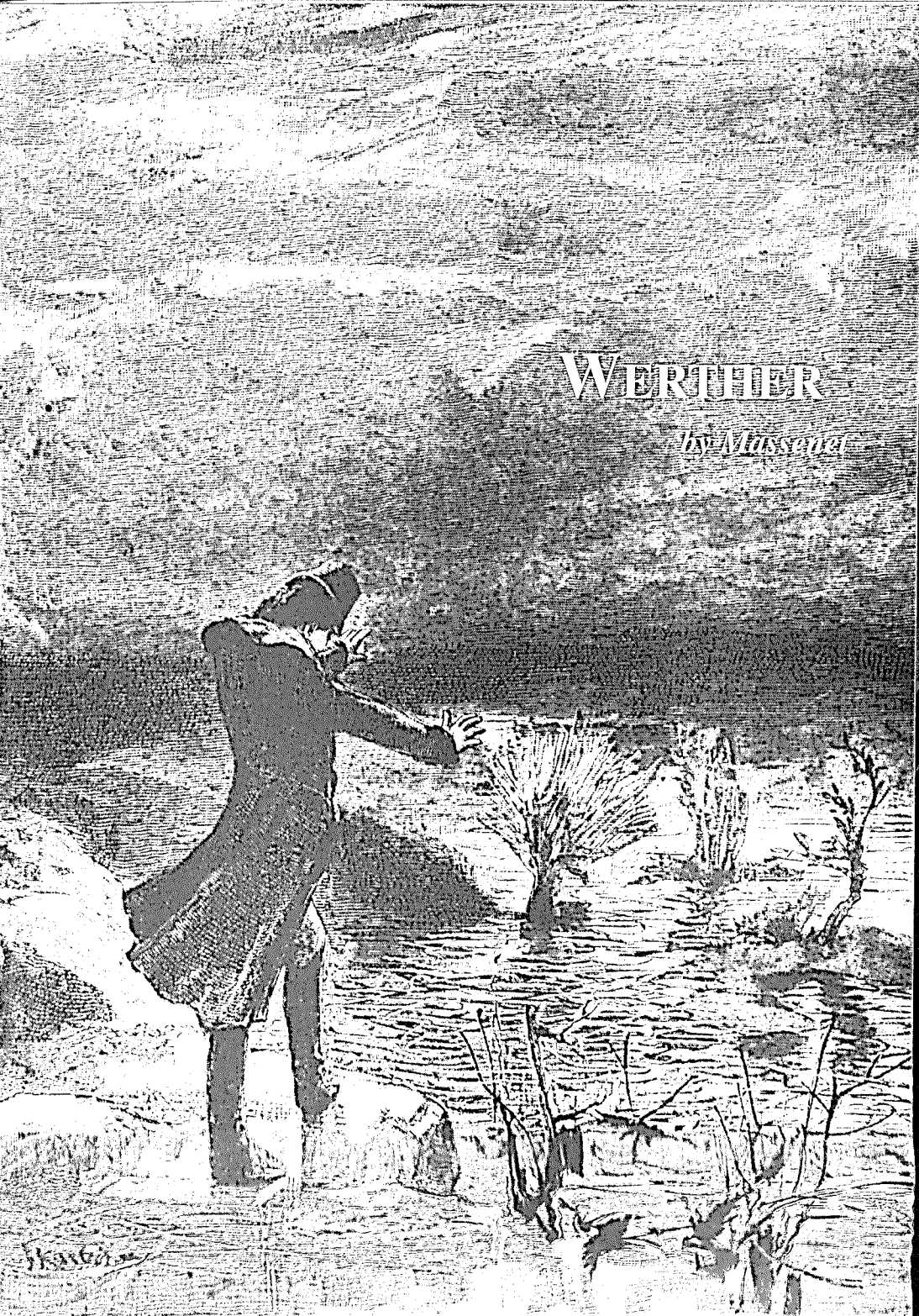


WERTHER

by Goethe



Kaufmann

LONDON ROYAL SCHOOLS' VOCAL FACULTY

Artistic Director

Robert Tear

Director of Opera

James Lockhart

Deputy Director of Opera

Michael Rosewell

Associate Producer

Mike Ashman

Guest Producer

John Copley

Vocal Faculty Administrator

Elizabeth Kaye

Opera Department Administrator

Andrew Page

FOR THE PRODUCTION

Assistant Designer

Yvonne Stable

Wardrobe Mistresses

Jane Leigh-Breese

Margaret Adams

General Manager of**Royal Academy of****Music Orchestras**

Clare Lane

Assistant Lighting Designer

Patrick Collins

Wardrobe Supervisor

Angela Henry

Orchestral Administrator**Royal Academy of Music**

Leyla Güneş

Production Manager

David Stressing

Music Staff

David Angus

Anthony Hose

Iain Ledingham

Jean Mallandaine

Christopher Middleton

Ian Page

Rehearsal Pianist

Brad Cohen

Stage Manager

Rose Montgomery

Assistant Stage**Manager/Props**

Ian Genner

Board Operator

Andrew Howick

French Coaches

Sonja Nerdrum

Michel Vallat

Stage Crew

Ben Howell

FOR THE SIR JACK LYONS THEATRE

Technical Director

David Stressing

Assistant Technical Director

Andrew Howick

Wardrobe Mistress

Margaret Adams

1912 7/25
01551



London Royal Schools' Vocal Faculty

presents

Werther

(sung in French)

