

THE FAUST LEGEND AND ITS MUSICAL MANIFESTATIONS: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

by

Dorette Maria Roos

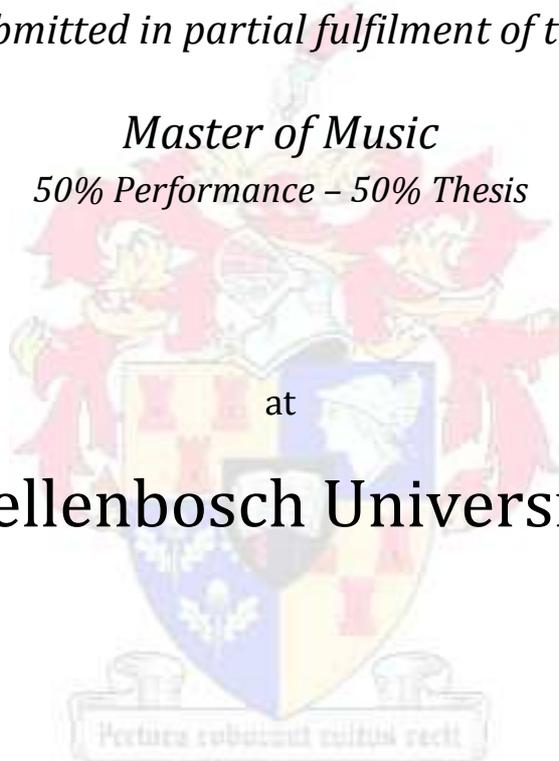
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Declaration

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part, submitted it at any university for a degree.

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Signature

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Abstract

This thesis explores the Faust legend and its musical manifestations since the 19th century. The objective is to provide a thorough background to the legend, before drawing up an account of compositions inspired by the Faust legend.

Firstly, the origin of the legend is investigated, followed by a brief summary of the most important literary works on the subject of Faust. This is followed by a comprehensive outline of the story as told by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, and then the most significant compositions inspired by the legend are discussed. A short section containing comparisons of the compositions and the conclusions of the study appears at the end.

The legend tells the story of Faust, a scholar, philosopher and alchemist in search of divine knowledge, power and pleasure. Faust encounters the devil and makes a pact with him in which he agrees to surrender his immortal soul, if the devil can satisfy Faust's thirst for knowledge and grant him the experience of true happiness.

The Faust legend is a very popular theme among composers and artists. One of the reasons for the success of the Faust legend is its universal appeal. This has led to various composers using the material as the basis for their works. Goethe's version of the legend has proven to be the most popular source for composers.

To produce a composition that attempts to capture the drama in its entirety, including its psychological and spiritual elements, is not feasible. Works centred on a smaller section, scene or character from Goethe's *Faust* were often more successful than the larger operatic compositions.

Like all great universal ideas, the Faust legend lends itself to an abundance of interpretations. Similarities between works are rare. Each composer who made use of the Faust legend interpreted it subjectively, which has produced many unique and varied compositions.

Opsomming

In hierdie studie word die Faust legende, soos wat dit in verskeie musikale komposisies van die 19de eeu uitgebeeld is, ondersoek. Die doel van die studie is om 'n lys van werke wat deur die Faustlegende geïnspireer is, saam te stel.

Die tesis ondersoek die oorsprong van die legende en gee 'n kort opsomming van die mees prominente literêre werke met die Faustlegende as onderwerp. Daarna volg 'n uiteensetting van die storielyn soos vertel deur Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. 'n Lys, bestaande uit gesaghebbende Faust komposisies, word ingesluit en laastens volg vergelykings en gevolgtrekkings uit die studie.

Die legende vertel die verhaal van Faust, die professor, filosoof en alchemis op soek na kennis, mag en plesier. Faust tree in gesprek met die duivel en gaan met hom 'n ooreenkoms aan om sy siel prys te gee in ruil vir kennis en ware geluk.

Die Faust legende is sekerlik een van die mees gewilde literêre onderwerpe vir gebruik deur komponiste en kunstenaars. Die universaliteit van die legende dra by tot die gewildheid daarvan en om gebruik te word as onderwerp in toonsettings. Goethe se weergawe word meestal ingespan as bron van inspirasie.

Om die volle omvang van die drama, met al sy sielkundige en geestelike elemente in 'n komposisie vas te vang, is feitlik onmoontlik. Soos die meeste groot universele werke, word Faust op verskillende maniere geïnterpreteer. Gevolglik is daar min ooreenkomste tussen die verskillende toonsettings. Elke komponis se interpretasie van die legende is uniek.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction and Rationale

The use of literary subject matter as inspiration for musical compositions has always been a common practice. Faust, or Faustus in Latin, is the protagonist of the classic German legend who sells his soul to the devil for knowledge and power. The Faust legend is a very popular literary theme amongst composers and artists. Why is this so? The narrative has given rise to a vast amount of literature, music and visual depictions. What led to the inspiration of so many different musical compositions in particular? According to Hervey,

No subject has attracted musicians to a greater extent than that of Faust and it must be added that none has proven so potent a source of inspiration in whatever form it has been treated (1926:106).

The fundamental aim of this thesis is to compile a succinct overview of a number of prominent literary and musical depictions inspired by the legend of Faust. The thesis will investigate the motivation and reasoning behind the vast impact of the Faust legend on musical compositions from the 19th century to the present day by looking at various compositions and sources of inspiration. This study offers an annotated catalogue of settings of the Faust legend, or portions thereof, and is based on existing secondary sources.

1.1 Prologue to the First Part of the Thesis

The first part of the thesis, which makes up the second chapter, will initially investigate the origin of the legend, followed by a brief summary of the most important literary works on the subject of Faust. The second chapter will also provide a

comprehensive outline of the story, as told by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe.¹ As composers often choose sections out of this literary whole, it is useful to have the events taking place in the dramatic poem as a point of reference.

The Faust legend, in short, tells the story of Faust, a professor, philosopher and alchemist, who is in search of divine knowledge, power and pleasure. Faust encounters the devil, called Mephistopheles (or Mephisto) and enters into a pact with him. The devil agrees to show Faust the “secrets of the world and let him experience the profoundest pleasures. In return, when Faust dies, he must surrender his immortal soul to Mephistopheles” (Bates, 1906:24).

The legend has been recreated in various forms and adaptations with regard to the setting of the drama, the Mephistopheles character, the Faust character and the powers or pleasures involved.

In the original account of the legend Faust’s soul is condemned to suffer eternally in hell, but in Goethe’s version Faust achieves inevitable salvation, regardless of his deal with the devil. This alternative ending offered an even more intriguing subject for composers to engage with, as the legend can now be presented as either a tragic tale or a narrative with a triumphant ending.

The second chapter will give sufficient information on the derivation of the tale, the story of Faust, the events, the characters and the different literary figures who engaged in this theme, to allow the reader to gain more insight into the compositions discussed in the third chapter.

The most acclaimed Faust dramas included in chapter two are: *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* by the English dramatist Christopher Marlow (1564 - 1593); an unfinished text containing Gotthold Ephraim Lessing’s (1729 - 1781) version of the legend; the most renowned version is the drama by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749 -

¹ There are numerous literary versions of the Faust legend, told by many writers over the centuries, and therefore not one single plot can be regarded as “the story of the Faust legend”. In this thesis the version of the legend by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe will be the focus; it is summarised in the second chapter.

1832); *Faust* by Nikolaus Lenau (1802 - 1850) and *Doktor Faustus* by Paul Thomas Mann (1875 - 1955).

1.2 Prologue to the Second Part of the Thesis

The second part of this research thesis, which makes up Chapter Three, will draw up an annotated catalogue of the most prominent compositions inspired by the Faust legend. This chapter serves as the focal point of the thesis and is also the most extensive in length. Aspects such as the historical context of the respective compositions, significant biographical details of the composer, and the background and inspiration of compositions will be briefly noted. The third chapter will provide a summary of relevant information about each featured composition.

The extent of the available literature and information played a role in determining the final choice of compositions utilised in this thesis. The popularity of the works or of the composers were taken into consideration. There are compositions included in this account for which few or no secondary resources were available to compile adequate information about the work. These compositions were nonetheless included in the account for the sake of completeness and as a matter of interest.

Some of the more significant compositions that will be expanded upon in this thesis include Liszt's *Faust Symphony*, Gounod's *Faust*, Berlioz's *La Damnation de Faust*, Mahler's *Eighth Symphony*, Stravinsky's *Soldier's Tale* and Schnittke's *Historia von D Johann Faustus*, among others.

There is an endless list of Faust compositions that could be added to this thesis and make a stimulating contribution to the research, but the scope of this study does not allow an unlimited number of compositions to be examined. Rather, the aim was to present an interesting and concise preliminary list that comments briefly on each composition.

1.3 Reflective Research Questions

The fourth, concluding chapter of this thesis will attempt to suggest some correlations between the compositions and comment briefly on the following questions:

1. What led to the inspiration of so many different musical compositions on this theme and why this specific legend? Does it have a universal aspect that attracts composers of each generation?
2. How do these compositions compare to one another? How is the Faust legend illuminated in different musical works?
3. Is there any biographical significance for the composers and the way they portray the legend?
4. Can parallels be drawn between the compositions?
5. What is the relevance of the legend to music today?

These and other comparable questions will be addressed briefly in the last chapter. They will serve as a point of departure in drawing some conclusions and for making closing remarks and for highlighting interesting facts that have come out of the research. These questions will not contribute to the thesis in any other substantial way, nor do they serve as the focal point of the research.

1.4 Literature Review

A great deal of literature has been written about the Faust legend in music. Many of the books and articles deal with a single composition or with a small collection of compositions concerned with the Faust legend that are related to each other in some way or another, be it thematically, or in similarities in style, or whether the works lend themselves to viable comparison.

An initial list of compositions inspired by the Faust legend was done by Fredrick Corder in 1886 in a series of articles in the *Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* called "The Faust Legend, and its Musical Treatment by Composers". Corder gives a

synopsis of each of the musical compositions he selected. The articles are informative, but were written more than a hundred and twenty years ago. An enormous number of compositions can now be added to the list.

Numerous online databases and educational websites that deal with the Faust legend provide a list of some prominent books, dramas, musical compositions, prose and films influenced by the tale. As a result of these various and diverse directories, a number of very interesting additions can be made to the list of compositions.

Ernest Newman (1905) wrote an essay "Faust in Music", published in his book *Musical Studies*, in which he gives an insight into why this legend is such a popular subject for all forms of art. He refers to Goethe's version of the legend as the main source of inspiration for most compositions. "Since Goethe's day we are bound to see the Faust picture through *his* eyes; any harking back to earlier forms of it is quite out of the question" (Newman, 1905:71).

Goethe has "extended and deepened" (Newman, 1905:71) all aspects of the legend and its characters; Newman looks for a successful composition that can capture all of the psychological and spiritual elements as well.

Biographical studies were the main source of information for this thesis. These books provided facts about the composers, their lives and their compositions. Biographical sources were particularly useful in gathering information on a composer's work and personal life experiences and indications of his own character. Biographies also often suggest psychological elements that became infused into the music along with, for example, the religious context and setting of the composition. To concentrate fully on each of these aspects of the composer and his work would be fascinating. Regrettably, the scope of the thesis does not allow for elaborate details on all the listed works and composers.

The amount of literature available for the different compositions varied greatly. In some cases ample information was discovered for a lesser-known composition, but at times details for even the popular works were difficult to come by.

Not all the compositions required plenty of resources. The most significant and extensive works received the most attention, where this was made possible by the available resources.

In most cases sufficient literature was available to make a viable and exciting study of the chosen compositions. Musicologists have taken up the Faust legend and its compositions in various ways, which allows for interesting debates and comparisons. It was intriguing to explore the treatment of the Faust legend through the ages.

1.5 Research Methodology and Objectives

The research methods used were mainly concerned with the exploration of the secondary literature and documentation of information in order to produce a credible historical account.

Historical research, as the term implies, is based on recounting the past. This type of research includes investigations in the recording, analysis and interpretation of events in the past with the purpose of discovering generalities and making deductions that may be useful in understanding the past, the present and, to a limited extent, can anticipate the future. The researcher is often dependent on the availability of documentary sources (Landman, 1988:65).

A musical composition, even with a narrative, is always open to interpretation by the performer and the listener. Can one find universal agreement on how the Faust legend is interpreted by different composers? Is it possible to articulate the reasons for the impact that the Faust legend has had?

The current debate in the musicological community about meaning and representation in music, referring to linguistic and semiological research, is not a topic

addressed in this thesis, primarily to avoid complete deviation from the intentions of this study.

Does the story of the legend give meaning to the music? And how does this compare to compositions with no narrative adjunct? Would the interpretation and response differ? Or is the interpretation and response of the individual most important?

Although the objective is to construct a historical account of Faust-inspired compositions, an attempt will be made to address these questions in order to offer a few speculative hypotheses as responses.

CHAPTER TWO

The Faust Legend

2.1 The Origin of the Faust Legend

Knowledge is such a mysterious attribute in the minds of the ignorant that they are ready to accept its possessor as a superior being – a god or a devil. Rather the latter than the former, however, for it is the curious property of the human mind to be far readier in acknowledging evil than good influences (Corder, 1886: 5).²

In the article “The Faust Legend and its Musical Treatment by Composers” Frederick Corder explains that throughout history any man who dared to “pierce the dense mists of ignorance and religious dogma” has always been considered to be allied with the powers of evil. The traditions of sorcery grew out of resistance to the endeavours of the church to keep a monopoly on available knowledge and therefore the middle ages gave birth to numerous legends revolving around this theme. One of these stories was the Faust legend, which was immortalised by various writers in poetry and prose.

The first printed version of the Faust legend was found in a chapbook (an inexpensive book or pamphlet) of medieval legends published in 1587 known as the *Faustbuch* or *Urfaustbuch*. The book was compiled by an anonymous author and published by Johann Spies in Frankfurt on the Main in September 1587, according to Palmer and More, *Sources of the Faust Tradition* (1966:130). Various editions and pirated versions appeared soon after. “The last *Faustbuch* of the Spies type, the eighteenth edition known, dates from the year 1598” (Palmer and More, 1966:130). The chapbook was considered a “fictitious biography” (Corder: 1886) of a man called Johann

² In the *Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* 1886, Volume 27, No. 515.

Faust,³ who was a widely known scholar, doctor of theology and philosopher, and also deemed a sorcerer due to “his unusual powers of the mind” (Corder, 1886:5).

