

Williams College Department of Music



Williams Opera Workshop

Faust

by Charles Gounod (1818 – 1893)

Monday, January 27, 2025 7:30 pm

Wednesday, January 29, 2025 7:30 pm

Chapin Hall

Williamstown, Massachusetts

Please turn off cell phones. No photography or recording is permitted.

Cast

(in order of vocal appearance)

Faust: Theo Cohen '23

Méphistophélès: Carl May '25

Wagner: Logan Spaleta '28, Jason Rivera '27 *

Bourgeois: Danny Hinh '28, David Cañez '27.5 *, Abdiel Perde '28

Valentin: Thomas Huckans '26

Siebel: Veda Safranek '28, Arden Caldicott '26 *

Marguerite: Sarah Danielle Dané Taiwé '26, Emma Hennessy '26 *

Marthe: Gabriella DiRusso '28, Hannah Pressman '28 *

Ensemble: David Cañez '27.5, Dan Caplinger, Gabriella Carvajal '28, Alison Case, Isabela Chou '28, Lucy Cumming '25, Danny Hinh '28, Abdiel Perde '28, Kaiden Roque '28, Luke Stenger '28

Chorus: Hilary Alton, Deborah Burns, Ellen Ennis, Jean Garcia-Gathright, CJ Gillig, Jody Green, Curt Johnson, Katya Latypova, Stella Leras '27, David Macpherson '64, Dennis McGill, Lee Park, Dick Rhindress, Meredith Rhindress, Kirsten Rose, Eric Tiffany, Celia Twomey, Erin Willliams, Laura Williams

**January 29th performance*

There will be two 10 minute intermissions between Acts 2-3, and between Acts 4-5

Orchestra:

Violin I: Richard O'Donnell '27 * *concertmaster*, Sonja Wermager

Violin II: Olivia Wong '28 *, Susan Abrams

Viola: Shiori Ono '28 *

Cello: EB Diallo '25 *, Owyn Darell-Sterbak '28

Bass: Lachlan Canavan '26 *

Harp: Matt Shareshian '25

Flute: Thomas Vukic '28

Oboe: Elena Lowe '25

Clarinet: Diane Bargiel

Bassoon: Leo Ponter

Horn: Sam Bean '26 *, Protik Majumder

Trumpet: Artie Carpenter '25

Percussion: Eleanor Race '28, Arthur Boote '28, Jeff Miller

Keyboard Organ & Harp: Ben Wien '28

Rehearsal Pianists: Alex De Biasio '28, Leigh Murphy '27, Sebastian Quadrini '28, Ben Wien '28

**principal*

Musical Director: Erin Casey

Stage Director: Paul LaRosa '02

Chorusmaster: Christine Casey

Lighting Designer: Paul LaRosa '02

Costume Design: Erin Casey (*with special thanks to Barbara Bell and Samantha Patterson from the Costume Shop*)

Scenic Design: Paul LaRosa '02

Dramaturg & Supertitle operation : Christine Casey

Special thanks to the members of the Northern Berkshire Chorale, Reverend Valerie Bailey Fischer, Maia Robbins-Zust, Jeff Miller, and David Cañez

This production is made possible by the support of the Williams College Department of Music and by donations to the Williams Opera Workshop Fund.

ACT I

Faust has spent a lifetime in the study of science. Disillusioned with life, he resolves to poison himself but is unable to go through with it. He curses God and calls on the Devil.

Méphistophélès obligingly appears and offers Faust riches, power, or glory. Faust, however, only wants to recapture the innocence of youth. Méphistophélès agrees to Faust's request, but there are conditions: on earth Faust will be master, but in the world below their roles will be reversed. When Faust hesitates, Méphistophélès conjures up a vision of Marguerite. Faust signs the contract and returns to his youth.

ACT II

Valentin and Wagner are going off to war with the other soldiers, and Valentin is concerned about leaving his sister Marguerite unprotected. Wagner starts a song to cheer everyone up, but is interrupted by Méphistophélès. Méphistophélès tells fortunes: Wagner, it seems, will be killed in his first battle, the flowers that Siébel picks will wither, and Valentin will meet his death at the hands of someone close to Méphistophélès. Méphistophélès conjures up a delicious vintage wine to toast Marguerite. This angers Valentin and both draw their swords. Valentin attacks but is stopped by Méphistophélès. Everyone is convinced they are in the presence of the Devil.

Méphistophélès summons Faust to a place where couples are dancing. Faust sees Marguerite and offers her his arm. She refuses and he is left more entranced than ever before.

ACT III

Siébel gathers flowers for Marguerite outside her house. As Méphistophélès predicted, they wither, but holy water seems to restore them. Méphistophélès and Faust have been watching, and Méphistophélès leaves a box of jewels for Marguerite. The atmosphere of innocence surrounding Marguerite's home moves Faust. Marguerite finds the jewels and puts them on. Faust and Méphistophélès return, and Méphistophélès flirts with Marthe, giving Faust the opportunity to seduce Marguerite. She begins to give in. Méphistophélès conjures up a garden and makes Marthe run off before disappearing himself. Marguerite realizes she loves Faust and they make love.

ACT IV

Seduced and abandoned, Marguerite is caring for Faust's child. She is still in love with him and prays for his return.

The soldiers return with Valentin. Siébel tries to stop him from seeing Marguerite but Valentin, suspecting the worst, pushes her aside.

Outside her house, Méphistophélès serenades Marguerite on Faust's behalf. Valentin and Faust fight and, with the intervention of Méphistophélès, Valentin is fatally wounded. Marguerite watches her brother die as he curses her for her dishonorable behavior with his last breath.

In a tragic twist of despair, Marguerite, consumed by madness, takes the heart-wrenching step of ending her newborn son's life, believing it to be the only escape from her anguish.

ACT V

Distraught over her desperate decision, Marguerite goes to church to pray for forgiveness. When she hears the voice of Méphistophélès telling her that she is damned, she collapses in terror.

With Méphistophélès's help, Faust goes to the prison in an attempt to save Marguerite. She seems to recognize her lover and recalls the night when he first seduced her. Faust is overwhelmed with pity. Mephistopheles, seeing an opportunity to also damn Marguerite by offering her an escape from the consequences of her decision, uses Faust to try to convince her to leave the prison and damn both of their souls. She refuses and gives herself into the hands of God to await her fate, who saves her soul and grants her access to heaven.

—Credit to English National Opera, adapted for WOW 2025