Lyric drama in four acts by Jules Massenet
Libretto by Édouard Blau, Paul Milliet and Georges Hartmann
after the novel *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* by Goethe

Conductor: **Michael Rosewell**

Producer: **Ceri Sherlock**

Designer: **Richard Aylwin**

Lighting Designers: **Simon Corder** with **Patrick Watkinson**

Royal Academy of Music Sinfonia

21, 22, 24 and 25 February 1994 at 7.30 pm

in the Sir Jack Lyons Theatre, Royal Academy of Music

CAST

<i>Werther</i>	Aled Hall (<i>21 and 24 Feb</i>) Walter Dixon (<i>22 and 25 Feb</i>)
<i>Albert</i>	Christopher Maltman (<i>21 and 24 Feb</i>) Stuart MacIntyre (<i>22 and 25 Feb</i>)
<i>Le Bailli</i>	Tómas Tómasson (<i>21 and 24 Feb</i>) Nicholas Gedge (<i>22 and 25 Feb</i>)
<i>Schmidt</i>	Michael Hart-Davis (<i>21 and 24 Feb</i>) Paulo da Silva (<i>22 and 25 Feb</i>)
<i>Johann</i>	Johann Smari Saevarsson (<i>21 and 24 Feb</i>) Plamen Beykov (<i>22 and 25 Feb</i>)
<i>Brühlmann</i>	Paul Robinson
<i>Charlotte</i>	Violetka Ivanova (<i>21 and 24 Feb</i>) Deborah Davison (<i>22 and 25 Feb</i>)
<i>Sophie</i>	Fiona Vaughan (<i>21 and 24 Feb</i>) Luba Stuchevskaya (<i>22 and 25 Feb</i>)
<i>Käthchen</i>	Fiona Macdonald (<i>21 and 24 Feb</i>) Emma Silversides (<i>22 and 25 Feb</i>)
<i>Children/Chorus</i>	Rachel Gilliam Ruth Gomme Sarah Haigh Victoria McLaughlin Benedikte Moes Sandra Yaron
<i>Guide and Servant</i>	Nigel Boarer Matthew Bridle
<i>Minister</i>	David Harper
<i>Minister's Wife</i>	Janet McAlpin

SYNOPSIS

Act I

On a July day, the Bailiff of Wetzlar rehearses his six children in a carol. His friends Johann and Schmidt call by and arrange to meet him later for a meal. There is general excitement about the ball to be held that evening in Wetzlar. The friends discuss the dreamy Werther, and the solid, reliable Albert, who is engaged to Charlotte (the Bailiff's eldest daughter), but who has been away on business for six months.

Werther arrives at the Bailiff's house, and is enchanted by its idyllic setting, and the children's angelic voices.

Charlotte appears, dressed for the ball, and is admired. She and Werther meet for the first time; they are going to the ball with two other guests, Brühlmann and Käthchen, whose carriage is soon heard. Charlotte charges her sister Sophie with the care of the younger children while she is out.

Sophie persuades the Bailiff to keep his appointment with Johann and Schmidt.

Albert arrives home, earlier than expected, hoping to surprise Charlotte. Overjoyed to learn from Sophie that he has not been forgotten, he arranges to return in the morning.

Charlotte and Werther come back from the ball. As they are parting, his words are full of love; she explains how her life is devoted to fulfilling the promises she made to her dying mother - to care for her younger brothers and sisters and to marry Albert. Werther is devastated to learn she is to marry someone else.

Act II

On a fine Sunday afternoon in September, Johann and Schmidt are praising the

Lord by extolling his gift of wine. The minister's golden wedding is being celebrated. Charlotte and Albert look back on their three months of marriage; Werther is tormented by the sight of them together.

Johann and Schmidt reappear, trying to comfort Brühlmann, who has been deserted by Käthchen.

Albert guesses the reason for Werther's despondency, and offers sympathy. Sophie begs Werther to be happy on this day of celebration.

Left alone once more, Werther acknowledges that in his heart he has not entirely given Charlotte up. To preserve honour, he should leave Wetzlar, but he cannot bear to be parted from her.

Charlotte appears, but in response to Werther's protestations of love, reminds him that she is Albert's wife. If Werther cannot forget her, he must go away. She concedes that he may return at Christmas. Werther resolves to go, but contemplates suicide if his strength of will to live without her should fail him. He visualises God's forgiveness for such an act. Sophie calls to him to join the festivities, but he hurries abruptly away.

INTERVAL - approximately 20 minutes

Act III

It is Christmas Eve, and Charlotte cannot tear her thoughts away from Werther, whose letters she has treasured.