In those times such a well-educated man was often labelled a magician. The Faust legend is said to be based on an actual personage born in Württemberg in the 1480s (Foster, 1981:12). Records of Georg Johann Faust were found in the forms of letters, diaries and evidence of matriculation records at the University of Heidelberg, “but the question remains whether the *Johannes Faust ex Simern* is Faust the magician” (Palmer and More, 1966:82). It is questionable whether all the sources are referring to the same person; this Johann Faust remains a mysterious figure (cf. Palmer and More, 1966). The stories in the *Faustbuch*, also known as Spies’s *Historia von Doktor Johann Fausten*, (Grimm and Hermand, 1987:8), were illustrated with horrifying graphics and chilling descriptions of hell that would have caused fear and doubt among their readers.

Many of these first printed books of the Faust legend triggered outrage among most religious institutions, especially the Lutheran Church, which strongly condemned alchemy, “inordinate ambition and ungodly speculation about the unknowable”(Palmer and More, 1966:4). The early Faust books served as a warning to ambitious folk and clearly portrayed the fate of their blasphemous actions.

It was an age of discoveries and a time of crisis: Nature and universe became objects of human curiosity, and the sciences entered into conflict with the doctrine of the church. The grey area between physics and metaphysics allows creatures like devils, sorcerers and magicians to populate the imagination of the common people. Faust seems to have been an ideal figure on whom they could project their anxieties and hopes (Grimm and Hermand, 1987:8).

The *Faustbuch* was a tremendous success; within two years of its first publication, sixteen German versions of the book appeared (Watt, 1996:27). It became

³ In various texts he is also referred to as Georg Faust, John Faust, Johannes Faust or Doktor Faustus (Latin).

so popular that the book was translated into four different languages and consequently spread like wildfire throughout Europe, with a sequel, *Das Wagnerbuch*, soon to follow.

Few works of literature had exerted as strong an inspirational force over the creative imagination as Spies's *Urfaustbuch*. [...] In giving literary form to the legendary Dr. Faust, he created a tremendous, indestructible symbol of human audacity and pride, of arrogance and despair, a symbol to which every successive generation has responded in its own way (Osborne, 1966:19).

2.2 A Brief Review of Faust in Literature

The *Faust* legend is found in countless works of literature. To make this study as thorough as possible, it is necessary to briefly review the legend from its origins to masterpieces like Goethe's *Faust*, noting in particular the following dramas. This is by no means a complete list of literary works, but merely an attempt to highlight the most renowned Faust plays.

2.2.1 Christopher Marlow

One of the first authors to dramatise the Faust legend was the English author Christopher Marlow (1564-1593). His drama, *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus*, was published in 1604 (Palmer and More, 1966:239), some twelve years after the first performance of the play. His version of the tragedy gives an insight into the contradictory soul of man, but is cast in the mould of the morality plays of that period. The play was written in accordance with Christian doctrine; if not, it would have had no chance of being performed on the Elizabethan stage (Rowse, 1981:150). Marlowe portrays ambition as a dangerous desire that was also the downfall of Doctor Faustus. Marlowe investigates the nature of sin, redemption and damnation to get his point across to the audience.

Palmer and More (1966) refer to this play as the starting point of the dramatic history of the Faust material. Marlow used an English translation of Spies's *Faustbuch* as his source of inspiration.

The high drama and epic poetry that accompanied the later Faust plays facilitated the lasting popularity of the work. But a tendency to introduce a comic element was already evident in Marlowe's play. In the 18th century the drama slowly moved from stage to puppet theatre, where it can still be seen today.

2.2.2 Gotthold Ephraim Lessing

The next eminent literary figure to engage with the Faust legend was the German writer, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-1781), who produced an unfinished book (c. 1784) containing his version of the Faust legend.

Lessing was probably familiar with the stage play as early as his student days, but the impulse to modernise and deepen the content of the play doubtless came from a performance of the Schuch troupe which he saw in Berlin in 1754 (Palmer and More, 1966:273).

Lessing was a representative of the Enlightenment period, and his version of the tale transformed the condemnation of the search for knowledge into a virtue of man. He also embarked on bringing Faustus to salvation, as man cannot be rebuked for a noble passion. The historical Faust was in search of worldly pleasures, such as power, lust and riches, but Lessing's Faust desired knowledge and truth. The changes Lessing made to the plot extended the psychological aspect of the legend and placed it on a higher level of literary significance.

The two reliable copies of Lessing's drama were supplied by his two friends, C.F. von Blanckenburg and J.J. Engel (Grimm and Hermand, 1987:11); they contain the outline of the drama and an ending of deliverance. This theme of salvation was soon

further pursued by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, who wrote the most extensive and most famous version of the Faust legend.

2.2.3 Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

A Portrait of Goethe⁴



One of the most celebrated German literary geniuses of all time, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749 - 1832), completed the first part of his *Faust* in 1806. It was published in 1808 and a deeply philosophical second part followed by 1832, the year of Goethe's death. The first part was revised and reprinted in 1928-29. Goethe transformed the legend of Faust into a masterpiece of German literature. It gave the legend its "most artistic and symbolic form" (Grimm and Hermand, 1987:20). Goethe not only tells the dramatic and controversial story of Faust with great poetic force, but also infuses the drama with psychological and spiritual elements throughout.

⁴ Eugène Delacroix (1798-1863), *Portrait of Goethe*, 1828. No. 1 from the set of 18 lithographs of Goethe's *Faust*. From the Davison Art Centre Collection at Wesleyan University. Available from: <http://www.wesleyan.edu/dac/>. Used with permission. (Personal Communication, 15 Aug 2010).

“Goethe worked so freely with the old myth, and integrated it so completely into his world view, that his *Faust* replaced the old myth. Even passages which are largely taken from, or inspired by, the chapbook were transformed into a new symbolic meaning” (Grimm and Hermand, 1987:13). Goethe’s most famous addition to the chapbook versions is the element of love in the tragedy of Gretchen tragedy.

In the chapter, “Music in Goethe’s *Faust*: Its First Dramatic Setting”, author Richard Green⁵ makes us aware of all the musical elements that are featured throughout the narrative. It is an ever-present component that contributes to the style and serves as a vehicle for the plot. Green suggests that Goethe’s drama provoked so many musical responses, firstly, because of the musical nature of the text itself, and secondly, because of the power of the drama and the extensiveness of the scenes. There are many direct references to music in the narrative itself, as well as indirect references where the presence of music is suggested.

All the *Faust* literature written before Goethe’s version surely stands second in line to his. Goethe transformed the legend into a modern and universal subject, incorporating love, joy, despair, philosophy and spirituality (Newman, 1905:84).

The psychological perspectives on the universal themes made *Faust* a work of art that certainly stood the test of time. Goethe’s unparalleled creation has been the inspiration of countless artists and composers.

2.2.4 Nikolaus Lenau

Nikolaus Lenau (1802-1850) was one of the most prominent poets of the first half of the 19th century. His strength lay in short lyric poems that conveyed a melancholy atmosphere (Schmidt, 1971: Preface). To take on the theme of *Faust* so soon after Goethe’s masterpiece was published in its entirety was not a problem for Lenau. He argued that the themes of man’s relationship with the universe and the balance of

⁵ In *Our Faust? Roots and Ramifications of a Modern German Myth* by Grimm and Hermand, 1987: [all the pages of the chapter].

powers between him and the world are so general and all-embracing that no two poets will treat the subject alike. He completed the 23-part poem in 1836; it was greeted with praise as well as severe criticism (Schmidt, 1971:110). Contrary to Goethe's version, Lenau condemns Faust to hell and the drama ends in tragedy, when the devil gets his part of the bargain.

Lenau's literary works are mostly unknown to readers today and he is predominantly remembered for his poems that were set to music by various contemporary composers. Lenau's dramatic works inspired a number of programmatic compositions of the Romantic era. The best known of these compositions are the two works by Franz Liszt, the *Mephisto Waltz* and *Der nächtliche Zug* known collectively as *Two Episodes from Lenau's Faust* (Grim, 1988:1).

2.2.5 Thomas Mann

Another celebrated version of the Faust legend was by the German novelist Paul Thomas Mann (1875-1955). His novel was published in 1947 and entitled *Doktor Faustus: Das Leben des deutschen Tonsetzers Adrian Leverkühn, erzählt von einem Freunde*, translated as *Doctor Faustus: The Life of the German composer Adrian Leverkühn as told by a friend*.

Set in the modern context of Germany during the 20th century, the story centres on the life and work of a composer Adrian Leverkühn. The character was based on the life of Nietzsche, whose syphilitic degeneration had long fascinated Mann (Hamilton, 1979:325). He set the story of this fictitious composer in the context of the Viennese School of music, which culminated in Schoenberg's 12-tone system.

Leverkühn, the Faust character, establishes a pact with the devil to achieve creative brilliance. Leverkühn purposely contracts syphilis to intensify his artistic inspiration through madness. Some of the passages in the novel were taken directly from the ancient *Faustbuch*. *Doctor Faustus* is rich in symbolism and it is as much a

record and representation of early-20th-century German history as it is a personal testimony (Hamilton, 1979:232 and 337). The book comments on the madness of extremist politics and the doomed fate of the entire German nation.

As the work was published so soon after the Second World War, it was received with harsh criticism. Regardless of the novel's difficult start, Thomas Mann won the *German Goethe Prize* in 1949 (Hamilton, 1979:355) and the novel is currently considered as the most successful and popular modern version of the Faust legend.

Thomas Mann's *Doctor Faustus* concludes this brief literary enquiry into Faust tales. These works are evidently not a complete list of Faust stories, but for the purpose of this thesis only a brief overview of the most significant works is required.

2.3 The Story of the Faust Legend

The second part of this chapter will focus on outlining the plot of the Faust legend as told by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. There are numerous versions of the Faust legend told by many writers over the centuries and therefore not one single plot can be summarised and accepted as "the story of the *Faust* legend". This thesis will concentrate on the most famous version of the story, the one written by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe.

A summary of Goethe's drama will sketch the events and characters in his version of the legend. Each literary version of the *Faust* legend contains variations on the setting, the events and characters. An attempt to include a description of all the alternative stories and adaptations would be impossible within the framework of this thesis.

2.3.1 The Definition of a Legend

A legend is characterised as a fictitious tale or unverifiable story that is handed down by tradition and commonly accepted as having some historical validity. It is

typically a narrative of human endeavours, concerned with a real person and or place, and often involves supernatural powers or occurrences (adapted from *Webster's Dictionary of the English Language*, 1993:818).

A legend is not to be confused with a myth, which is to be explained as an invented tale associated with gods and divine heroes, designed to offer an explanation for certain phenomena and miracles (*Webster's Dictionary of the English Language*, 1993:946). A legend, unlike a myth, is deemed realistic and believable, not fundamentally designed to teach a moral lesson, but rather a reflection of a psychological truth. The experiences often reaffirm commonly held values or beliefs.

A legend usually has elements of realism, morality and universality. Realism treats subject matter that pertains to everyday life: the ordinary, familiar, mundane aspects of life. Morality in literature is designed to instruct us about virtuous conduct or the lack thereof. Universality assumes that certain truths are common to all people.

2.3.2 The Story of *Faust* Part One

The *Faust* legend tells the story of a German scholar, magician, alchemist and philosopher called Faust, who is frustrated by the limitations of his earthly wisdom and is consequently in search of divine knowledge, universal truths and the ultimate pleasures of life. Faust encounters the devil, named Mephistopheles, who vows to offer him a chance to discover the secrets of the world as well as his services to Faust, along with all the power, knowledge and opportunity to experience the profoundest pleasures in exchange for his immortal soul when he dies.⁶

The first part of Goethe's *Faust* opens, as was traditional in the European theatre world, with a *Dedication and a Prelude in the Theatre*. The essence of the Prelude suggests that poetry mirrors the world; the world is a stage. It also implies that "the

⁶ The plot summary of Goethe's *Faust* was compiled from three sources: Cummings (2004); Corder (1886); and personal annotations from a German literature course completed at Oberlin College and Conservatory in 2007.

world of poetic creation is a place of refuge from harsh reality” (Atkins, 1958:11). This introduction is followed by a *Prologue in Heaven*. The Prologue begins with God and Mephistopheles conversing about the mortal scholar and alchemist, Faust. Mephistopheles mocks Faust for his dedication to God and suggests that Faust’s thirst for knowledge is a weakness that will cost him his soul.

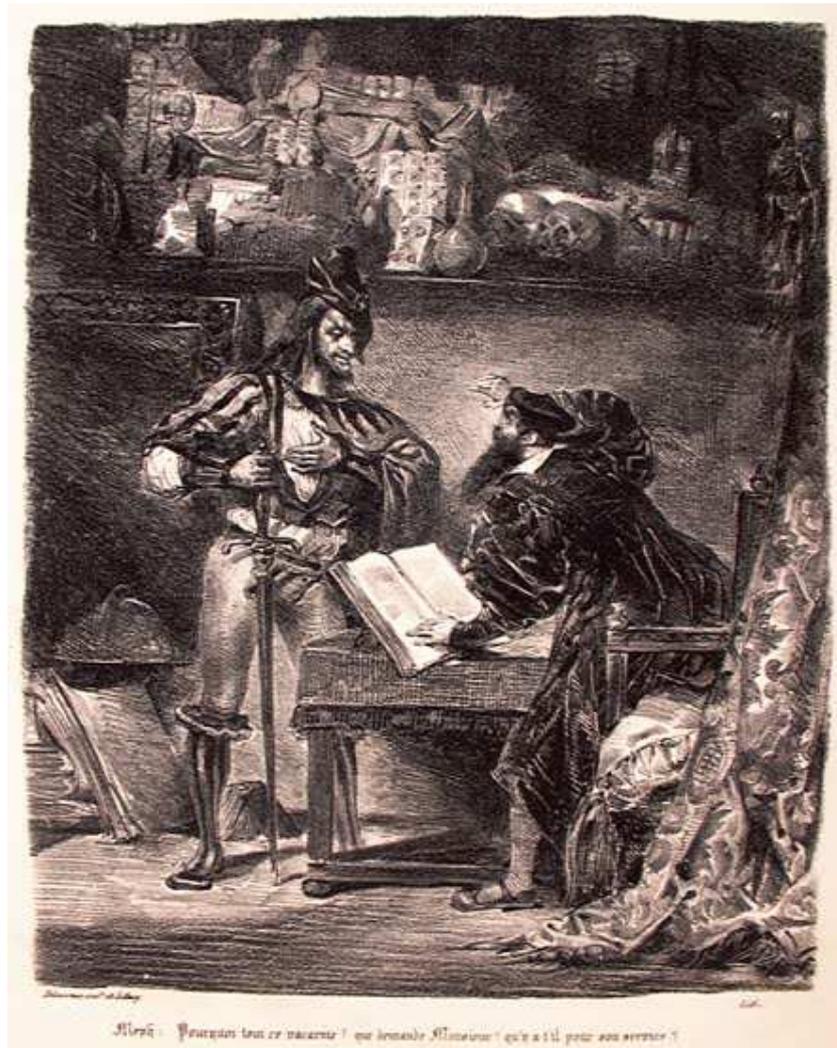
Faust is in turmoil over his attempts to understand the deepest mysteries of the universe. Mephistopheles wagers that he can bend the will of Faust away from God by providing him with the knowledge he seeks and hence winning his soul for eternity. God grants Mephistopheles permission to tempt Faust, saying that even in his darkest moment Faust will be conscious of the righteous path.

