he concentrated very much on large-scale choral works, until his death at Saint-Cloud on 18 October, 1893.

FAUST was premièred at the Théâtre-Lyrique in Paris on 19 March, 1859. It had been declined by the National Opera House because it was thought not to be colourful enough; its eventual production was also delayed for a year due to a play based on Faust by Dennery being staged nearby. The opera did not have immediate success and went through several changes in its early years. Several numbers were cut from the first production at the insistence of Leon Carvalho, manager of the Théâtre-Lyrique, who also cast his wife as Marguerite. After this unpromising start, the work was purchased for ten thousand francs by the publisher Antoine Choudens, who required the replacement of the spoken dialogues with recitatives. Choudens undertook a tour of Germany, Italy, Belgium and England with *Faust*, still with Marie Caroline Carvalho in the lead female role, and by the time the work was revived in Paris in 1862, it was an outstanding success.

The optional ballet sequence, somewhat tangential to the actual plot and not included on this recording, was added in order that the opera could be performed at the Théâtre Impérial de l'Opéra in 1869. From then on, *Faust* remained immensely popular, becoming the most frequently staged opera at the *Théâtre Impérial*, and is still among the top twenty most performed operas in the United States.

FAUST – An opera in Five Acts SYNOPSIS

ACT I

We are in 16th-century Germany. The philosopher Faust is sitting in his cabinet, surrounded by papers. His search for truth through knowledge has brought him only despair and depression and he tries to poison himself twice, holding back when he hears a choir. Cursing both science and faith, he class on Satan as his only hope. Mefistofele (Mephistopheles) appears and seduces Faust into selling his soul with promises of the lovely Margherita (Marguerite).

ACT II

Soldiers, students and local residents sing a drinking song at a fair near the city gate. Valentino (Valentin), leaving for war with Wagner, leaves his sister Marguerite in the care of his friend Siébel. Mephistopheles appears to cause mischief, and insults Marguerite, whereupon Valentin draws his sword, However the sword shatters, and realizing the infernal nature of his opponent, the crown fend him off with their sword handles raised as crosses. Mephistopheles and Faust join the townspeople in the famous waltz.

ACT III

Siébel is in Marguerite's garden and leaves a bouquet for her. Faust is hoping to woo Marguerite and sends Mephistopheles to find a suitable gift – and is brought a box of jewels. Marguerite returns, thinking about her meeting with Faust at the fair, and sees the jewels which her friend Marthe tells her must be from a secret admirer. Marguerite tries on the jewellery, singing the famous *Jewel Song*. Faust and Mephistopheles appear and begin to flirt with the women. Faust is allowed a kiss but is then told to leave. But Marguerite, confused with her emotions, sings for his return and Faust, hearing her, comes to her.

ACT IV

Marguerite has been seduced by Faust and has borne his child, becoming a social outcast. She sings a pensive air at her spinning wheel, with Siébel alongside. Marguerite intends to visit the church to pray, but is prevented by Mephistopheles and then by a band of demons. She is able to

complete her prayer but faints when cursed again by Mephistopheles, who then serenades her. Valentin returns from war, seeking the despoiler of his sister; he duels with Faust and is killed, but with his dying breath he condemns Marguerite to hell.

ACT V

It is Walpurgisnacht. In the mountains, a band of witches surround Faust and Mephistopheles. Faust is taken to a cave full of courtly figures, who are holding a ball – here, the optional ballet may be performed. Faust sees Marguerite in a vision and cries out for her. Mephistopheles takes him to the prison where she is held, on a false charge of murdering her child. After their love duet, Marguerite recognizes Mephistopheles as the devil. She prays for divine assistance, as Faust tries to take her way urged on by Mephistopheles. Marguerite will not listen. She imagines seeing Faust's hands covered in blood, and rejects him, dying in terror and confusion. Mephistopheles declares that Faust is judged, Faust prays for his lost soul while Marguerite's is taken to heaven.