Sophie comes to invite her to visit the rest of the family while Albert is away. She is shocked by Charlotte's sorrowful appearance, and comments that everyone seems sad since Werther left. At the mention of

his name, Charlotte can contain herself no longer, but after an outburst of tears she accepts Sophie's invitation. She prays for strength.

Suddenly Werther appears. Charlotte cannot resist his impassioned entreaties, but quickly tears herself away. Distraught, Werther rushes out.

Albert, returning from his travels, has already learnt that Werther has been there. He confronts Charlotte, but they are interrupted by a servant with a message from Werther: he requests Albert's pistols to take on a long journey. Albert commands Charlotte to hand them over. Albert retires and Charlotte rushes after Werther.

Act IV

On the night before Christmas it begins to snow over the village of Wetzlar.

Charlotte enters Werther's study and discovers him, mortally wounded. She pleads for his forgiveness; he looks forward to the peace of death and freedom from their moral struggle.

Charlotte reveals she has always loved him, but put duty first, and knows now that in trying to save her soul she has lost him. United at last, they hear from the distance the children singing their long rehearsed nowell. Already half delirious, Werther is convinced it is a hymn of forgiveness, and dies.

Penny Longman



Jane Morris, photographed by John R. Parsons (1865)

(By courtesy of the Board of Trustees of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

GOETHE AND MASSENET

Massenet's *Werther* is based on Goethe's novel *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* (The Sorrows of Young Werther). This semi-autobiographical work takes the form of a series of letters in which Werther describes in detail not only the events of the last few months of his life, but also his innermost thoughts and feelings.

In the Spring of 1772 Goethe went to live in the small town of Wetzlar, to comply with his father's wishes that he pursue his career in law there. He met and fell desperately in love with Charlotte Buff, second eldest of the 11 children of an important local official, whose wife had died the previous year. Since the death of her mother, Charlotte had assumed the role of caring for her younger brothers and sisters, by whom she was held in almost reverent adoration. It was widely known that her 'intended' was Christian Kestner, with whom Goethe also became friendly. Kestner (on whom Albert is modelled) was often occupied with his business, unlike Goethe, who seemed unable or unwilling to submit himself to the disciplines of the world of work, and passed his time walking, reading and painting. He and Charlotte spent much time together, although her loyal devotion to Kestner was indisputable. By September, Goethe had resolved to tear himself away from the painful situation, and the three friends spent their final evening together on 10 September. Their conversation turned to life after death, just as Werther describes in his letter of the very same date. Other autobiographical details, such as the date of Goethe's birthday, also coincide with details of Werther's life - it seems the author made no attempt to disguise the many autobiographical elements in the novel, and when it appeared it became the gossip of Wetzlar.

After leaving Wetzlar, Goethe went to Koblenz, where he was charmed by the 16-year-old Maximiliane, daughter of the authoress Sophie von La Roche and her privy councillor husband. The Lotte of the novel bears a strong physical resemblance to Maximiliane, and Goethe's experience of finding a new focus for his attention soon after leaving his idol is clearly mirrored in the friendship Werther forms with a Miss von B. This occurs after he has left Wetzlar, and taken up a position in the employment of an ambassador (an episode which is omitted from the opera). Goethe did not identify the ambassador, but he was modelled on von Hoefler, ambassador of Braunschweig, who was based in Wetzlar, and in whose employ was a young man named Karl Wilhelm Jerusalem. Goethe was acquainted with Jerusalem; they had studied law in Leipzig at the same time, and had some contact while both living in Wetzlar, although they were not close friends. When, a few weeks after his departure from Wetzlar, Goethe learnt from Kestner that Jerusalem had committed suicide, he was deeply affected. The primary cause of Jerusalem's despair seems to have been the futility of his passion for a married woman, but this was compounded by seriously strained relations with his employer, and painful experiences of being cold-shouldered by society. Goethe identified strongly with Jerusalem's predicament and fate; it may have been in order to find out more about the tragedy that he almost immediately revisited the town, and he certainly requested more information from Kestner. In the second half of the novel Werther is closely modelled on Jerusalem, and the similarity between their suicides is particularly striking.

Goethe wove these three strands of human experience (his own relationships first with Charlotte and then Maximiliane, and the sufferings of his contemporary Jerusalem) into a novel which took Europe by storm. A vogue developed for wearing breeches, buff waistcoat and a blue frock coat - the clothes which Werther wore when he first met Lotte and which matched Goethe's recollection of Jerusalem's appearance. There were Werther songs, porcelain depicting scenes from Werther, Werther scent, Werther fans, jewellery and gloves - the list is almost endless. The novel was even imputed with prompting a spate of suicides throughout Europe, although this accusation has perhaps been exaggerated.

The huge popularity of Goethe's novel rested chiefly on the central story of doomed passion, and other important aspects of the work were largely ignored. Werther is highly critical of the desperately status-conscious society in which he finds himself while working for the ambassador. In the context of a Germany where the middle classes were just beginning to resent the vast hierarchy of aristocracy which dominated them, this was charged with political significance. At that time literature provided the chief vehicle for political debate.