The next scene is set in Faust’s study. Faust laments in despair over his lack of knowledge of the universe, despite his studies in philosophy, medicine, law and theology. He concludes that he knows nothing about the truths and mysteries of the world and contemplates drinking poison.

Faust is distracted and uplifted by the joyous singing of a crowd in the street, passing by the window. It is Easter morning, a time of hope and renewal. Faust takes a walk with his assistant, Wagner, to clear his mind. During their walk they encounter a suspicious black poodle that circles them and follows them home.

In Faust’s study, the poodle’s supernatural presence manifests itself as Mephistopheles, who appears dressed as a scholar.

Mephistopheles Appears To Faust⁷



Mephistopheles proposes to reveal the secrets of the world to Faust and to allow him to experience the profoundest pleasures. In return, when Faust dies, he must surrender his immortal soul to Mephistopheles. Faust consents to the deal, which would be completed the moment Faust exclaims that he had experienced the highest and most exquisite pleasure attainable by man. The pact is sealed with blood.

Faust's and Mephistopheles' travels commence at Auerbach's Cellar, a tavern in Leipzig, where men are drinking and singing. Mephistopheles bores holes in one of the tables and makes wine flow continuously from it. The men are delighted at first, but

⁷ Eugène Delacroix (1798-1863), *Mephistopheles Appears to Faust*, 1828. No. 6 from the set of 18 lithographs of Goethe's *Faust*. From the Davison Art Centre Collection at Wesleyan University. Available from: <http://www.wesleyan.edu/dac/>. Used with permission. (Personal Communication, 15 Aug 2010).

when spilled wine turns to fire, they accuse him of sorcery and attack him. Mephistopheles places a spell on them and disappears with Faust. The experience only disgusts Faust; playing tricks on drunkards is not his idea of an ennobling activity.

Subsequently Mephistopheles gives Faust a potion that erases thirty years of aging and makes him appear youthful again. Faust drinks it and instantaneously becomes a handsome young nobleman who attracts the attention of every woman.

Faust soon meets a girl called Marguerite, nicknamed Gretchen, and becomes infatuated with her. Faust leaves a casket of jewellery for Gretchen in her room. When she discovers the jewels, they dazzle her. However, Marguerite's mother regards the casket as suspect and donates it to the church. Mephistopheles curses this turn of events and ridicules the church as a devourer of wealth. Meanwhile, Marguerite wonders about her admirer.

With the help of Mephistopheles, Faust meets Marguerite and woos her in the garden. She is overcome with joy that a young nobleman finds interest in her. Faust is torn between love and lust, but Mephistopheles sees to it that lust conquers. Soon Faust and Marguerite make love and she falls pregnant.

Faust and Mephistopheles are confronted by Marguerite's brother, Valentine, who is furious over the theft of his sister's virginity. In a sword fight Faust kills Valentine. The turmoil attracts the neighbours and Faust and Mephistopheles flee.

A year passes. Faust, still eager for knowledge, attends an annual gathering of sorcerers and evil spirits, called Walpurgis Night. According to German folklore, Walpurgis Night occurs on April 30th on Brocken Mountain, in the Harz mountain chain between the Weser and Elbe Rivers.

A fraction of Faust's former self resurfaces when he has a vision of Marguerite in prison. Guilt-ridden, he persuades Mephistopheles to help him rescue her. She has been imprisoned for drowning the baby that Faust fathered, an act that has driven her insane with guilt. After riding magic steeds to the prison in the darkest night, they gain entry to

the dungeon. Faust enters her cell. She regains her sanity upon recognizing Faust's voice, and when she rises, her chains fall off. As the sun rises, Faust urges her to flee with him, but Marguerite refuses to leave. When Mephistopheles appears, she recognizes him as an evil spirit and throws herself upon the mercy of God, begging angels to descend from heaven to protect her. A voice from above calls out: "She is saved". Mephistopheles and Faust disappear. This ends the first part of the tragedy.

2.3.3 The Story of *Faust* Part Two

The second part of *Faust* takes place in a universal macrocosmic setting. It contains many enigmatic, symbolic and psychological aspects and therefore the events that follow may seem somewhat disjunctive as a narrative line. The symbolic elements often override the narrative line. A full explanation of the symbolic representation in either parts of *Faust* is unfortunately beyond the scope of this thesis.

The second part of the tragedy commences in a lush field, where Faust lies asleep, surrounded by flying spirits, singing and playing harps. The music awakens him and the sunrise makes Faust aspire to new adventures and purpose.

The next scene takes place in the Court of an Emperor in deep financial distress. Mephistopheles disguises himself as a court jester and points out that the country is rich in gold waiting to be mined. In the morning, as the emperor basks in his sun garden with members of his court, a marshal reports that the financial crisis has ended. When Faust and Mephistopheles present themselves to the emperor, his treasurer gives them credit for the miraculous financial turn-around by their invention of paper money.

For his amusement, the emperor requests Faust to summon the spirits of Paris and Helen of Troy. Mephistopheles instructs Faust how he can acquire the power to work such a wonder from the Eternal Mothers, who live deep within the earth. He gives Faust a magic key that transports him to their dwelling.

When Faust returns to the court, he produces the images of Paris, Helen and a Greek temple. To do so, Faust must forget the state of actuality and enter that of the Infinite and the Eternal. Helen's beauty overwhelms Faust. When he tries to enter the scene, an explosion knocks him unconscious and the images disappear. Mephistopheles carries him away and this concludes the first act.

Act Two commences in Faust's old chamber. His pupil, Wagner, has been conducting laboratory experiments and has created a tiny human being named Homunculus. When the creature hovers over Faust, he sees into his dreams of Greece and Helen and warns Mephistopheles not to awaken him; the shock of finding himself in his mundane surroundings could kill him. Instead, Faust must be taken to Greece to share the Walpurgis Night, a wild chaos of allegory and philosophy.

Faust meets Chiron the centaur, a mythological creature that is half-man and half-horse. Chiron was the wise tutor of Hercules, Achilles and Asclepius, the Greek god of healing. Faust describes his adoration of Helen and bids Chiron speak of her. The centaur verifies that the centuries have not dimmed her beauty; she remains young and beautiful, her figure beyond compare.

Meanwhile, Mephistopheles frolics with the witches, and Homunculus travels in search of the secret to becoming fully human. Homunculus learns that there is only one way for him to achieve his goal: let time and nature do it for him. So he hurls himself into the sea, to evolve as previous primordial life forms. This is an interesting foreshadowing of Darwin's theory of evolution (Cummings, 2004).

In Act Three Faust and Mephistopheles travel to Sparta, home of King Menelaus, who has returned from the Trojan War with Helen. While he celebrates the Greek conquest of Troy, Helen and a chorus of captive Trojan women fret about what will be done with them. Mephistopheles, in the guise of a hag, tells them Menelaus means to kill them. However, he says, they can save themselves if they submit to the protection of a

great lord of the north, who is Faust. Terrified, they flee with Mephistopheles to Faust's castle. There, over time, Faust entices and wins Helen.

War breaks out between the Greek soldiers and Faust's own army. Faust and Helen flee to Arcadia, a pastoral region in southern Greece. There they live peaceful, secluded lives and raise a son, Euphorion. He inherits Faust's restless curiosity and yearns to explore beyond the woods and cliffs that confine him. One day he begins to climb a rock face, attracted by the roar of the unseen ocean. At the top of the precipice, overcome with the ecstasy of the moment, he hurls himself into the air, achieves momentary flight and then falls to his death. Euphorion calls out to Helen. A mother cannot let the pleas of her child go unanswered, and so she bids Faust farewell, embracing him for the last time and leaves. Faust grieves.

In the fourth act Faust seeks a practical endeavour for his energies and can think of none better than to reclaim land from the sea and put it to productive use. It so happens, Mephistopheles says, that the same emperor whom they saved from a financial crisis owns such land and needs help in a war. After Mephistopheles and Faust bring him victory, the emperor grants Faust land for his project.

In the fifth act, Faust wishes to acquire more property on which an elderly couple, Baucis and Philemon, live. Faust promises to relocate them to a grand estate, but they decline the offer. Without Faust's knowledge, Mephistopheles and his henchmen kill the old couple and burn their property. Faust is deeply remorseful. Four ghosts, who are born of the smoke and fire, visit Faust at midnight. They are *Want*, *Blame*, *Need* and *Care*. Three of them warn Faust that he will soon die. Faust realizes that man cannot know everything about life; he must content himself with limited knowledge. *Care* blinds him.

When spirits of the dead start digging Faust's grave, he mistakenly thinks the labourers are continuing his land reclamation project. Overjoyed, he exclaims that he is

experiencing the great moment he has been looking for – this profoundest moment of happiness.

Faust's words fulfil the pact with Mephistopheles in providing Faust a moment of highest ecstasy. But Faust's joy is because of his project for the benefit of mankind and not for his own contentment. Faust dies, at age 100, and God claims him for heaven and he is saved. Angels receive him and they ascend to the highest realm. Mephistopheles is defeated.

In many versions of the legend before and after Goethe, the story would end with Faust irrevocably corrupted and when the pact is fulfilled, the devil hauls him off to hell.

The second part of Goethe's *Faust* concludes with the famous last lines known as the *Chorus Mysticus*,⁸ a declaration of faith and love.

Chorus Mysticus

Alles Vergängliche	All that is past of us
ist nur ein Gleichnis;	Was but reflected;
das Unzulängliche,	All that was lost in us
hier wird's Ereignis;	Here is corrected;
das Unbeschreibliche,	The indescribable,
hier ist es getan;	Here is done;
das Ewigweibliche	Woman's Divinity
zieht uns hinan.	Leads us on.

This final verse consists of some of the most famous lines from Goethe's *Faust* and is often found in music compositions. The most renowned example of this is Mahler's *Eighth Symphony*.

⁸ From *Faust: Der Tragödie erster und zweiter Teil; Urfaust*.(2007) by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. München: Verlag C.H. Beck. The English translation taken from *Faust Parts I and II* by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1965) as translated by Sir Theodore Martin. London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd, p. 416.

The drama ends with *An Epilogue on Earth*, which serves as the counterpart to the *Prologue in Heaven*. The Epilogue clarifies the final points, the symbolic characters, themes, ideas and motifs, and serves to return us to the realms of finite human beings (Atkins, 1958:263).

This concludes the plot outline of Goethe's very imaginative and complex poem, *Faust*. This second chapter has dealt with the origin, literary history and plot of the *Faust* legend. The third chapter commences the investigation of musical compositions inspired by the Faust legend.

CHAPTER THREE

Compositions Inspired by the Faust Legend

3.1 Introduction

The third chapter of this thesis provides a succinct list of the foremost compositions inspired by the Faust legend since the 19th century. Compiling such a list of compositions on the subject of Faust is a huge task and this account can by no means be all-inclusive and complete.

The compositions chosen were selected according to:

- The availability of information and resources about the compositions;
- The status and popularity of the works and/or composers;
- The level of significance to the subject matter.

A vast number of Faust compositions have been omitted from this historical overview. The purpose of the research was not to provide an exhaustive list of names and dates, but instead to give useful information on some of the most renowned Faust compositions. Because of the large number of works discussed below, only a brief summary of each composition is possible.

For a list of additional compositions concerned with the Faust legend, particularly concerning very early, lesser-known works, the article “The Faust Legend, And Its Musical Treatment by Composers” by Frederick Corder (1886) and the books *Faust In Der Musik Teil I* and *Faust In Der Musik Teil II* by Hermann Fähnrich (1978) may be consulted. Both of these sources are now outdated in the sense that they do not include any contemporary or popular music compositions.

The table of Faust compositions below is arranged in order of composition dates, from the earliest 19th century works to most recently composed works. This is followed by a brief discussion of each composition.

3.2 Table of Faust Compositions

In the table below compositions No. 1 to 17 correspond to numbers 3.3.1 to 3.3.17 respectively in the section on Faust compositions of the 19th century. Compositions No. 18 to 31 correspond respectively to numbers 3.4.1 to 3.4.14 in the sections on Faust compositions of the 20th century.

Composer	Name of Composition	Date
19th Century Compositions		
1. Ludwig von Beethoven	Aus Goethe Faust: Es war einmal ein König	1809
2. Louis Spohr	Faust	1813
3. Franz Schubert	Gretchen am Spinnrade	1814
4. Richard Wagner	Faust Overture	1840
5. Peter J von Lindpaintner	Faust Overture	1840
6. Hector Berlioz	La Damnation de Faust	1846
7. Charles Valentin Alkan	Grand Sonata	1848
8. Robert Schumann	Scenes from Goethe's Faust	1853
9. Franz Liszt	Faust Symphony & Two Scenes from Lenau's Faust	1854-57
10. Charles Gounod	Faust	1859
11. Anton Rubinstein	Faust: A Musical Portrait for Orchestra	1864
12. Arrigo Boito	Mephistopheles	1868
13. Florimond Louis Hervé	Le Petit Faust	1869
14. Pablo de Sarasate	Faust Fantasy	1874
15. Modest Mussorgsky	Mephistopheles' Song of the Flea	1879
16. Heinrich Zöllner	Faust	1887
17. Gustav Mahler	Symphony No. 8	1906-07
20th Century Compositions		
18. Richard Thiele	Faust and Gretchen: A Comic Sketch	Unknown
19. Ferruccio Busoni	Doktor Faust	1916-25
20. Igor Stravinsky	Soldier's Tale	1918
21. Sergei Prokofiev	The Fiery Angel	1919-26
22. Jan Bouws	Lied van die Vlooi	19--
23. Havergal Brian	Faust	1955-56
24. Henri Pousseur	Votre Faust	1960-67
25. Konrad Boehmer	Doktor Faustus	1983
26. Alfred Schnittke	Faust Cantata & Historia von Doktor Johann Fausten	1983 1994
27. Charlie Daniels Band	The Devil Went Down to Georgia	1979
28. The Fall	Faust Banana	1986
29. Randy Newman	Faust	1993
30. Art Zoyd	Faust	1993-95
31. Muse	The Small Print	2003

3.3 Faust Compositions of the 19th Century

In the early 19th century German literature regained artistic prominence and had a great influence on all forms of music. The thoughts and emotions of the poets could emerge through the music. With this “newly augmented vigour” (Fischer-Dieskau, 1988:11) many texts of great literary value inspired composers to incorporate them in song.