THE PRINCIPAL PERFORMERS

Teatro la Scala was closed from the spring of 1917 until September 1918, and again from early 1919 until the end of 1921, thus losing three complete seasons. Although the house orchestra undertook a world tour under Toscanini, which included a trip to the USA in 1920-21, the several recordings made during this period by both Columbia and especially HMV (through its Milan branch) were invaluable in keeping the orchestra and chorus busy and providing much needed, if modest, income.

Giuliano Romagnoli

Although Romagnoli was a principal soloist and a major player in this recording, very little is known about him. He was born in about 1890, possibly in Catania, Sicily. He played Cavaradossi and Enzo (*La Gioconda*) at Novi Ligure in 1920, the same year the Faust was made. His other recorded legacy amounts only to a few songs for HMV and two duets on Columbia with baritone Taurino Parvis. A Giuliano Romagnoli also recorded some mandolin solos for Zonophone in 1907/8 but it is not clear whether this is the same person.

Gemma Bosini

Bosini was born at Belgioso, near Pavia, on 10 October 1890 and died on 2 February 1982 in Milan. A highly regarded operatic soprano, she studied in Milan with Salvatore Pessina, and made her stage debut at the Teatro Politeama, Genoa, in 1913 in the role of Mimi. She sang all over Italy, including at the Teatro Lirico (Milan), Teatro Petruzzelli (Bari), Teatro della Pergola (Firenze) and in particular at the Teatro Massimo in Palermo where in 1915 she enjoyed great success as Antonia in Offenbach's *Tales of Hoffmann* and where she also met her future husband, the great baritone Mariano Stabile (1888-1968). She guested at Teatro Liceo in Barcelona in 1918 as Elvira in *Don Giovanni*, and appeared in Cairo, San Carlo, Naples (as Manon Lescaut and Micaëla in *Carmen*), Teatro Verdi (Trieste), Teatro Colón (Buenos Aires – as Alice Ford in *Falstaff* – her main role which she sang some 400 times, presumably often alongside her husband).

Her final performance was as Alice at Palermo in 1930. She ended her days at the Casa di riposo Verdi in Milan. Her brother was organist at Milan Cathedral. She was also heard in the roles of Tosca, Desdemona, Maria (in Mascagni's *Guglielmo Ratcliff*), Iris, Fedora, Marguerite, Elsa (*Lohengrin*), and Margherita (Boito's *Mefistofele*). As well as this Faust, she recorded a complete *La Bohème* and several operetta scenes.

Fernando Autori

The Sicilian bass Autori was born at Calatafè, near Palermo, in 1884. He died at Florence on 3 October 1937. At first he studied medicine, then thought of becoming a painter, before finally deciding on a musical career, when he commenced studies in Palermo with Antonio Cantelli. His debut was at Teatro Massimo, Palermo in 1913 as King Raimondo in Mascagni's *Isabeau*. At the same house, he sang in *La Fanciulla del West*, *Madame Sans-Gêne* (Giordano), *Manon* (Massenet), *Lucia di Lammermoor* and *La Bohème*, enjoying great success there in the period up to 1919.

Guest engagements in this period included those at Teatro Dal Verme and Teatro Carcano in Milan. His debut at La Scala was as Geronte in *Manon Lescaut* in 1924. He remained at La Scala until 1936, mainly taking *basso buffo* roles, in which he was greatly encouraged by Toscanini. He sang in many premieres including *La cena delle beffe* (Giordano, 1924), *I Cavalieri di Ekebù* (Zandonai, 1925), *La Sagredo* (Vittadini, 1930), *Guido del popolo* (Robbiani, 1933) and *Il Campiello* (Wolf-Ferrari, 1936) all at La

Scala. He also took part in the premiere of Pick-Mangiagalli's *Basi e Bote* at the Teatro Argentina in Rome, and appeared in *Il Matrimonio segreto* at the same Opera in 1935-6. During a number of appearances at

Covent Garden between 1927 and 1934, his singing was much appreciated. His London roles included the first British performance of *Turandot* in 1927 (as Timur), Leporello, Archibaldo (*L'amore dei tre Re* by Montemezzi), Sparafucile, Philip II (*Don Carlo*), and Simone (*Gianni Schicchi*). His guest appearances during the 1930s took him to many leading theatres and opera houses in Vienna, (the State Opera), Copenhagen, Monte Carlo, Berlin, Oslo, The Hague, Barcelona, Basel, and Turin. He also sang at Mozart festivals in Frankfurt. His many fine recordings also helped to assure his reputation as one of the leading European singers of his day, and he is undoubtedly the "star" of this Set.