Goethe's *Werther* also embodies elements of *empfindsamkeit*, a concept which was evolving out of the *sturm und drang* art of the 1770s, and which can roughly be translated as sentiment. This involved a reaction against rationality, with a tremendous emphasis on the cult of friendship, on self-analysis, and on deep emotion and emotionalism. The previous fascination in art with the remote world of the aristocracy was supplanted by a desire for works focusing on the middle-class environment to which most readers themselves belonged.

The idea of the genius creating his own rules, needing to be free from restriction either by society's expectations, or by rules in art, is another important hallmark of this period. The character of Werther epitomises the idealist artist, a creative genius, who in his search for self fulfilment and creativity, cannot or will not allow himself and his art to be stifled by the kind of ordered life-style which is prescribed by society. Werther's abortive period working for the ambassador demonstrates the disastrous consequences of his attempt to renounce this individualism, and to go into society and abide by its rules.

Finally, the rise of pantheism led to an absorption with nature, and seeking God in the natural world. Rousseau's criticism of 18th century civilisation, which he believed corrupted man's natural creativity, led to a fascination with the most natural forms of mankind, which were perceived to be peasants and children, both groups as yet relatively uncorrupted by civilisation. These ideas surface repeatedly in Goethe's novel - in Werther's love for his natural surroundings, his various sympathetic encounters and acquaintances with peasants, and the importance given to children.

In August 1886, Massenet was taken by his friend Georges Hartmann to visit Wetzlar. Deeply impressed by the surroundings made famous by Goethe's tragic novel, Massenet (encouraged by Hartmann) immediately re-read *Werther* and was determined to make it his next operatic subject. Like most of Goethe's original readers, he chose to focus on the romantic aspects of the novel. Drastic alterations were necessary to shape a dramatically satisfying libretto out of Werther's stream of complex introspective letters. His encounters and relationships with various peasants, through which Goethe explored

the idea of the innate nobility of the 'unspoilt' peasantry, are totally omitted. So too is the whole period of his employment in the ambassador's service, and thereby also Goethe's biting criticism of the obsessively class-conscious society in which Werther (or Jerusalem) found himself, but which chose to exclude him. Yet although the socio-political aspects of the novel are not explicit in the opera they remain essential elements of the central character of Werther, whom Goethe created and Massenet adopted. Massenet's Werther is still the genius who lives outside the rules of society.

Lotte, however, is markedly altered by Massenet. In Goethe she is almost a silent character; the reader receives everything through Werther's words, and even when her speech is reported, it is through him, with his resonances added. Only towards the very end, when Goethe interpolates

some narration as from an outsider, does he reveal an insight into Lotte's feelings, and the reader discovers, apparently at the same as she herself does, that her feelings for Werther do extend beyond the simple friendship she has always assumed. Massenet's Lotte seems to feel this conflict from the start; her promise to marry Albert appears more a matter of duty to her dying mother, her attitude to Werther is always a little more ambiguous. In the opera she and Werther become more equal players, and thus Massenet creates a dramatic dialogue out of a monologue. His conclusion also departs strikingly from the original - Goethe's Werther dies alone, with no rapturous final moments in which Lotte finally confesses her love to him. The isolation which characterised his life is complete in his death.

Penny Longman

GOETHE ON NATURE AND WERTHER

The only evident striking similarity between Massenet's Werther and Goethe's apart, that is, from the obvious narrative of their life - is the preoccupation with nature. For Goethe this lifelong source of inspiration and wonder is not only evidenced in *Werther* and the poetry, but also in his drawings and scientific experiments. It is also the central preoccupation that underlines his redaction of *Faust* part 1.

24 July *

Since you are so concerned that I should not neglect my drawing, I would prefer to say nothing at all about the question than to admit how little I have done of late.

I have never felt happier, and my

feelings for Nature, down to tiny pebbles and blades of grass, have never been so full and acute, and yet - I do not know how to express myself; my imaginative powers are so weak, and everything slides and shifts before my soul, so that I cannot grasp the outlines; but I fancy I might make a go of it if I had some clay or wax to model. If things are like this much longer I really shall get some clay and model it, even if all I produce is dumplings!

I have started on a portrait of Lotte three times, and three times I have failed disgracefully; which depresses me all the more since I could take a very good likeness not so long ago. So then I cut a silhouette profile of her, and that will have to do.

During his Italian journey he expressed his feelings about himself and the artist in the following way: 'In every artist there is a germ of recklessness without which talent is inconceivable.'

18 August *

Did it really have to be like this? - that the source of Man's contentment becomes the source of his misery?