Each compositional entry below is introduced with a very brief biographical note on the composer under discussion, notwithstanding the fact that in most cases the information is common knowledge. This is then followed by a discussion of the composer’s Faust composition concerned.

3.3.1 Ludwig van Beethoven *Es war einmal ein König (1809)*

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 – 1827) is regarded as one of the most gifted and admired composers of all time. He is universally known and loved for his symphonies, chamber music compositions, piano works and many other musical compositions.

Beethoven was completely captivated by the poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and his literary works. In a biography of Beethoven, George Marek (1970:152) tries to explain the respect that Beethoven had for Goethe: “Admiration is too weak a word. Beethoven almost worshiped Goethe”. In exploring letters and journals of Beethoven, as published by Michael Hamburger (1960), it is evident that Beethoven greatly cherished Goethe’s writings and was very much inspired by them. In a letter to Bettina Brentano on the 10th of February 1811, Beethoven exclaims: “I have composed some music (to Egmont), purely out of love for his (Goethe’s) writings, which give me such happiness” (Hamburger, 1960:84).

Ample correspondence took place between Beethoven and Goethe. These two legendary personages met each other at Teplitz in 1812, where Beethoven played the piano for Goethe (Burnham and Steinberg, 2000:289).

Among the music based on Goethe's work, Beethoven's *Egmont Overture* is one of the best known. The only setting of an extract from *Faust* that Beethoven produced was a song for voice and piano, called *Es war einmal ein König*, translated as *There Once Was a King*, which appears in a set of six songs as opus 75.

Six Songs, Op. 75:

1. *Mignon*, from Goethe
2. *Neue Liebe, neues Leben*, from Goethe
3. ***Es war einmal ein König, from Goethe's Faust***
4. *Gretels Warnung* from Gerhard Anton von Halem
5. *An den fernen Geliebten*, from Christian Ludwig Reissig
6. *Der Zufriedene*, from Christian Ludwig Reissig

These songs were published as a collection in 1810 that was dedicated to Princess Kinsky (Burk, 1946:338). *Es war einmal ein König* is also known as *Aus Goethes Faust* (From Goethe's *Faust*) or *Song of the Flea*. In the *All Music Guide Online*, Grimshaw (n.d.) describes the song as a "farical ballad sung by Mephisto. It describes a king who takes an unusual and magnanimous liking to a lowly flea. [...] The king has a tiny but glamorous suit tailored for his little friend, and even appoints him and his fellow fleas to positions of nobility. [...] Beethoven brilliantly sets this ludicrous scenario".

Goethe's work commented strongly on his beliefs and views of life. In a similar way Beethoven expressed his life philosophy through his music. His symbolic expression of good inevitably overcoming evil is clearly portrayed in all of his compositions.

The levels of Beethoven's ingenious compositions were rarely matched by other composers and likewise Goethe is deemed as a literary god that few have been able to

equal. It is therefore often regretted that Beethoven never attempted to produce a symphonic setting of *Faust*.

3.3.2 Louis Spohr *Faust* (1813)

German composer and violinist **Louis Spohr** (1784-1859) was one of the first composers to produce a musical setting of the *Faust* drama. This composition was also the very first opera setting of *Faust*.

Louis Spohr firstly established himself as a violinist before becoming known as a composer. He chiefly composed solo works and concertos for violin before extending his skills to other musical styles. He was determined to prove himself as a composer and therefore focused on opera and symphonic music as compositional genres.

His three-act opera *Faust* was written in 1813 in a period of four months, although the first performance was only given in 1816 in Prague (Brown, 2001b: Vol. 24:199, 200). Spohr employed musical motifs to portray the characters and give structure to the opera. The idea of using motifs as a predominant technique had not yet been explored by composers at the time and Spohr was one of the first composers to develop this idea. In 1852 Spohr revised the opera and replaced all the spoken dialogue with recitatives.

In the essay “Music in Goethe’s *Faust*: Its first Dramatic Setting” author Richard Green (Grimm and Hermand, 1987:53) explains that Spohr’s *Faust* opera is primarily based on a text prepared by Josef Karl Bernard, who borrowed directly from the old folk plays and also from F. Maximilian Klinger’s *Fausts Leben, Thaten und Höllenfahrt* of 1791.

Based on earlier legends, the story is relatively different from most of the operas to follow. In Spohr’s opera the most noteworthy difference is the omission of the

Marguerite character and instead has a love triangle between Faust and two lovers. The opera ends in tragedy as Mephistopheles hauls Faust to hell.

3.3.3 Franz Schubert *Gretchen Am Spinnrade (1814)*

Franz Schubert (1797-1828) is a Romantic composer particularly famous for his chamber music, symphonies and in particular his song cycles. In the 1820s and 1830s the Austrian composer was referred to and celebrated as “the Lied composer Franz Schubert” or “the composer of *Erlkönig*”, which was his most famous composition (Gibbs, 2000:43).

Schubert’s bold and exciting song writing gave the genre a more eminent status. Schubert gave opus numbers to most of his songs, which implied that he considered them as noteworthy compositions (Schneider, 1959:108). He is often praised as the creator of the *lied*. “But Schubert, by his adoption of the rhythm of the spoken word, was the first to transmute poetry and the natural tones of the voice into song, and to enshrine in poetry and music the common spirit of humanity” (*ibid.*).

Schubert, like most 19th century composers, was greatly inspired by Goethe — the most renowned living German poet of the time. From 1810 to 1828 Schubert wrote about 630 songs using texts from more than one hundred poets. Seventy-four of those songs were settings of Goethe’s poetry, including *Erlkönig*, *Gretchen am Spinnrade*, *Heidenröslein*, *Rastlose Liebe*, extracts from *Wilhelm Meister* and *Mignon’s Song* (Gibbs, 2000:45).

Gretchen am Spinnrade is a poem taken directly from the first part of Goethe’s *Faust*. The song was composed on October 19, 1814 (Gibbs, 2000:43). It is a musical painting of the scene where Gretchen is spinning at a spinning-wheel, as well as a psychological depiction of the suffering that imprisons her.

The Refrain

Meine Ruh' ist hin,
Mein Herz ist schwer;
Ich finde sie nimmer
Und nimmermehr.

My peace is gone,
My heart is heavy;
I shall find it never
Never more.

Marguerite at the Spinning Wheel⁹



In his songs, Schubert often used “material phenomena as metaphors for psychological states of mind” (Gibbs, 2000:45). The spinning wheel is represented by perpetual motion in the piano accompaniment. Gibbs maintains that such procedures

⁹ Painting by Eugène Delacroix (1798-1863) of *Marguerite at the Spinning Wheel*, 1828. No. 11 from the set of 18 lithographs of Goethe's *Faust*. From the Davison Art Centre Collection at Wesleyan University. Available from: <http://www.wesleyan.edu/dac/>. Used with permission. (Personal Communication, 15 Aug 2010).

express more than mere descriptive tone painting of a realistic element in the poem, but also convey the dominant mood of the literary text.

3.3.4 Richard Wagner *A Faust Overture (1840) and Seven Faust Songs (1831)*

German composer **Richard Wagner** (1813-1883) is celebrated mainly for his many operas.

In a biography of Wagner Robert Gutman (1971) suggests that Wagner's curiously indecisive attitude towards Goethe led commentators to ignore the extent of his debt to Germany's greatest poet.

Wagner was a late Romantic and embraced tragedy in much of his music. He was inspired by many of Goethe's ideas and philosophies and represented them in various forms in his operas. The story lines and moral perspectives of his operas often embodied these ideas and philosophies. Wagner's operas, also known as *musical dramas* (Dahlhaus, 1992:156), were filled with leitmotifs, rich harmonies and thick orchestration. Wagner wrote the librettos to all of his operas. Examples of these are: *Der fliegende Holländer*, *Tannhäuser*, *Tristan und Isolde*, *Das Rheingold*, *Die Walküre*, *Parsifal*, *Lohengrin*, etc.

Wagner composed his *Faust* music when he was still fairly young, unlike most of the other *Faust* music composers, who concerned themselves with the topic much later in their lives, and for many of them *Faust* featured in one of their last compositions.

Wagner composed a set of seven songs¹⁰ from Goethe's *Faust* called *Sieben Kompositionen zu Goethe's Faust* in 1831. A revised version was produced in 1832 (Griffiths, 2004:866).

1. *Lied der Soldaten*
2. *Bauern unter der Linde*
3. *Branders Lied*
4. *Lied des Mephistopheles*
5. *Lied des Mephisto*
6. *Meine Ruh ist hin*
7. *Melodrama*

The *Faust Overture* was intended to be the opening movement of his *Faust Symphony*. This idea never materialised and the composition was left as a single-movement concert overture. The work was composed from 1839 to 1840 and revised fifteen years later in 1855 (Chamberlain, 1900:338).

In the Master Musicians Series, Robert Jacobs (1968) suggests that in the *Faust Overture* Wagner endeavoured to express the spirit of the following words of Goethe: "Und so ist mir das Dasein eine Last, Der Tod erwünscht, das Leben mir verhasst" [My being is a burden to me, I long for death, my life is heavy].

The question arises why Wagner, the foremost opera composer of the 19th century, did not attempt to compose an opera on the popular subject of Faust?

Irmgard Wagner (2004) attempted to answer this question in a lecture to the Wagner Society by saying:

Wagner insisted on writing his own opera texts. The text of Goethe's *Faust*, however, was a given. It was already by Wagner's active time a monumentalised

¹⁰ The list of song titles as found in Jacobs, Robert L. (1968) *The Master Musicians Series: Wagner*. London: J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd, p. 224.

poetic text that brooked no alterations that barred any new text as a substitute. It was different for the French and Italian composers: Berlioz, Gounod, and Boito. Their audiences could not have insisted on the authentic text, since *Faust* was available to their cultures only in translation anyway. The composer of a German opera, for a German public, could not have taken liberties with Goethe's canonical text".

Neither one of Wagner's two *Faust* compositions is particularly well known or frequently performed today.

3.3.5 Peter Josef von Lindpaintner *Faust Overture (1840)*

Peter Josef von Lindpaintner (1791 – 1856) is a fairly unknown German conductor and composer, who studied composition in Munich. He composed many stage operas, *lieder*, sacred music and instrumental works. Lindpaintner later became the Kapellmeister at Stuttgart, where he remained for the rest of his life (Brown 2001a, Vol. 14: 719).

Frederick Corder (1886) notes an overture and incidental music to Goethe's *Faust*. The overture was published in the 1840s. The exact date of composition is not available and no additional information could be found on this composition. The *Grove Dictionary of Music* does not provide a list of compositions by Lindpaintner as a confirmation of these facts.

3.3.6 Hector Berlioz *La Damnation de Faust (1846)*

Hector Berlioz (1803 – 1869) was a French Romantic composer most famous for his orchestral masterpiece *Symphonie Fantastique* and his cantata setting of *La Damnation de Faust*.

Hector Berlioz discovered Goethe's *Faust* for the first time in 1827 when he read it in a French translation by Gérard de Nerval. He was completely captivated by the

drama: “The marvellous book fascinated me from the first. I could not put it down; I read it incessantly, at meals, at the theatre, in the street” (Cairns, 1969:125).¹¹ *Faust* had a profound effect on Berlioz and inspired him to compose *Eight Scenes from Faust* (*Huit Scènes de Faust*) based on Goethe’s book.

Berlioz was instantly drawn to the character of Faust and felt that the drama was designed to be set to music. In 1828 Berlioz started composing *Eight Scenes from Faust*, comprising nine songs to the verse portions of Gérard De Nerval’s translation of Goethe’s *Faust*. The songs were completed in 1829 and a copy was sent to Goethe and other composers (Barzun, 1956:68, 70, 76). In a letter to Goethe accompanying the score of *Eight Scenes from Faust* Berlioz wrote:

Faust having been my regular reading for some years, I have pondered on this astonishing work so deeply and lovingly that it has come to exercise a kind of spell over me. Musical ideas have associated themselves in my mind with your poetic ideas, and despite a firm resolve never to unite my feeble strains to your sublime accents, little by little the temptation became so strong, the spell so potent, that the music of several scenes came to be written almost without my knowledge.

I have just published my score; and however unworthy an offering it may be, I take the liberty today of rendering homage by sending it to you. I do not doubt that you will have already received a large number of compositions of all kinds, inspired by your prodigious pen, so I have every reason to fear that, coming after so many others, I am merely bothering you. But, living as you do surrounded by fame and glory, even if the petitions of the humble cannot touch you, at least I hope you will forgive a young composer who, his heart uplifted and his imagination set on fire by your genius, cannot restrain a cry of admiration (Searle, 1966:22).

¹¹ From Berlioz’s *Memoirs* edited by David Cairns, 1969: p. 125.

Eight Scenes from Faust (1828-1829) was written for soloists, chorus and orchestra. It was later revised and merged into *La damnation de Faust* (Griffith, 2004:92).

La Damnation De Faust was composed in 1845-46 and came about as an expansion of the *Eight Scenes* composed earlier. Enthused by Goethe's drama, his intention was to create a large dramatic opera, but with minor alterations to complement the music. "Despite these liberties which Berlioz took for translating an action into music, he adhered very faithfully to the form and spirit of his model" (Barzun, 1951:491).

The title *La Damnation de Faust* anticipates the tragic end to this semi-operatic composition, even though it was inspired by Goethe's work. Despite Berlioz's fascination with Goethe and *Faust*, he decided to conclude the composition in despair with *Faust's* soul in Mephistopheles' possession.

The composition is catalogued as a cantata for chorus, soloist and orchestra and often described as a concert opera. The four-part composition is acknowledged as a "highly organized entity whose parts cast mutual reflections one on another, and whose philosophical purport deserves as much meditation, after full and repeated hearings, as that of *Don Giovanni* or *Tristan*" (Barzun, 1951:483).

The first performances of the *Damnation of Faust* took place at the Opéra Comique in December 1846. Audiences were "puzzled by the form of a concert work so obviously dramatic in character, and by the music's bewildering variety of mood and brevity of style, its sizzling pace and sardonic humour, the swiftness of its transitions from earthy brutality to the most translucent beauty, the epigrammatic compression unequalled by anything else in his output and untypical of its time" (*Berlioz and the Romantic Imagination*, 1969:120).

The indifferent reception from Parisian audiences wounded Berlioz deeply. In his *Memoirs* he expressed his agony at the failed performances of the *Damnation of Faust*

in Paris: “Nothing in my career as an artist wounded me more deeply than this unexpected indifference (of the Parisian public)” (Cairns, 1969:416).

With frequent performances after Berlioz’s death, *La Damnation de Faust* became a huge success, also in German-speaking countries (Elliot, 1959:84, 226).