Napoleone Limonta

Little is known of this Neapolitan baritone but he is believed to have been born around 1860 or thereabouts. In 1881 he appeared in Berlin and other German cities with an Italian company starring the Spanish tenor Fernando Valero. He returned to Germany in the following year with Ada Adini and Antonio Arámbaro, and was next noted on tour at the old Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires in 1885. He played small roles at La Scala during the 1880s; his first role was believed to be Gessler in *Guglielmo Tell* on 26 December 1881 and he also sang Montano there in the world première of *Otello* in 1887. In between he was Mattia in Meyerbeer's *Il Profeta* (1884-5). After working at Teatro Argentina, Rome in 1888 nothing is heard of him until he appeared in Toscanini's 1898 *Meistersinger* at La Scala. Limonta would be aged around 60 when he recorded this *Faust*, a very creditable achievement.

Adolfo Pacini

Baritone Adolfo Pacini was born in Rome in 1882. He studied at the Accademia Santa Cecilia with the legendary baritone Antonio Cotogni, before making his debut in 1904 at the Teatro Dal Verme in Milan as Sancelotto Mathieu in *Andrea Chénier*. He toured Central America in 1905 then became a member of the Lombardi opera Company in 1907, with which he toured the USA and Canada. Also in 1907 he had appeared in the premiere of Montemezzi's *Mauro e Francesco* in Bologna. His early career also took him to Rome, Pisa, Buenos Aires (1909), Rosario and Montevideo.

His La Scala debut took place in 1910 when he played Paolo Albani in *Simon Boccanegra*. He was Finalist in the 1911 Italian premieres of *Der Rosenkavalier* and Filiasi's *Fior di Neve*. Guest appearances included those at Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires in both 1911 and 1928, three seasons at Teatro Liceo in Barcelona,

Cairo (1920-1), and Istanbul (1924) as well as at several leading Italian houses. After 1928 he mainly turned to buffo roles such as Dulcamara at the Teatro Reale, Rome, and became a great favourite in such roles there for the following 12 years. He took part in a tour of Germany in 1938. All told he played some 62 roles in 217 theatres during his long and distinguished career, also recording for Pathé and for HMV for whom, as well as this Faust, he recorded *Aida*, *Andrea Chénier* and *Tosca*.

Nella Garrone

Born around 1880, mezzo-soprano Nella Garrone enjoyed a career as a *comprimaria* singer at several small Italian houses. She was seen at the Teatro Colón, Buenos Aires in 1908 as Suzuki in the local premiere of *Madama Butterfly* alongside Maria Farneti and Amedeo Bassi. She appeared in *La Fanciulla del West* at Lucca in 1911 and appeared in the premiere performance, at Teatro Dal Verme, Milan, of *Giocondo e il suo Re* by Carlo Jachino. As well as this Faust set, she sang two roles in the early HMV *Rigoletto*.

Carlo Sabajno was a prolific recording artist not only with La Scala; the fact that he was also HMV's Musical Director in Italy may have promoted this aspect of his career. Nonetheless he was a very fine conductor, and indeed (as on this set) was not named on the record labels.

References: Kutsch & Riemens; Wikipedia; Encyclopedia of World Biography (Thomson Gale 2006); Charles-gounod.com

THE EDITION

Faust was first performed in Italy at La Scala, Milan, on 11 November 1862. The Italian libretto was provided by Achille De Lauzières, and published by Ricordi & co. The recorded version follows this edition very closely, with the omission of the ballet scene and minor cuts in the Waltz, Love Duet, Soldiers' Chorus and (three) in the final scene. Also the Act IV Prelude and Marguerite's recitative are omitted.