My heart's immense and ardent feeling for living Nature, which overwhelmed me with so great a joy and made the world about me a very paradise, has now become an unbearable torment, a demon that goes with me everywhere, torturing me. At other times, when I gazed from the crags across the river to those hilltops yonder, taking in the entire fertile valley and seeing all about me burgeoning and putting forth new life; when I saw the mountains, clad from foot to peak with thick and mighty trees, and the winding valleys shaded by the most delightful woods, and the river flowing gently amongst the whispering reeds and mirroring the lovely clouds which a soft evening breeze wafted across the heavens; and when I heard the birds carolling in the forest all around, and millions of midges danced their giddy dance in the last red glow of sunlight, and a last setting ray brought forth the humming beetle from its grassy retreat, and all the busy buzzing made me study the ground, where the moss that gains its sustenance from the unyielding rocks, and the heath that grows on the barren sand, revealed to me the inmost, sacred warmth of the life of Nature - at such times, how ardently my heart embraced it all: I felt as if I had been made a god in that overwhelming abundance, and the glorious forms of infinite Creation moved in my soul, giving it life. Immense mountains surrounded me,

chasms yawned at my feet, streams swollen by rain tumbled headlong, rivers flowed below me and the forests and mountains resounded; and I could see those immeasurable and incomprehensible powers at work in the depths of the earth, and above the earth's surface, beneath the heavens, there teemed all the infinite species of Creation. Everything, all of it, is peopled with myriad forms; and then mankind comes building its nests, crowding together safely in little houses, and supposes it rules over the whole wide world! Poor fool! imagining everything to be so small, because you are yourself so small.

When Goethe's conversation turned whilst he was writing *Torquato Tasso*, to *Werther*, he replied: 'That is another creature I fed, like the pelican, with my own heart's blood. There is so much in it of my own innermost feelings and thoughts that it could run to a novel of ten such volumes. And incidentally, as I have often remarked before, I have re-read the book only once since its publication, and have taken good care not to do so again. It's sheer high explosive! To read it fills me with an uncanny feeling, a dread of being involved once again in the pathological state of mind by which the novel was inspired.'

Perhaps Goethe's words about the poet are a shocking reminder of the fate of the artist: 'There is no safer way of avoiding the world than through art, and there is no safer way of being linked with the world than through art.'

Ceri Sherlock

* extracts from pages 55 and 65 of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, translated by Michael Hulse (1989). Reproduced by permission of Penguin Books.

MASSENET'S RECOLLECTIONS

On Sunday, August first, Hartmann and I went to hear *Parsifal* at the Wagner Theatre in Bayreuth. After we had heard this *miracle unique* we visited the capital of Upper Franconia...After running through various German towns and visiting different theatres, Hartmann, who had an idea of his own, took me to Wetzlar, where he had seen *Werther*. We visited the house where Goethe had written his immortal romance, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*.

I know *Werther's* letters and I had a thrilling recollection of them. I was deeply impressed by being in the house which Goethe made famous by having his hero live and love there.

As we were coming out Hartmann said, 'I have something to complete the obviously deep emotion you have felt.' As he spoke, he drew from his pocket a book with a binding yellow with age. It was the French translation of Goethe's romance...I scarcely had the book in my hands than I was eager to read it, so we went into one of those immense beer halls which are everywhere in Germany. We sat down and ordered two enormous bocks like our neighbours had. Among the various groups were students who were easily picked out by their scholars' caps and were playing cards or other games, nearly all with porcelain pipes in their mouths. On the other hand there were few women.

It is needless to tell what I endured in that thick, foul air laden with the bitter odour of beer. But I could not stop reading those burning letters full of the most intense passion. Indeed what could be more suggestive than the following lines, remembered amongst so many others, where keen anguish threw *Werther* and

Charlotte into each other's arms after the thrilling reading of Ossian's verses?

'Why awakest me, breath of the Spring? Thou caresseth me and sayeth I am laden with the dew of heaven, but the time cometh when I must wither, the storm that must beat down my leaves is at hand. Tomorrow the traveller will come; his eye will seek me everywhere, and find me no more...'

And Goethe adds: 'Unhappy *Werther* felt crushed by the force of these words and threw himself before Charlotte in utter despair. It seemed to Charlotte that a presentiment of the frightful project he had formed passed through her soul. Her senses reeled; she clasped his hands and pressed them to her bosom; she leaned towards him tenderly and their burning cheeks touched.'

Such delirious, ecstatic passion brought tears to my eyes. What a moving scene, what a passionate picture that ought to make! It was *Werther*, my third act. I was now all life and happiness. I was wrapped up in work and in an almost feverish activity. It was a task I wanted to do but into which I had to put, if possible, the song of those moving, lively passions.

Circumstances, however, willed that I put this project aside for the moment. Carvalho proposed *Phoebe* to me and chance led me to write *Manon*. Then came *Le Cid* to fill my life. At last in the summer of 1885, without waiting for the result of that opera, Hartmann, Paul Milliet, my great, splendid collaborator in *Hérodide*, and I came to an agreement to take up the task of writing *Werther*...

When the work was done, I went to

M. Carvalho's [Director of the Opéra-Comique] on the twenty-fifth of May. I had secured Mme. Rose Caron, then at the Opéra, to aid me in my reading. The admirable artiste was beside me turning the pages of the manuscript and showing the deepest emotion at times. I read the four acts by myself, and when I reached the climax, I fell exhausted, annihilated.