In a review of *La damnation de Faust* in the *New York Times* Anthony Tommasini (2008) points out that Berlioz’s dramatic legend in four parts was never intended to be staged, although most opera companies undertake to do so anyway. It was a musical drama that Berlioz anticipated to be performed in a concert hall rather than on an opera stage.

Rakóczy March, *Dance of the Sylphs* and *Minuet of the Will-o-the-Wisps* are three parts from *La Damnation de Faust* that were extracted from the choral work and published separately as orchestral pieces (Ewen, 1966:41).

The work was ultimately published in 1854 and dedicated to his close friend Franz Liszt. The success it gained after his death would have astonished Berlioz. It became his most esteemed composition among the French.

In the programme notes of a recording of *La Damnation de Faust* Hugh MacDonald (1995:9) wrote: “He [Berlioz] has grasped both the spirit and the feeling of Goethe, the thirst in Faust’s soul, the allure and fatal attraction of Mephistopheles charm, Marguerite’s innocence, and the immensity of nature”.

La Damnation de Faust is one of the most famous musical settings of the *Faust* drama and is still frequently performed today.

3.3.7 Charles Valentin Alkan *Grand Sonata (1848)*

Charles Valentin Alkan (1813 – 1888) was a French virtuoso pianist and composer. Most of his compositions were written for the piano, consisting mainly of sonatas and etudes, intended to be performed by him.

Among his sonatas Alkan composed *Grand Sonata 'Les Quatre âges' (The Four Ages) Opus 33* in 1848 (Griffith, 2004:16) describing four decades in a person's life.

In a description of the Sonata in the *All Music Guide*, Mona DeQuis (n.d.) points out that, although the sonata had been composed in 1848, it did not receive its premiere until 1873. The second movement of *'Les Quatre âges'* is entitled *Quasi-Faust* and uses Goethe's tragic hero as inspiration for the music.

Alkan's style of music is most frequently compared to that of his contemporaries, Franz Liszt, Hector Berlioz and Frederic Chopin.

3.3.8 Robert Schumann *Scenes from Goethe's Faust (1853)*

Robert Schumann (1810-1856) was a Romantic composer of the 19th century, most famous for his ingenious song cycles. In a biography of Schumann, Fischer-Dieskau (1988) noted that no other form of music is better suited to a full understanding of Schumann's growth and decline than a thorough and penetrating study of his *Lieder*.

Schumann was inspired by many poets of the time throughout his life including: Jean Paul (1763 - 1825), Justinus Kerner (1786-1862), Heinrich Heine (1797-1856) and Ludwig Uhland (1787-1862). However, it was Johann Wolfgang Goethe who fascinated and inspired Schumann from his childhood.

The infatuated literature of the time had a direct and personal appeal to Schumann. "Schumann found a continuous source of inspiration in the subjective sentiments of the Romantic poets. He could identify their emotions with his own, so that his music never failed to capture the essential overtones of the verse" (Chissell, 1948:55).

Schumann regarded music as a language that could express the most subtle and mysterious emotions. He only set nineteen of Goethe's poems to music, but many others were included in several of his part-song compositions. Extracts from Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*, of which *'Kensst du das Land'* is most famous, were composed as *Lieder und*

Gesänge aus 'Wilhelm Meister'. Subject matter from Goethe can also be found in Schumann's *Hermann und Dorothea* (Op. 136), *Mignon's Song* and *Braut von Messina* (Op. 100). The Intermezzo for piano in E-minor has the words '*Meine Ruh' ist hin*' printed in the middle section, which is spoken by Gretchen in *Faust*.

Schumann began sketches for his oratorio *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* in 1844. He considered the subject as an opera project, but soon gave up the idea. The work was published without an opus number, as *Szenen aus Goethes Faust* for solo voices, chorus and orchestra. The composition consists of an overture and three parts. Songs 1, 2, 3 and 7 of the third part were completed first. The thirteen scenes were arranged to form three connected parts, but do not form a dramatic or musical unit. The selected scenes were not chosen for the sake of coherence, but more likely on the basis of what Schumann found personally moving and musically suggestive.

Part One included the following scenes from *Faust* Part One:

1. Part of the first scene in the garden with Gretchen and Faust.
2. Gretchen in front of the picture of the 'Mater Dolorosa'.
3. The Cathedral scene.

Part Two is based on material from *Faust* Part Two:

1. The first scene of the first act: 'A pleasant landscape'.
2. The 'Midnight' scene from the fifth act.
3. Faust's death in the fifth act.

Part Three consists of the last scene of Goethe's Part Two, divided into seven numbers.

Many of the scenes that Schumann chose are religious in character. He omitted many of the most notorious scenes, including the tragedy of Gretchen. Schumann also did not incorporate the character of Mephistopheles, who was a powerful force in Goethe's drama. Schumann stuck to the original text very closely.

An adaptation of the drama in the manner of Gounod's opera would have seemed blasphemous to Schumann. [...] Schumann's setting of *Faust* amounts to a

Romantic interpretation, emphasizing the religious aspects and reducing Mephistopheles to a marginal figure. Schumann arranged the last part in an order that is clear and logical, concentrating on the guilt, striving, struggles and salvations of the Faustian man (Fischer-Dieskau, 1988:203).

The work was mainly composed in the last ten years of Schumann's life. A preliminary version of *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* was performed in Weimar, Dresden and Leipzig in 1849 as part of Goethe's 100th birthday celebrations. The Weimar performance was conducted by Franz Liszt.

The last part of the oratorio is often more highly regarded than the other two parts. As Chissell (1948) notes:

In many ways it is to be regretted that Schumann added parts one and two, since the work as a whole is too frequently judged by them, and ignored. Schumann confessed that he found this the hardest problem of all since 'the elements that have to be mastered are too many and too gigantic'. [...] The result is laboured and lacking in all inner driving-power. But part three deserves to be heard more often (Chissell, 1948:189).

For further study of *Szenen aus Goethes Faust*, a detailed musical analysis and musical explanations can be found in Chapter 25 of Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau's book entitled *Robert Schumann: Words and Music*.

Schumann expressed his fear of doing an injustice to the work of Goethe to his friend Brendel: "Why add music to poetry that is perfect by itself?" (Fischer-Dieskau, 1988:207). In 1847 Schumann added a revised version of the final chorus, *Chorus Mysticus*. The work was completed in 1853, when Schumann finally wrote the overture. The first performance of the completed composition was performed in 1862 in Cologne.

In spite of its shortcomings, we can conclude that Schumann's *Scenes from Faust* is a valid setting of this famous and often-composed text. Some of its visionary aspects caused him great pain, such as the lemurs' songs and the angelic choirs,

but he succeeded in interpreting them in a way that expresses their inner meaning more convincingly than the settings by other composers, who tried their hands at setting the drama (Fischer-Dieskau, 1988:208).

3.3.9 Franz Liszt *A Faust Symphony (1854-57) and Two Episodes from Lenau's Faust (1860)*

Hungarian composer and piano virtuoso **Franz Liszt** (1811 - 1886) was a very successful child prodigy whose virtuosity soon transformed him into “the Paganini” of the piano world. Most famous for his many piano etudes and showpieces, Liszt also accomplished much fame for his symphonic poems for orchestra, of which *Les Preludes* is best known.

Liszt was introduced to Goethe's *Faust* in 1830 by Hector Berlioz, who influenced Liszt's musical development greatly (Walker, 1970:304). Liszt met Hector Berlioz at the premiere of his famous *Symphonie fantastique*. The encounter was described by Berlioz in his *Memoires* as follows:

I talked to him about Goethe's *Faust*, which he said he had not read, but about which he soon felt as enthusiastic as I. We felt a deep sympathy for each other, and the friendship between us grew even closer and firmer. He attended the concert and attracted the attention of the entire audience by his applause and demonstrations of enthusiasm (Wilkinson, 1975:19).

A Faust Symphony in Three Character Pictures (after Goethe) was composed in 1854 solely as an instrumental work (Hervey, 1926:107). It consists of the following movements:

1. *Faust*
2. *Marguerite (Gretchen)*
3. *Mephistopheles*

Three years later, in 1857, Liszt added a choral epilogue, *Chorus Mysticus*, to complete the work as we know it today (Merrick, 1987:267). The composition premiered in Weimar in 1857 and was dedicated to Hector Berlioz (Ewen, 1966:217).

The first movement, *Faust*, is comprised of five main themes that each portrays an aspect of Faust's character. The *Gretchen* movement is an engaging representation of love and innocence. In the last movement, *Mephistopheles*, Liszt takes the Faust themes and presents them in parodied form, twisted and manipulated (Watson, 1989:275).

The composition reveals Liszt's concept of the three central characters of Goethe's drama. "It is a brilliantly individual work and into it he [Liszt] poured his whole being" (Beckett, 1963:110).

In a review Arlo McKinnon (1999) describes Liszt's quasi-autobiographical *Faust Symphony* as one of the most significant, but least appreciated, orchestral works of the nineteenth century.

Franz Liszt also composed an orchestral tone poem based on Lenau's *Faust*. The composition, *Two Episodes from Lenau's Faust*, consists of two movements, namely *Der nächtliche Zug - The Midnight Procession* and *Der Tanz in der Dorfschenke (Mephisto-Walzer) - The Dance in the Village Tavern (Mephisto Waltz)* as the second movement.

The sources give different dates for this composition and the dates of the transcriptions for piano. According to Derek Watson (1989:396), *Two Episodes from Lenau's Faust* was composed in 1859, while Walter Beckett (1963:157) dates the composition as 1860 and Anthony Wilkinson (1975:110) as 1862.

In his biography of Liszt Arthur Hervey (1926:118) explains that *The Midnight Procession* describes the passing march in celebration of St. John's Eve that Faust observes through his window. As the procession passes, Faust is left alone and falls into the deepest melancholy. The Mephisto Waltz is "wildly intoxicating" and serves as a strong contrast to the first movement.

Three Mephisto Waltzes and a Mephisto Polka were composed (and/or transcribed) for piano solo by Liszt. The *Mephisto Waltz No. 1* was composed in 1860, *Mephisto Waltz No. 2* in 1881, *Mephisto Waltz No. 3* in 1883 and the Mephisto Polka in 1884.¹² Because of the inconsistency of documented composition dates, it is unclear whether the *Mephisto Waltz No. 1* from *Two Episodes from Lenau's Faust* was first composed for orchestra or for solo piano.

A *Second Mephisto Waltz* for orchestra was composed between 1878 and 1881, according to *The Penguin Companion to Classical Music* (Griffiths, 2004:457). According to Derek Watson (1989:156), the orchestra version was transcribed from the piano version of *Mephisto Waltz No. 2* and premiered in the same year of 1881.

In addition to Liszt's own Faust compositions, he made transcriptions of Berlioz's *La Damnation de Faust* (1840) and of a Waltz from Gounod's *Faust* (1868). Again different sources give different dates: Paul Griffiths (2004:457) dates the transcription of Gounod's *Faust Waltz* as 1861, whereas a transcription of Schubert's *Gretchen am Spinnrade* is dated between 1838 and 1856 (Wilkinson, 1975:111).

From the number of compositions by Liszt drawn from *Faust*, as well as the many transcriptions of *Faust*, it is evident that Liszt was immersed by the legend.

Liszt's *Faust Symphony* is certainly one of the great symphonic compositions in this account of Faust compositions.

3.3.10 Charles Gounod *Faust* (1859)

Charles Gounod (1818 – 1893), a 19th-century French composer, is most renowned for his twelve operatic works and in particular for his compositions of the operas *Faust*, *Mireille* and *Roméo et Juliette*.

¹² The dates were taken from the list of compositions in Anthony Wilkinson, 1975:109.

From a very young age Gounod enjoyed the Romantic poetry of Lamartine and Goethe (Huebner, 2001, Vol. 10:215). In 1856 Gounod began the composition of his opera *Faust*, with Jules Barbier and Michel Carré as the librettists. Additional ballet music for *Faust* was commissioned and composed in 1858.

Faust is a five-act opera that was first performed on 19 March 1859 in the Théâtre Lyrique in Paris. Parisian enthusiasm for the opera was not overwhelming at first, but it enjoyed much appreciation at a later stage (Griffiths, 2004:323). It gained more attention and success than any of Gounod's other operatic compositions. Gounod's *Faust* opera was written shortly after Berlioz's *La Damnation de Faust*.

The libretto, based on the first part of Goethe's story, was written by Carré and Barbier who, according to Demuth (1950) in his *Introduction to the Music of Gounod*, were not too concerned with the philosophy of the *Faust* legend. The events chosen do not form a coherent plot.

In Gounod's version of *Faust*, Marguerite plays a very prominent role, conceivably signifying the Virgin Mary. Mephistopheles was portrayed as a diminished character in terms of his role and power. Gounod's strong Christian beliefs may have influenced these modifications.

The *Jewel Song* sung by Marguerite in the third act of the opera is often independently performed as an excerpt from the opera. It is a short brilliant aria for soprano that is light and innocent. The music to Gounod's *Faust* opera is attractive and melodic, and includes theatrical qualities that are easily digested by audiences. Gounod's opera concludes with Marguerite being lifted to salvation "showing the powers of evil as harmless against innocence" (Demuth, 1950:16).

Gounod envisioned creating *Faust* as his masterpiece, in which he evidently succeeded, as it became his most celebrated composition.

3.3.11 Anton Rubinstein *Faust: A Musical Portrait for Orchestra (1864)*

Anton Rubinstein (1829 – 1894) was a Russian composer and virtuoso pianist, who founded the St Petersburg Conservatory in 1862 with the support of the Grand Duchess, Elena Pavlovna (Griffiths, 2004:682).

According to Ewen (1966) in his book *Great Composers 1300 to 1900*, Rubinstein produced a considerable amount of chamber music, orchestral music, piano works and vocal music, including six symphonies, five piano concertos, ten string quartets, twenty operas, choral and vocal music.

As indicated in the *Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (Garden 2001, Vol. 21:847) Rubinstein composed his Opus 68, *Faust: a Musical Portrait for Orchestra after Goethe*, in 1864. It premiered the same year in Leipzig, Germany. It is said that this movement was intended to be developed into a *Faust Symphony*, but the idea was evidently discarded.

3.3.12 Arrigo Boito *Mefistofele (1868)*

Arrigo Boito (1842 - 1918) was an Italian writer, librettist and composer. He is primarily remembered for his collaboration with the composer Verdi, for whom Boito wrote librettos to the operas *Othello* and *Falstaff* (Griffiths, 2004:105).

Boito began composing *Mefistofele*, an Italian opera, in 1866. The libretto was written by Boito himself. A prologue, four acts and an epilogue make up the opera (Boito, 1944).