The recording was made by the Gramophone Company's Milan office over the period 1st – 14th June, 1920 and issued on twenty 12" Green –label "Concert-Record Gramophone" discs, nos. S 5260-5298 (even numbers only shown on labels).

Matrix numbers:

S 5260	1057aj, 1058aj	S 5274	1076aj, 1086aj	S 5288	1088aj, 1079aj
S 5262	1068aj, 1061aj	S 5276	1094aj, 1085aj	S 5290	1081aj, 1059aj
S 5264	1074aj, 1075aj	S 5278	1093aj, 1097aj	S 5292	1084aj, 1077aj
S 5266	1072aj, 1082aj	S 5280	1066aj, 1070aj	S 5294	1089aj, 1065aj
S 5268	1087aj, 1079aj	S 5282	1071aj, 1090aj	S 5296	1064aj, 1060aj
S 5270	1080aj, 1078aj	S 5284	1091aj, 1089aj	S 5298	1092aj, 1067aj
S 5272	1062aj, 1063aj	S 5286	1069aj, 1095aj		

NOTES - The original discs, from Stephen Sutton's collection, were in mint condition but of course were recorded acoustically without any microphones or electrical amplification. Digital restoration was carried out by Andrew Rose of Pristine Audio and has been applied carefully to avoid digital distortion; surface hiss may seem quite high at the start of CD1, but the Prelude was recorded very faintly and was almost inaudible prior to treatment. The signal/noise ratio is overall splendid for the time. Given the age of the set, the overall sound quality is most remarkable and allows the superb performances to shine through. Recording pitch was not consistent but has been adjusted where possible.

Notes and libretto transcription by Stephen Sutton © 2008

Design: Stephen Sutton, Divine Art Ltd

Original sound recording made by The Gramophone Company, Milan in 1920

This reissue © © 2008 Divine Art Limited

Digital restoration: Andrew Rose, Pristine Audio

Mastering: Stephen Sutton

With thanks to Tully Potter for his assistance in providing artist biographies and general encouragement.



DIVINE ART RECORDINGS GROUP

INNOVATIVE | ECLECTIC | FASCINATING | INSPIRATIONAL

Over 500 titles, with full track details, reviews, artist profiles and audio samples, can be browsed on our website. All our recordings are available at any good record store or download provider or direct from our secure online shopping website:

www.divineartrecords.com
(CD, 24-bit HD, FLAC and MP3)

Diversions LLC (Divine Art USA) email: sales@divineartrecords.com

Divine Art Ltd. (UK) email: uksales@divineartrecords.com

Printed catalogue sent on request

Also available in digital download through Primephonic, Qobuz, iTunes, Amazon, Spotify and many other platforms

follow us on facebook, youtube and twitter



WARNING: Copyright subsists in all recordings issued under this label. Any unauthorised broadcasting, public performance, copying or re-recording thereof in any manner whatsoever will constitute an infringement of such copyright. In the United Kingdom, licences for the use of recordings for public performance may be obtained from Phonographic Performance Ltd, 1, Upper James Street, London W1R 3HG.

Divine Art Historic Sound series:

27801 Sibelius Symphonies 5/6, Tapiola
LSO/Kajanus; Finnish Nat. O./Schnéevoigt

27802 Mendelssohn : Elijah (complete) 2CD
Williams, Jones, Baillie, BBC National Chorus & Orchestra/Robinson

27803 Beethoven: Piano Trios
Trio Santoliquido

27804 Bach: The Art of Fugue (Arr. Harris)
The Roth Quartet

27805 Cavalleria Rusticana + Pagliacci 2CD
The British National Opera Company

27806 Moeran & Coates: Violin Concertos
Campoli/BBC SO/Boult; Sauer/BBC Northern O./Groves

27807 Milhaud: Orchestral and Chamber Music
Vienna SO/Swoboda; San Francisco SO/Monteux, etc.

27808 E J Moeran: The Collected 78 rpm recordings
Halle Orchestra/Heward, Heddle Nash, John Goss etc.

27809 Bizet: Carmen (complete) 2CD
Thill/Visconti/Paris Symphony Orchestra/Cohen

digitally remastered 2008 by

PRISTINE
AUDIO