Then Carvalho came to me without a word, but he finally said: 'I had hoped you would bring me another *Manon*! This dismal subject lacks interest. It is damned from the start.' As I think this over today, I understand his impression perfectly, especially when I reflect on the years I had to live before the work came to be admired.

Carvalho was kind and offered me some exquisite wine, claret, I believe, like what I had tasted one joyous evening I read *Manon*...My throat was as dry as my speech; I went out without saying a word.

The next day, *horresco referens*, yes, the next day I was again struck down, the Opéra-Comique was no more. It had been totally destroyed by fire during the night. I hurried to Carvalho's. We fell into each other's arms, embraced each other in tears and wept. My poor director was ruined. Inexorable fate! The work had to wait six years in silence and oblivion.

Extract from *My Recollections* by Jules Massenet, translated by H. Villiers Barnett, published by Greenwood Press.



Caricature of Massenet by Cappiello (Royal Opera House Archives)

DRAME LYRIQUE AND OPERATIC REALISM

Categorizing literary genres according to the degree of their dependence on earlier models is by no means a vain occupation. Traditional subject matter and works are used more frequently in the drama than in the novel - and more freely, if more covertly, in comedy than in tragedy - and this in turn says important things about the nature of these genres. However, as little inclined as we are to excuse a novel for being woven according to a familiar pattern, we are all the more generous in allowing opera librettos to plunder literature without a qualm. We may be perfectly within our rights to protest against 18th century librettists in the name of Racine, or 19th century librettists in the name of Shakespeare, but our efforts will prove useless in the end.

Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that the *drame lyrique* of the late 19th century, a genre that withdrew from the staged world history of Meyerbeer to interior tragedies, did not shrink for a moment from turning to materials such as *Hamlet* and *Mignon* (Ambroise Thomas, 1868 and 1866), *Faust* (Charles Gounod, 1859) and *Werther* (Jules Massenet, 1892), all of them models that can scarcely be abstracted from their underlying philosophical spirit. The method that permitted *Kabale und Liebe* to be transformed into a libretto fully capable of standing on its own merits, and nowhere compelling listeners to think of Schiller, could not be applied to *Faust* or *Mignon*.

To German audiences, who found his artistic convictions as dubious as his melodies were irresistible, Gounod was the composer not only of *Faust* but of the *Ave Maria* (1853) as well, thus compounding desecration of Goethe with sacrilege to Bach. (In fact, however, Gounod was a church composer whose piety was as

unimpeachable as the solidity of his musical craftsmanship.) It is absurd, or at least misguided, to accuse the libretto of *Faust* (shamefacedly renamed *Margarete* in Germany) of preserving little more than the plot outline and a few props from the original, which after all was well known in France through Gérard de Nerval's translation. The opera's greatest shortcoming, evincing not just a want of literary tact but a faulty dramaturgy as well, is not its remoteness from Goethe's play but its dependence on the play despite this remoteness. However tempting it may be to try to forget the play in order to enjoy the opera, this approach proves impossible the moment we take the libretto seriously as a theatre piece instead of regarding it merely as a vehicle for vocal numbers such as Valentin's Prayer, Mephistopheles's Song of the Golden Calf, and Faust's Cavatina. For the moment we put Goethe's text out of mind we fail utterly to understand why all of Mephistopheles's magic tricks are necessary to generate the love between Faust and Marguerite that ultimately spells their doom. According to the rules of operatic dramaturgy, the sorcery that Mephistopheles applies at the beginning and the end of the Act III duet in order to turn Marguerite's fondness into love, and love into passion, is entirely superfluous: in light of Wagner's and Verdi's operas it seems almost to be a law of the genre that passion is visited upon the characters unawares. What Mephistopheles does could have been accomplished just as easily without him by the music. But if Mephistopheles's sorcery impairs the substance of the drama rather than deepening it, manipulating its psychological processes and turning the tragedy into a puppet show, it also represents the sole *raison d'être* for the existence of the Devil

in a metaphysical tragedy reduced to the level of *drame lyrique*. For however domineering Mephistopheles's behaviour may be on stage, with his *couplets*, macabre pranks, and shady intrigues, he is basically extraneous to the essentials of the plot. Since we cannot conceive why Faust, to function as the tenor of a *drame lyrique*, is at first an elderly man who then has to be transformed by sorcery into a younger one, we are forced to recall Goethe's play. Even though the libretto offends against the spirit of the play, it is nevertheless dependent on its structure. Literary reflection, though purportedly unnecessary, is constantly forced upon the listener.

What prevented Gounod from distancing himself even more from the play was presumably the church composer in him: *Faust* was composed not least of all for its opening and closing scenes - the choruses wafting into Faust's study and the transfiguration of Marguerite. If its relation to Goethe's play is contradictory, the reason is to be found less in the frivolity of which Gounod is accused by his German critics than in his piety. It is not the waltz that upsets the dramaturgical conception so much as the angelic chorus and its opposite, black magic.