Boito's opera became a rousing success despite its disastrous first performance at La Scala, Milan in 1868. Boito completely revised the opera and a reduced version was performed at Bologna's Teatro Communale in 1875 (Laurance, n.d.).

Although faithful to the concept and essence of Goethe's *Faust*, with a triumphant end, it is not as popular as the other large-scale vocal works on the same subjects, such as Berlioz's *La Damnation de Faust* or Gounod's *Faust*.

3.3.13 Florimond Louis Hervé *Le Petit Faust (1869)*

Florimond Louis Hervé (1825 – 1892) was a French singer, composer and librettist. Employed at the Theatre in Paris he composed more than 120 operettas. *Le Petit Faust*, an operetta in four acts, was composed in 1869. The libretto was written by A. Jaime and H. Crémieux. *Le Petit Faust* was written as a parody on Gounod's *Faust* and premiered in Paris 1869 (Lamb, 2001, Vol. 11:449).

3.3.14 Pablo de Sarasate *Faust Fantasy (1874)*

Pablo de Sarasate (1844 – 1908) was a late 19th-century Spanish violinist and composer. According to the *Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, (Schwarz and Stowell, 2001, Vol. 22:281), Sarasate was a renowned virtuoso and consequently many famous composers of the time dedicated their violin compositions to him. Examples are Bruch's Second Violin Concerto and *Scottish Fantasy*, Saint-Saëns's First and Third Concertos and Lalo's famous *Symphonie Espagnol*.

Sarasate composed a virtuoso showpiece for violin and orchestra (or violin and piano) called *Faust Fantasy* in 1874, which was an arrangement of Gounod's opera *Faust* (Griffiths, 2004:694). This fantasy showpiece was among nine concert fantasies based on popular operas of the time. His setting of *Carmen* is the best known of these compositions.

3.3.15 Modest Mussorgsky *Mephistopheles Song of the Flea (1879)*

Russian composer, **Modest Mussorgsky** (1839 – 1881) is known as one of music's great realists; his is most famous for musical characterizations in his song cycles and his opera, *Boris Godunov* (Griffiths, 2004:538).

His orchestral masterpiece, *Night on a Bare Mountain (1867)*, is an eminent example of a tone poem for orchestra. Together with his solo piano showpiece, *Pictures*

at an *Exhibition*, these two compositions are highly regarded and are still often heard in performance today.

In a biography of Mussorgsky, author Montagu-Nathan (1916:83) describes Mussorgsky's solo songs as theatrical music scenes with a vocal part.

Mephistopheles' Song in Auerbach's Cellar, best known as *Mephistopheles Song of the Flea* or *Mephisto's Song of the Flea*, describes a scene from the first part of Goethe's drama. Mephistopheles sings a robust song about a king who gives extravagant attention to a flea in his court. The king also demands his tailor to fashion a gown for the flea and bestows great power on the flea. He causes chaos in the court, but no one dares to harm the flea.

The words of *Mephisto's Song of the Flea* as found in Goethe's *Faust*¹³:

Es war einmal ein König,	Upon a time there lived a king,
Der hatt' einen großen Floh,	This king he had a flea;
Den liebt' er gar nicht wenig,	So much he loved the little thing,
Als wie seine eignene Sohn.	That like his son was he.
Da rief er seinen Schneider,	His tailor he beseeches,
Der Schneider kam heran:	The tailor to him goes,
Da, miß dem Junker Kleider	Now measure my flea for breeches,
Und miß ihm Hosen an!	And measure him for hose.
In Sammet und in Seide	In satin and in laces,
War er nun angetan,	Straightway this flea was dressed;
Hatte Bänder auf dem Kleide,	He had buckles to his braces,
Hatt' auch ein Kreuz daran,	And a cross upon his breast.

¹³ In Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (2007) *Faust: Der Tragödie erster und zweiter Teil; Urfaust*. München: Verlag C.H. Beck. Page 71- 72 and the English translation of the text by Lord Francis Levenson Gower. Michigan: University of Michigan p. 133.

Und war sogleich Minister,	He govern'd then the nation,
Und hatt' einen großen Stern.	With a star his coat to grace,
Da wurden seine Geschwister	And he gave each poor relation
Bei Hof' auch große Herrn.	A pension or a place.
Und Herrn und Fraun am Hofe,	He set the ladies scoffing,
Die waren sehr geplagt,	The lords were sore distress, (sic)
Die Königin und die Zofe	The queen too, and the dauphin,
Gestochen und genagt,	Could neither eat nor rest;
Und durften sie nicht knicken,	And yet they dared not stifle
Und weg sie jucken nicht.	And crush the flea outright;
Wir knichen und ersticken	We reckon it but a trifle
Doch gleich, wenn einer sticht.	To crush one if he bite

The song, composed in 1879, is a setting of a text from a translated version of Goethe's *Faust* by Alexander Strugovshchikov (Griffiths, 2004:539). As one of Mussorgsky's last compositions, *Song of the Flea* was premiered in 1880 with Mussorgsky himself as the pianist.

Igor Stravinsky made an orchestration of Mussorgsky's composition of *Mephisto's Song of the Flea*, as well as Beethoven's Flea Song¹⁴ called *Es war einmal ein König* (Foreman, 2003).

3.3.16 Heinrich Zöllner *Faust (1887)*

Heinrich Zöllner (1854 – 1941) was a German conductor and composer who primarily composed for vocal genres. His works consist of ten operas, which include a

¹⁴ Refer to 3.3.1 in this chapter for an overview of Beethoven's *Es war einmal ein König*.

setting of Faust, several large-scale compositions for chorus and orchestra, symphonies, piano music and smaller vocal works.

Zöllner composed a staged *Faust* drama in 1887 that premiered in the same year in Munich. It consisted of a Prologue and four Acts published as Opus 40. The text was taken from Goethe's *Faust* (Root, 2001 Vol. 27:864).

Zöllner's *Faust* composition was one of his very first major works. This fact makes him distinct from many of the other composers discussed in this study, who produced their Faust compositions towards the end of their lives.

Regrettably, neither a recording nor a performance review of his *Faust* music could be found to be included or discussed.

3.3.17 Gustav Mahler *Symphony No .8 (1906-07)*

Gustav Mahler (1860-1911) is one of the great masters of late Romantic composition. An Austrian composer and foremost conductor of his time, Mahler is known for his gigantic, emotional symphonies and vocal works. He brought new dimensions to late Romantic music and established the bridge to early 20th-century music (Ewen, 1966:234). Mahler was one of the first composers, after Beethoven, to incorporate vocal parts into his symphonic works.

Mahler's *Eighth Symphony in E flat* major was composed in 1906. The work was not performed for four years after its creation. The premiere took place in Munich in September 1910, with Mahler conducting the performance himself. The concert and the response to the work were triumphant (Engel, 1932:118). The *Eighth Symphony* is one of the largest orchestral-choral works in the classical repertoire and as a result of the vast number of singers required it has acquired the name of *Symphony of a Thousand Voices* (Floros, 1985:213).

The symphony consists of two parts, firstly a Latin Pentecost hymn, *Veni Creator Spiritus*, and secondly, the Final Scene from Goethe's *Faust Part II, Chorus Mysticus*.

The metaphysical elements in Goethe's poetry were an immense source of inspiration to Mahler. He was deeply influenced by Goethe's attitude towards life and nature. "But the sun in the sky of his spiritual world was Goethe. He had a remarkable knowledge of his work and [...] was one of the foundations of his intellectual life" (Walter, 1958:119).

Although the two parts originate from different periods, they are united through themes and motifs. Constantin Floros (1985:217) describes them as follows: "The differences between the two texts are evident and undeniable. At the same time, it cannot be ignored that both contain certain theological concepts, including thoughts of grace, love and illuminations".

The second part is described as a music drama, written for full symphony orchestra, seven soloists, double chorus of mixed voices, children's chorus and organ (Mahler, 1946:233).

Mahler turned all his highly developed symphonic powers to giving an answer to the most heart-searching of all questions, by placing in a full-scale musical context the *Veni Creator Spiritus* and the belief in immortality voiced by Goethe in the final scene of *Faust*. This was his *Eighth Symphony*. No other work expressed so fully the impassioned 'yes' to life (Walter, 1958:107).

The *Eighth Symphony* speaks with a universal voice of affirmation and is one of the most convincing representations of Goethe's masterpiece.

3.4 Faust Compositions of the 20th Century

The source of the inspiration behind a composition gives a basis for comparison between the compositions. As Goethe played such an epic role in the creation of the Faust legend, it is relevant to note the extent to which he inspired compositions on the subject.

For Faust compositions from the 19th century it is fairly simple to indicate the source of inspiration. At the time Goethe was a legend with a great influence on the music world. This association with Goethe is often a prominent fact taken into consideration when studying the composers or compositions of the 19th century.

The difficulty with compositions of the 20th century is the sheer variety of genres and the possible roots of the motivation for the origin of the works are especially diverse. In particular with reference to popular music bands, finding valid sources for information proved challenging.

3.4.1 Richard Thiele *Faust and Gretchen – A Comic Sketch*

A Faust composition by **Richard Thiele** was found in the Stellenbosch University Music Library. The score provides the only available information on the piece. The title of the composition is *Faust and Gretchen – A Comic Sketch*. This short vocal duet marked as Opus 201 is intended for a male voice as the *Faust* character and a female voice for *Gretchen*. The duet is accompanied by piano and the libretto was written by W. Köhler taken from Goethe's drama.

Regrettably neither a date of composition nor any biographical information about the composer Richard Thiele could be found for further research or comparison.

3.4.2 Ferruccio Busoni *Faust (1916-25)*

Ferruccio Busoni (1866-1924) was an Italian composer and piano virtuoso. Although born in Italy, Busoni spent most of his life living in Austria and Germany.

In a biography of Busoni Edward Dent (1933) points out that Busoni admired Goethe's poetry and was motivated to use it as a basis for an opera. Busoni was also familiar with the plays of Marlowe, sent to him by an English friend, which included the play *Doctor Faustus*.

The subject of *Faust* occupied Busoni's interest for a long time. "For ten years the subject of *Faust* had been rooted in his mind; the germ of the idea had been present to (sic) him for thirty years and more" (Dent, 1933:290).

Busoni wrote the libretto of *Doctor Faust* himself. *The Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* points out how every major work that Busoni composed after 1918 was conceived as a study for his opera *Doctor Faust*. These compositions were rich in allusions and numerological symbols, and many of them were incorporated directly into the eight-scene opera.

Busoni based *Doctor Faust* on the original ancient books of the Faust legend. In Busoni's opera Faust dies alone, deserted by man, the devil and God. "*Doctor Faust* was the creation of a solitary, and in a certain sense Busoni had been a solitary all his life" (Dent, 1933:293). The score of *Doctor Faust* was left unfinished at Busoni's death in July 1924.

The first performance was given at the Dresden Opera House on the 21st of May 1925. It is a dramatically effective opera, but has not captured the popular imagination (Osborne, 1966:15). It is nevertheless seen as Busoni's literary and theatrical masterpiece.

3.4.3 Igor Stravinsky *A Soldier's Tale (1918)*

The 20th-century Russian composer **Igor Stravinsky** (1882 – 1971) is best known for his ballet compositions *The Firebird* (1910), *Petrushka* (1911) and *The Rite of Spring* (1913).

Stravinsky composed *The Soldier's Tale* (*Histoire du soldat*) in 1918; it premiered at the Lausanne Theatre on 28 September 1918 (Routh, 1975:22). This theatrical stage piece consists of six scenes for three actors and a dancer, accompanied by a small instrumental ensemble of seven players (Boucourechliev, 1987:314).

In a biographical study on Stravinsky André Boucourechliev (1987) notes that the libretto of *The Soldiers' Tale* was taken from one of Afanasyev's tales compiled by C.F. Ramuz. It is the story of a soldier who trades his violin (his soul) to the devil for a book that can predict the future. The tale ends tragically.

Although bearing similarities to the Faust story, *The Soldier's Tale* is not an immediate outcome of the Faust legend. As there are parallels to be drawn between the Faust tale and the fundamental nature of *The Soldiers Tale*, it is a noteworthy composition pertaining to our account of Faust compositions, but it does not directly link to any literary form of the legend itself. The reputation of Stravinsky as a composer is one of the main reasons for including this composition in our list of works.

Stravinsky made two arrangements of his *Soldier's Tale* music: a five-movement suite for violin, clarinet and piano (1919) and an eight-movement instrumental suite (1920) (Routh, 1975:175).

3.4.4 Sergei Prokofiev *The Fiery Angel* (1919-26)

Sergei Prokofiev (1891 – 1953) was a 20th-century Russian composer, described by Paul Griffiths as “a master of irony and hugely productive, he raced from topic to topic, style to style, ranging from bitter sarcasm to the lushest Romantic-fantasy of *The Love for Three Oranges* to the hysteria of *The Fiery Angel*” (Griffiths, 2004: 633).

Prokofiev composed a vast number of operas, ballets, film scores, incidental music, choral orchestral music, symphonies, concertos, orchestral works, chamber music, songs and sonatas.

Prokofiev started composing *The Fiery Angel*¹⁵ in 1919 based on the plot of Valery Bryusov's historical novel of the same title (Hanson, 1964:102). The full alternative title of the novel gives a good description of themes in the opera: “The Fiery

¹⁵ *The Fiery Angle* is also translated as *The Flaming Angel*.

Angel; or, a True Story in which is related to the Devil, not once but often appearing in the Image of a Spirit of Light to a Maiden and seducing her to Various and Many Sinful Deeds, of Ungodly Practices of Magic, Alchemy, Astrology, the Cabalistical Sciences and Necromancy, of the Trial of the Said Maiden under the Presidency of His Eminence the Archbishop of Trier, as well as of Encounters and Discourses with the Knight and thrice Doctor Agrippa of Nettesheim, and with Doctor Faustus, composed by an Eyewitness”.

The opera has five acts, with the libretto written by Prokofiev himself. A piano score was published in 1927 (Prokofiev, 1959:287). *The Fiery Angel* premiered as a radio concert after Prokofiev’s death in Paris in January 1954. The first staged performance of the work took place in Venice 1955 (Nestyev, 1961:507).

Prokofiev revised the work in 1926-27 for a production by Bruno Walter of the Berlin State Opera. Delays in the copying of parts once again prevented the performance of the opera. Prokofiev incorporated much of the opera’s music into his *Third Symphony* (1928) (Redepenning, 2001, Vol. 20:410).

The story of *The Fiery Angel* bears strong resemblance to the Faust story, but like Stravinsky’s *Soldiers’ Tale*, it does not link directly to any literary form of the Faust legend itself and is chiefly included because of Prokofiev’s reputation. The essence of *The Fiery Angel* is nonetheless Faustian and therefore it is a composition to take into account in this study.

3.4.5 Jan Bouws *Die Lied van die Vlooi* (19--)

Jan Bouws (1902 - 1978) was a Dutch-South African composer, lecturer and musician, also well known as the author of many music publications. Bouws immigrated to South Africa in the 1960s and became a lecturer of music at the University of Stellenbosch until 1972. Bouws is known for his substantial contribution to the South African *Music Encyclopaedia* and the *Standard Encyclopaedia of Southern Africa*

(Otterman, 2003). Bouws also wrote extensively about music education and folk music in South Africa.

As a composer he focused most of his attention on songs with Afrikaans texts. He became especially known for a song called *Op my ou ramkietjie* based on a text by the famous Afrikaans poet C. Louis Leipoldt.

A small vocal composition based on Goethe's *Faust* called *Die Lied van die Vlooi uit Goethe se Faust* was discovered in the Stellenbosch Music Library. The title translates as *The Song of the Flea from Goethe's Faust*. This 20-second-long composition is based on the same verse used by Mussorgsky and Beethoven, where Mephistopheles sings in Auerbach's Tavern. The translation into Afrikaans was done by Eitemal (Bouws 1966).

The words¹⁶ are:

Daar was eenkeer 'n koning	Upon a time there lived a king,
En hy had 'n bul van 'n vlooi,	This king he had a flea;
So welkom in sy woning,	So much he loved the little thing,
Soos 'n eie seun so mooi.	That like his son was he.
Toe laat hy sy snyer weet	His tailor he beseeches,
En die snyer het voor hom gestaan	The tailor to him goes,
Vir die prins 'n baadjie gemeet	Now measure my flea for breeches,
En jy pas ook die broekie aan.	And measure him for hose.

Regrettably no further information on the piece could be found. Neither was a date of composition printed in the score, nor was a recording of the piece available.

¹⁶ The words were taken from the music score of *Lied van die Vlooi* by Jan Bouws, available from the Stellenbosch Music Library.

3.4.6 Havergal Brian *Faust (1955-56)*

Havergal Brian (1876 – 1972) was a German-born English composer of the early 20th century. Brian's chief focus was on orchestral music, including overtures, suites, tone poems, concertos and thirty-two symphonies. Most of his music has remained unpublished.

The information about the composer and this composition was taken from the official website of the Havergal Brian Society (2010), which is available from www.havergalbrian.org.

One of Brian's five operas is *Faust*, a music drama in a prologue and four acts, composed between 1955 and 1956. The text is taken from the first part of Goethe's *Faust*, shortened by Havergal Brian himself. The opera is set in German with no English translation.

The composition remains unpublished, with the exception of the first part, *Prologue in Heaven*, which was published by United Music Publishers.

From his *Faust* opera, Havergal Brian transcribed many of the numbers for orchestra.

These include:

- Prologue in Heaven
- Prelude to Act II *Durch die Luft*
- Prelude to Act II, Scene 2 *Abend*
- Night Ride of Faust and Mephistopheles
- Gretchen Songs for soprano and orchestra, or piano
- Cathedral scene for soprano and bass soloists, chorus, organ & orchestra

The opera remains unperformed in its entirety, although the *Prologue in Heaven* was recorded on 9 March 1979 in London for BBC radio.

3.4.7 Henri Pousseur *Votre Faust (1960-67)*

Henri Pousseur (b. 1929) is a Belgian composer most famous for his opera *Votre Faust*, translated as *Your Faust*. In the *Penguin Companion to Classical Music* Paul Griffiths (2004:270) describes the opera as “a composition played out by actors, in a layered and partly mobile connection with singers and instrumentalists”. *Votre Faust* was composed between 1960 and 1967, with the libretto by Michel Butor. The opera premiered in Milan in 1969.

A young composer Henri, the Faust character, is approached by a Theatre Director, the Mephistopheles character, to compose an opera on the theme of the Faust legend. The opera is about this composition, yet to be written.

In the *New Grove Dictionary of Opera* Jean-Yves Bosseur (n.d.) describes *Votre Faust* as an opera that initially appears as a traditional opera. Five actors are used to convey the dramatic element, while four solo singers (soprano, mezzo-soprano, tenor and bass) establish the complex relationship between the actors and the instrumentalists. The orchestra consists of 12 solo musicians who introduce supplementary percussion and vocal interpolations in the form of fragmentary phrases and dialogues. A series of audio-tapes is included that show instrumental and vocal qualities by means of electro-acoustic distortion. *Votre Faust* explores original methods of musical representation.

3.4.8 Charlie Daniels Band *The Devil Went Down to Georgia (1979)*

Charles Edward Daniels (b. 1936) is an American musician known for his contributions to country and southern rock music. He is notorious primarily for his number one country hit *The Devil Went Down to Georgia*.

All the information about the composer and the song was taken from the official website of the Charlie Daniels Band.

The Devil Went Down To Georgia is a song about a young fiddle player who makes a pact with the devil involving dexterous violin playing. If the devil can play the violin better than the young man, he is to own his soul; if not, the boy gains a violin of gold. "I'll bet a fiddle of gold against your soul" says the lyrics.

The interesting element in this country song is that the devil loses the deal fairly to the young fiddle player and leaves shamefully beaten. The fiddle player invites him back to try again someday. "Devil, just come on back if you ever want to try again. 'Cause I told you once, you son of a gun, I'm the best that's ever been".

3.4.9 Konrad Boehmer *Doktor Faustus* (1983)

Konrad Boehmer (b. 1941) is a Dutch composer of German birth, who studied composition, philosophy, sociology and musicology at the University of Cologne. He obtained a doctorate degree on the theory of open form in new music in 1966 (Griffiths, 2004:103). Boehmer became a professor of music history and new music theory at the Royal Conservatory in The Hague in 1972. His works include operas, chamber music, piano music and electro-acoustic music.

Unless otherwise cited, information about this opera and a description of the work was taken from Konrad Boehmer's official website, available at <http://www.kboehmer.nl>. The information from the website was confirmed by Professor Boehmer via email correspondence (Personal Communication, 27 June 2010).

Boehmer's music drama in two acts, *Doktor Faustus* was composed between 1980 and 1983 (Sabbe 2001, vol.3:778). It premiered in Paris in 1985. The Faust story behind this extensive drama in music is based on rare historic documents referring to the legend. The libretto was compiled by Hugo Claus, who used these documents to produce a story that bears little resemblance to the Faust dramas of the Romantic period or of earlier versions. The Mephisto character is replaced with a historical opponent, Thrithemius, who is also an alchemist and astrologer like Faust.

A short synopsis of the opera: After Trithemius saves Faust from a dangerous situation, they conduct an experiment every medieval alchemist was dreaming of: the creation of a homunculus. Once this experiment is successfully accomplished, a beautiful young man, Hans, arises from the phials of the laboratory.

Hans becomes the object of Faust's desires, but before long the boy starts behaving like his historical model – in search of greater things. Hans is then betrayed by Trithemius and killed by the messengers of Rome. Faust is destroyed by the loss of his beloved creation. In a state of complete drunkenness Faust drinks one of the phials from his laboratory and dies from the poison. In the final scene, Trithemius completely neutralizes his former opponent.

Doktor Faustus is written for full orchestra, two protagonists, fifteen soloists, a children's choir, an opera choir and figurants. The opera *Doktor Faustus* was awarded the Rolf Liebermann Prize in September 1983.

3.4.10 Alfred Schnittke *Faust Cantata* (1983) & *Historia von Doktor Johann Fausten* (1994)

Contemporary Russian Composer, **Alfred Schnittke** (1934 – 1998) wrote two compositions on the subject of *Faust*. His first work was a *Faust Cantata* (1983), also called *Seid nüchtern und wachet*, followed by his opera *Historia von Doktor Johann Fausten*, completed in 1994.

The *Faust Cantata* was written for orchestra, chorus, organ and four solo singers. In the *All Music Guide*, John Keillor (n.d.) describes the Cantata as a prequel to Schnittke's *Faust* opera, which was commissioned by the Vienna Singing Academy for the 1983 Vienna Festival. The libretto was taken from the last chapter of the second Faust book by Johann Spies.¹⁷

¹⁷ For background and information on Spies's Faust book, refer to Chapter One: *The Origin of the Legend*.

This secular cantata, consisting of ten parts, is a narration of Faust's descent into hell. The libretto presents a horrific version of the legend, to which the music corresponds. The Cantata was incorporated into the final act of Schnittke's Opera.

Historia von Doktor Johann Fausten is an opera in three acts including a prologue and an epilogue. It was premiered in 1995 in Hamburg by the Hamburg State Opera (Moody 2001, Vol. 22:566).

An article in the *New York Times* by music critic Alex Ross (1995) describes the final act of the opera:

In an inspired anachronism, Mr. Schnittke casts the climax in the form of a diabolically melodious tango, with a contralto croaking in Brechtian style into a microphone and an electric guitar thundering underneath. He then retreats to chilling medievalisms for the admonitory epilogue. No Goethean redemption here: Faust's is a lurid life that ends badly. [...] His (Schnittke's) accomplishment in 'Faust' is singular; no composer before him has come so close to the story's primal terror.

3.4.11 The Fall *Doktor Faustus* (1986)

The Fall is an English punk rock group that was formed in Manchester in 1977. The two principal members are Mark Edward Smith and guitarist Martin Bramah (Laing, n.d.). The Fall has released almost 30 albums in the last two decades. The two best ones are *Live at the Witch Trials* (1979) and *This Nation's Saving Grace* (1985). "Built around Smith's fractured lyrics and ranting vocal style, the Fall has remained unaffected by trends in pop music and maintained the oppositional spirit of the early English punk movement" (Laing, n.d.).

Their song *Doktor Faustus* is found on the album *Bend Sinister*, released in 1986 by Beggars Banquet Records. The lyrics are broken and do not offer a story or a coherence of ideas.

Doctor Faustus: Horshoes Splackin' Swallows Haycart, Cart-Horse. Of the peasant blockin' his path. Doctor Faustus: Power showin', spits out Hay-cart, cart-horse, hay and box at the gates of Anholt. Dr. Faustus: At the court of the count, made fruits exotic pleasure-lichous, appear behind curtains in winter. Dr. Faustus: At the decadent court, made animals from sun-lands appear in the sparse gardens of Vinter in ze likkle willage. Doktor Faustus: Horse-shoes clackin', swallows cart-horse, hay-cart of the peasant blockin' his path.

Must leave his student friends. FAUSTUS! Come get yer chips! Pull me blood silhouette, thru the ceiling sky. Cast me blood silhouette, thru the ceiling sky.¹⁸

3.4.12 Randy Newman *Faust (1993)*

Randy Newman (b. 1943) is an American composer, singer-songwriter, pianist and film composer. Born into a musical family of famous Hollywood film composers and conductors, Randy Newman started composing his own music at the age of sixteen and made his first recording by 1968. Most of his albums use conventional rock instrumentation, but also draw from blues, jazz and slow tunes (Pareles 2001, Vol. 17:806).

Randy Newman recorded various song albums in the 1970s and 1980s and became an Oscar- and Grammy-winning film composer from the late 1980s onwards. He composed for films such as *Avalon*, *Ragtime*, *Toy Story*, *The Pursuit of Happiness*, *Trouble in Paradise*, *The Natural*, *James and the Giant Peach*, *A Bug's Life*, *Monsters Inc.*, *Seabiscuit* and *The Princess and the Frog* (Official Website of Randy Newman, 2010).

¹⁸ Lyrics were taken from <http://www.metrolyrics.com/dr-faustus-lyrics-fall.html> [Accessed: 3 June 2010].

Newman composed his dark humorous musical *Faust* in 1993. The lyrics to *Faust* were transcribed from Goethe's drama by Ralph Page, setting the story in modern times and infusing it with "humorous cynicism" (Brantley, 1996). *Faust* was recorded at Reprise Records on 19 September 1995. The recording was done by an 'all-star rock-pop cast' consisting of Randy Newman as the Devil, James Taylor as God, Don Henley as Henry Faust, Elton John as Angel Rick, Linda Ronstadt as Margaret and Bonnie Raitt as Martha.

The musical was performed at the La Jolla Playhouse in San Diego, California and the Goodman Theatre in Chicago. As a master of modern American music, Randy Newman's *Faust* score remains "a shimmering, multi-faceted gem" (Brantley, 1996) for modern listeners to enjoy.

3.4.13 Art Zoyd *Faust* (1995)

French rock band **Art Zoyd** can best be described as an electronic rock group that incorporates jazz and contemporary classical styles into their music. The group was formed in 1968 and consists of four musicians (2 violins, bass and trumpet) as the basis of the band (Official Website of Art Zoyd).

Their first album was recorded in 1976 and since a collaborative project to compose ballet music in 1983, the band's main focus became the composition of music for films and ballet. The group explored combinations of music and visual arts, including dance, drama, silent movies and video.

In 1993 Art Zoyd, in particular Gérard Hourbette and Thierry Zaboïtzeff, composed music for the 1926 silent film *Faust* by Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau. The premier took place in Rome during the same year. A studio album of *Faust* was released in 1995. *Faust* enjoyed moderate success and was staged as recently as 2003.

3.4.14 Muse *The Small Print*

The rock band **Muse** was formed in the small town of Teignmouth, England in the mid-1990s (Myers, 2007:12). The trio consists of guitarist/vocalist Matthew Bellamy (b. 1978), bassist Chris Wolstenhome (b. 1978) and drummer Dominic Howard (b. 1977).

Their recorded albums include: *Showbiz* (1999), *The Origin of Symmetry* (2002), *Hullabaloo Soundtrack* (2002), *Absolution* (2003), *Black Holes and Revelations* (2006), *H.A.A.R.P* (2008) and most recently *The Resistance* (2009). Muse is a heavy metal rock band that often includes direct and indirect quotes of classical music from the great Romantic composers like Rachmaninov, Chopin and Berlioz in their music (Myers, 2007:37). Muse is inspired by many pop and rock legends of the past decades, including Freddie Mercury and Kurt Cobain.

Their song *The Small Print* was written by lead singer Matthew Bellamy and is featured on the album *Absolution*, recorded in September 2003 (Myers, 2007:225). The song, known as *Action Faust* before the album's release, tells the essential story of the Faust legend from the Devil's point of view (Beaumont, 2008:167). The mortal selling his soul in exchange for power and fame, doomed to be a "slave to the grave", taking all the memories of "the good days". The devil identifies himself as the "priest God never paid".

The Lyrics

Take, take all you need	Hope, I hope you've seen the light
And I'll compensate your greed	'cause no one really cares
With broken hearts	They're just pretending
Sell, I'll sell your memories	Sell, and I'll sell your memories
For 15 pounds per year	For 15 pounds per year
But just the good days	But you can keep the bad days

Say, it'll make you insane
And it's bending the truth
You're to blame
For all the life that you'll lose and
You watch this space
And I'm going all the way
And be my slave to the grave
I'm a priest God never paid.