Still, the *religioso* tone of the work - a tone to be heard not only in the final chorus or in Valentin's Prayer but also in Faust's Cavatine and the duet that quotes it - never left French 19th century opera. Where Meyerbeer set religion against a backdrop of military history, the *drame lyrique*, having taken refuge in interior dramas, used religion as an ingredient in private affairs. And it is this dash of sanctimoniousness in works such as Gounod's *Faust* and Massenet's *Thaïs* (1894) which has given the *drame lyrique* its reputation as 'bad 19th century art' from our current perspective....

We have no way of telling whether, and if so to what extent, Massenet and his librettist Georges Hartmann were aware of the religious slant to Goethe's *Werther* when they turned to it in 1886. (The text is filled with countless quotations and semi-quotations from the New Testament, turning the love story, on careful reading, into a martyr's tragedy.) Whatever the case, when Max Kalbeck, for the 1892 Vienna premiere, translated the final line *tout est fini* with Christ's last words on the cross, he was not blaspheming but simply drawing attention to an element which, considering the history of the *drame lyrique*, probably attracted Massenet to this story in the first place, at least subconsciously or semiconsciously. Taken by itself, *Werther* would hardly have seemed a likely candidate for a libretto capable of succeeding as a stage piece (although earlier composers, among them Rodolphe Kreutzer, had also tried their hand at the material, without success). For Massenet, however, the composer of *Manon*, *Esclarmonde* (1889), and *Thaïs*, appropriating *Werther* as material for an opera meant recasting Werther's tragedy into a drama with Charlotte as its main character.

Werther's love is love at first sight. The fact that his exaltation turns into despair and back again alters nothing of his character, which remains the same in essence. Paradoxically, his aria *J'aurais sur ma poitrine*, famous outside the context of the opera as the *Désolation de Werther*, even unites and fuses the opposing moods between which Werther vacillates: depression and rapture become indistinguishable from each other. This is done by superimposing, as it were, an Italianate *agitato* onto Massenet's idiosyncratic tone of passion mingled, or at least tinged, with resignation, a tone more deserving of an *andante* or *allegretto* tempo. Presupposing, with Walter Benjamin, that

destiny and character are mutually exclusive, we might claim that unlike Werther, who is locked in his destiny, Charlotte is the protagonist of a drama of character. The very possibility of this claim points up the difference between the opera and the novel. If, in the novel, Lotte's liking for Werther remains an 'inner sympathy' marked only for a single instant by a confusion of emotions, Massenet's Lotte is the victim of a love which she tries to hide from herself, a love which gradually takes on the proportions of tragedy by becoming all the more apparent as her situation becomes increasingly hopeless. In the novel Lotte is virtually a woman without a past ('so kind and yet so steadfast, her spirit at one with the true industry and activity of life'). Only by having her not merely unleash a tragedy but suffer it herself was it possible to create an opera which, apart from a few monologues and picturesque subplots, consists of nothing more than four duets, always between the same characters. Our analysis of the musical dramaturgy must therefore proceed from the work's underlying problem: the difficulty with which an internalized plot, fashioned into an opera libretto by making drastic changes in the novel, could become musically intelligible under the compositional conditions of the late 19th century.

Like Puccini, Massenet had a genius for assimilating techniques without belying his own nature, and the leitmotiv technique he applies so openly, without thereby turning into a Wagnerian, sets up a close bond between the duets or dialogue scenes. Nonetheless, it fails to account for his success in transforming a situation play between two characters into an opera in which the music not merely illustrates the psychological processes but sustains them as well. True, in the final scene Lotte takes

over a recurrent melody that seemed at first to belong to Werther as an expression of his amorous longing. Still, though uncommonly moving, this artifice remains a momentary effect.

Apparently the crucial point is that, contrary to a popular misconception, Massenet, a professor at the Conservatoire, was not simply an 'opera monger' but took musical forms to be 'sedimented contents' (to use Adorno's term) and put them to dramaturgical use. In the first duet Charlotte's lines are characterized by simple and clear-cut tunefulness (*C'est que l'image*); in the second, by a four-bar orchestral motive which threatens to develop into an expansive modulation only to return in the end to a simple reprise (*Werther! N'est-il donc pas d'autre femme*); in the third, by urgent sequences emerging from the stanzas of an Ossianic song (*N'achevez pas*); and in the fourth, by a passionate outburst based on a highly chromaticized orchestral version of the central leitmotiv (*Que ton âme et mon âme*). The four duets thus show an increasing complexity and intensification of form, beginning with simple song and progressing to motivic development with a hasty recapitulation, then to a widely modulating sequence, and finally to an excessively chromatic rendition of the opera's main motive. This formal differentiation mirrors and externalizes the changes of 'tone' accompanying the progress of Charlotte's emotions, the work's interior plot. In this way, *Werther* takes its place among those operas by Massenet which turn on a female protagonist.

Extract from *Nineteenth Century Music* by Carl Dahlhaus, translated by J. Bradford Robinson, published by University of California Press.