Say, it'll make you insane
And I'm bending the truth
You're to blame
For all the life that you'll lose and
You watch this space
And I'm going all the way
And be my slave to the grave
I'm a priest God never paid.

CHAPTER FOUR

COMPARISONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The fourth chapter of this thesis will consider the questions posed in the introduction in the first chapter and expand on them briefly. This chapter will also highlight interesting points that surfaced from the study of the Faust compositions in the third chapter and, lastly, it will present some closing remarks and conclusions.

The questions asked were:

1. What led to the inspiration of so many different musical compositions on this theme and why this specific legend? Does it have a universal aspect that attracts composers of each generation?
2. How do these compositions compare to one another? How is the Faust legend illuminated in different musical works?
3. Is there any biographical significance for the composers and the way they portray the legend?
4. Can parallels be drawn between the compositions?
5. What is the relevance of the legend to music today?

4.1 Universal Ideas in *Faust*

No subject has attracted musicians to a greater extent than that of Faust and it must be added that none has proven so potent a source of inspiration in whatever form it has been treated. Neither is this to be wondered at, for its appeal is so many-sided, and it offers to the composer endless opportunities of exercising his imagination in probing its philosophy and illustrating its fantasy and romance (Hervey, 1926:106).

The *Faust* legend encompasses many aspects of life. It is easy to find a theme within the story that fascinates one. Themes such as the nature of man, supernatural

influences, solitude, the gamble of life, individualism, success, the sentiment of love, guilt, death, religious beliefs, eternity, heaven and hell, God and the devil, the triumph of life, among others, are present in the legend.

These universal themes make the legend successful. The essence of the tale does not only lie in the dramatic plot, but also in the philosophical and religious questions and struggles throughout. The ideas in Goethe's drama invite one to consider the complexities of human morality.

In an essay entitled "Faust in Music", Ernest Newman (1905:71) gives an insight into why this legend is such a popular subject for all forms of art. He believes that Goethe's version of the legend is the main source of inspiration for the bulk of Faust-based compositions. "Since Goethe's day we are bound to see the Faust picture through *his* eyes; any harking back to earlier forms of it is quite out of the question" (Newman, 1905:71). Goethe enhanced all aspects of the legend and its characters. It contains an enormous variety of subjects and this makes it so simple for anyone to find a theme that is attractive.

In James Kelly's doctoral dissertation, *The Faust Legend in Music*, he notes that "there has been a truly amazing number of compositions of every conceivable variety inspired by some phase of the Faust story" (Kelly, 1960:157). He believes that all men see some part of themselves in Faust. The Faust legend represents the phenomenon of opposing forces within all of us. Good versus evil, religion and redemption, mortality versus eternity, and desires versus morality, to name but a few of the most captivating ones.

The *Faust* legend also contains

religious and philosophical problems which have ever fascinated and tormented mankind; the relationship between man and the powers of good and evil; man's revolt against human limitation; the thirst for knowledge beyond mere

information; the puzzling disparity between the sublimity and the misery of human life (Palmer and More, 1966:3).

In the essay "Music in Goethe's *Faust*: Its First Dramatic Setting" (Grimm and Hermand, 1987:48) author Richard Green explains the musical appeal of Goethe's *Faust* drama, which in his opinion explains the large number of musical settings. His reasons focus on four main features of the drama, namely:

- The musical nature of the language used in the poem;
- The power of the drama, the fullness of the scenes that suggest pantomimic and sensual displays, evoking musical accompaniments;
- Direct reference to music within the text itself;
- Indirect references in which the presence of music is suggested.

The first part of *Faust* consists of over 12 000 lines , which is enough to "tax the constructive powers of any composer to the uttermost" (Newman, 1905: 71). The length of Goethe's tragedy makes it impractical to perform in its entirety from beginning to end, even in the spoken theatre. Therefore, in order to create a composition that is plausible within a musical performance setting, it is necessary to modify the drama. The practice of altering the original work is apparent in all of the studied compositions (Sternfeld, 2010).

To compose a work of music that attempts to capture *Faust* in its entirety, including the psychological and spiritual elements, is not feasible. When considering our study of Faust-inspired compositions, it appears that the ones which centred on a section, scene or character from *Faust* were often more successful than the operatic compositions that attempted to capture as much of Goethe's drama as possible. Examples of such compositions more limited in scope would include, Beethoven's *Song of the Flea*, Franz Schubert's *Gretchen am Spinnrade*, Franz Liszt's *Faust Symphony*, Mahler's *Symphony No. 8*, Alfred Schnittke's *Faust Cantata* and the band Muse's *The Small Print*.

The above-mentioned compositions concentrated on either a scene or set of lines in *Faust*, such as those by Beethoven, Schubert, Mahler and Schnittke; or on selected characters as in the works of Liszt, who portrays all three of the main characters in his Symphony. In the song, *The Small Print*, Muse's lyrics convey Mephistopheles' thoughts on a mortal signing away his soul.

The universality of the legend and the versatility of the subjects as discussed above effectively answers our question of why this specific legend is so popular and influential, and why it served as the inspiration for numerous art works and compositions. There is no doubt that Goethe, who produced a masterpiece of world literature on the subject of Faust, had great influence on the number of musical compositions to follow his drama.

4.2 Compositions Compared

How do these compositions compare with one another? Are the works extremely diverse or are there parallels to be drawn between the compositions?

Like all great universal ideas, the *Faust* legend lends itself to an abundance of interpretations. Composers were inspired by Goethe's musical verse and the enigmatic, philosophical and religious ideas in the drama and not by a preceding musical idea. The themes and interpretation of the plot cover such a wide range of starting points for a composition that similarities between the works are rarely found. Not even settings of the same text – for example, Beethoven and Mussorgsky's *Song of the Flea* – show evidence of notable similarities. Besides opera, which has emerged as a popular genre among the composers on the Faust legend, most of the compositions are more dissimilar than alike.

How is the Faust legend illuminated in different works of music? Ernest Newman reviews some of the well-known musical compositions incorporating the *Faust* legend in his book *Musical Studies* (1905). He judges many of the compositions, in particular the

operas, as inadequate. He believes a successful composition should also attempt to “cover all the psychological ground of the drama” (Newman, 1905:72). This expectation that a composition should engage all of the mental and emotional elements of *Faust* is surely understandable, but considering the magnitude of the drama it is not realistic.

Each composer illuminated the legend in his own unique way. Some composers selected a particular scene or group of lines such as Beethoven’s *Song of the Flea*, Franz Schubert’s *Gretchen am Spinnrade*, and Gustav Mahler’s *Symphony No. 8*. Liszt was motivated by the characters of the drama and seized on their most prominent character traits as an inspiration for his *Faust Symphony*. As previously mentioned, the compositions that concentrated on smaller parts of the *Faust* drama were often more successful than the compositions that attempted to capture everything.

With reference to our study of Faust-inspired compositions, the most popular and successful compositions that fall within the category of large-scale vocal works are Hector Berlioz’s *La Damnation de Faust* and Alfred Schnittke’s *Historia von D Johannn Fausten*. As for popular music, Randy Newman’s *Faust*, Charlie Daniels Band’s song *The Devil Went Down to Georgia* and the band Muse’s song *The Small Print* stand out as the best-known and most successful compositions.

Are there any accounts of inter-connectivity between biographical elements of the composers’ lives and the way they portrayed the Faust legend?

It is very interesting to note that so many of the composers recognised a character trait of Faust in themselves, be it the unquenchable thirst for knowledge, restlessness, a searching nature, love gone wrong, or religious questions and beliefs. The best example of this would be Franz Liszt, who, like Paganini, was rumoured to have sold his soul to the devil to obtain his phenomenal musical talent. Many of the composers’ compositions (including Liszt’s works) are described as autobiographical by many of the leading musicologists. “In Liszt’s case the parallelism between his life, his

character and his work is often obvious; few composers have pointed themselves so accurately in their music”(Newman, 1969:299). Arlo McKinnon (1999) describes Liszt’s *Faust Symphony* as quasi-autobiographical and Hugh MacDonald (1991:75) draws our attention to how Berlioz “felt the soul-searching and frustration of Faust as his own personal experiences”. In the book *Robert Schumann Words and Music*, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (1988:202) notes that Schumann saw himself as a reflection of Faust, even as a young man.

Each composer took an element of the drama that he found intriguing and appropriate and created music from that aspect.

Berlioz’s *Faust*, for example, was described by John Warrack in the programme notes for the BBC Symphony Orchestra as

a dramatization of the soul’s condition, a nightmare progress from frustration at the failure of learning, of easy companionship, of God, of nature, of love, into an ever more terrible isolation, whipped by the devil who cannot be escaped because he is within, until journey’s end is reached in a total dullness, the numbing of all sensation and the exclusion from any hope, that is Hell... (*Berlioz and the Romantic Imagination*, 1969:120).

This description of extreme emotions in the quote above expands our understanding of why this legend has been so influential and fascinating to artists.

4.3 The 19th century and the 20th century

The most concentrated period of Faust compositions, in particular the symphonic and operatic works, was the 19th century, amounting to about two thirds of the works in our list composed in the 19th century compared to one third in the 20th century. It is evident that a significant number of compositions based on the *Faust* legend emerged in the 19th century. The rationale behind this is easily explained: Goethe was a living poet for some of this time (he died in 1832) and his literary works, including

his masterpiece *Faust*, were read and studied widely by many individuals across Europe; serving as an obvious source of inspiration to artists, musicians and composers. Many of the composers in this study were also contemporaries of Goethe and were eager to share their compositions with him.

“Goethe took an extremely active and discriminating interest in music” (Grimm and Hermand, 1987:47). However, there appears to be no record of Goethe attending a concert of one of the Faust compositions, nor was any direct commentary from Goethe found on any of the known compositions. Goethe often referred to his close friend and composer, Carl Zelter, for musical opinions on compositions sent to him (Cairns, 1969:544). “I am unable to judge music, for I lack knowledge of the means it employs to its ends; I can speak only of the impression it makes on me when I surrender myself to it wholly and repeatedly” (Goethe as cited in Istel and Baker, 1928:229).

The only record of Goethe involving himself in the musical process of a Faust composition was with Prince Anton Heinrich von Radziwill, who was the first composer to write incidental music (1810-1835) to the *Faust* drama. “Goethe took a warm interest in the work, even rewriting certain passages for the composer” (Istel and Baker, 1928:238).

Taking a look at the list of 19th century Faust compositions,¹⁹ nearly fifty percent of the works were written by German composers,²⁰ as opposed to the 20th century list, where the nationalities of the composers are more or less equally spread between French, English, Russian, Dutch, American and Italian composers.

From the comparison of the Faust compositions in our list, it is very interesting to note that roughly ninety percent of the 19th-century compositions were directly inspired by Goethe’s drama, as opposed to the 20th-century works, where the sources of inspiration are more widely spread and only about forty percent are directly related to Goethe’s work.

¹⁹ Refer to Chapter Three page 34 for the Table of Faust Compositions.

²⁰ Including German-speaking Austrian composers.

In view of the relevance of Faust in the music world today, it is plain to see that the legend is still inspiring compositions. The numbers may not be as overwhelming as in the 19th century, but surely compositions on this subject have not come to a halt and will continue to inspire artists of future generations.

4.4 Words and music

Is the music given meaning through the story of the legend as opposed to a composition with no narrative adjunct? Would the interpretation and response differ? Or is the interpretation and response of the individual most important?

The question of whether the narrative component gives meaning to the music and how it reflects on the music is answered by Wagner. In his opinion:

We know that the verse of poets, even those of a Goethe or a Schiller, cannot determine music; only drama may do that, and by drama I mean not the dramatic poem or text, but the drama we see taking place before our eyes, the visible counterpart of the music, where the words and text enunciated belongs solely to the action and no longer to the poetic idea (Wagner, 1870 as cited in Dahlhaus, 1992:156).

Music is received and interpreted uniquely by each individual. The poetry of Goethe inspired many compositions, but it is virtually impossible to compare the poetry directly with its musical counterpart. The compositions are a representation of the composer's ideas and emotions on the themes and subjects in the drama.

As previously said, it is not feasible to create a work that is entirely unaltered from the original drama, because of the length and complexity of the work. When reflecting on the compositions as independent works of music, most of them are successful and enjoyable. The scope and purpose of this thesis do not include an investigation into the musical components of each composition, though it would have

been enlightening to explore and compare themes, instrumentation and motifs of the various compositions. This is material for future research.

Sternfeld (2010) argues that a masterpiece of world literature, whether by Goethe, Shakespeare or Dante, may not serve as the best subject for a successful opera. “But it seems fair to suggest that the folk legend of the wager between Faust and the Devil will not fail to intrigue and tempt composers for years to come”.

4.5 Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to explore the Faust legend as manifested in music since the 19th century. The object was to provide a thorough background to the legend in all its aspects, before drawing up an overview of compositions that were based on the Faust legend.

In the first chapters the origin of the legend was investigated, followed by a glance at the most important literary works on the subject of Faust; and lastly a comprehensive outline of the story, as told by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, was given. The third chapter contains the annotated catalogue of the most significant Faust-inspired compositions. All of these components were examined to provide a more informed account of the legend. This enabled a better understanding of the inspiration and elements within the compositions described in the main part of this thesis.

From the list of compositions, fascinating information emerged throughout the study. The motivation and reasoning behind the vast impact of the Faust legend became apparent through the information collected. Brief descriptions of the most acknowledged Faust compositions has been provided.

For future research, this subject of thesis can be expanded in a number of different ways. The list of Faust works can be supplemented to include many more current and future compositions; or one could extend the study of the existing compositions to include a musical analysis of each piece, such as orchestration,

instrumentation, tone painting, harmonic structure etc. This would provide intriguing comparisons between the various works. Many of the above ideas about the legend are speculative and require further study to elaborate on the hypotheses.

The Faust legend encompasses all dimensions and disciplines of life – scientific, mythological, historical, literary and aesthetic, philosophical and psychological, as Schindler (1978) points out in her article “Making Literature Come Alive: The many Lives of Dr. Faust”. The legend asks the essential question: what is life about and is it worth living?

The *Faust* legend, and especially Goethe’s *Faust*, will undoubtedly continue to be a “creative force” (Kelly, 1960:157) behind artistic compositions for future generations.

REFERENCE LIST AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

The sources consulted will be divided into three sections. Firstly a reference list of books, articles, music scores and compact disks cited in the thesis, secondly a list of internet sources cited in the thesis, and lastly, all other sources that were consulted but not cited in the thesis.

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