BIOGRAPHIES

MICHAEL ROSEWELL (*Conductor*)

Michael Rosewell studied at the Royal College of Music, where he was awarded a scholarship and a number of prizes for piano and conducting. His first professional work was in Germany, and after gaining experience in various opera houses he joined the music staff of Vienna State Opera. There he assisted Claudio Abbado and other distinguished conductors such as Zubin Mehta, Sir Colin Davis and Nikolas Harnoncourt, as well as working closely with many of the world's leading singers. He then took the post of Kapellmeister at the National Theatre in Mannheim. Michael Rosewell is Deputy Director of Opera for the London Royal Schools' Vocal Faculty and since returning to England has conducted regularly for the Buxton Festival and the London Handel Society, worked at the Royal Opera House, continued symphonic orchestral work with orchestras in Europe and maintained his association with English National Opera as a guest conductor.

CERI SHERLOCK (*Producer*)

Ceri Sherlock directs opera, theatre and film. He also writes and teaches. Recently he was Artistic Director of the Actors Touring Company, London, Artistic Director of THEATRIG and a Staff Producer at Welsh National Opera. In 1992/3 he was a Judith E. Wilson Visiting Fellow at the University of Cambridge. During the Fall Semester 1993 he was Visiting Scholar in Film at the School of Theater, Film and Television at the University of California, Los Angeles, and gave workshops and masterclasses in acting at Arizona State University's Theater Department. Recent work has included writing and directing his film, *Dafydd* (BBC & NOS), premiered at the Rotterdam Film Festival '93 and *Fallen Sons* by Edward Thomas, to be screened on BBC2 later this Spring. Previous work for the Royal Academy and Royal College of Music includes Berlioz' *Béatrice et Bénédicte* (1989) and Handel's *Il Pastor Fido*, also seen at the Händel-Festspiele Halle (1992).

RICHARD AYLWIN (*Designer*)

Richard was born in Surrey and studied Fine Arts at Brighton Polytechnic. His theatre design credits include *Who's Afraid of Virginia Wolf*, *Punishment without Revenge*, *The Shaming of Bright Millar*, *Mozart and Salieri*, *Up N Under*, *Phaedra*, *Waiting for Godot*, *No Remission*, *School for Clowns* and *Mother Courage*. Opera credits include *Katya Kabanova*, *Noye's Fludde*, *Threepenny Opera*, *The Rising of the Moon*, *The Rape of Lucretia*, *The Fall of the House of Usher*, *A Soldier's Tale* and *Béatrice et Bénédicte*. Companies he has worked for include the Everyman Theatre Cheltenham, Actors Touring Company, Sherman Theatre, Contact Theatre, Royal College of Music, Music Theatre Wales, Wexford Festival Opera, Welsh National Opera, Hijinx Theatre, Royal Academy of Music, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Bournemouth Sinfonietta, City of London Festival, English National Opera - Baylis Programme, Scottish Opera, London Symphony Orchestra and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Society.

SIMON CORDER (*Lighting Designer*)

Simon Corder left school in 1978 and joined a circus, going on to touring theatre and opera. He is Lighting Consultant to the Almeida Theatre, where he designed the lighting for *Hippolytus* and *A Hard Heart* (1992). As Lighting Designer and Technical Director of Lumiere & Son Theatre Company from 1981 to 1992, he lit numerous productions and Site-Specific pieces all over the world. Recent opera includes lighting for Almeida Opera, English National Opera, Welsh National Opera (*Così fan tutte*), Opera North (*Orpheus in the Underworld*) and Scottish Opera, (*The Vanishing Bridegroom*), and his work also encompasses theatre and dance. He lights regularly for Opera Theatre Company of Ireland. For the past few years he has been working on Night Safari - Singapore, the first night-time zoo in the world, due to open in mid 1994.

PLAMEN BEYKOV (*Johann*)

Born in Bulgaria, in 1990/91 Plamen studied in the Bulgarian Academy of Arts in Rome, under the artistic and pedagogical guidance of the Bulgarian bass, Boris Christoff. Plamen is a soloist with Sofia Philharmonic Orchestra and National Bulgarian Radio Orchestra, having made concert/CD recordings. He now studies with Stephen Roberts.

PAULO DA SILVA (*Schmidt*)

From Lousado, Portugal, Paulo studied singing at the Lisbon Conservatoire. Since living in England he has worked with Jeffrey Davies, Rae Woodland, Diane Firlano and currently with Kenneth Bowen. Paulo has performed as soloist in both England and Portugal. Recent performances include Rossini's *Stabat Mater* in Lisbon.

MICHAEL HART-DAVIS (*Schmidt*)

Michael studies with Edward Brooks, supported by the Countess of Munster Trust. His oratorio work is extensive, including regular Royal Albert Hall appearances. He has performed Tamino (*Magic Flute*) for Stowe Opera and will sing Ferrando (*Così fan tutte*) for Opera Inside Out in April.

DEBORAH DAVISON (*Charlotte*)

Deborah was born in Belfast. She read Music at Cardiff University and now studies with Yvonne Minton. Roles include the Sorceress, Bianca, Maurya (*Riders to the Sea*) and the Countess (*Queen of Spades*) and as a concert soloist she has sung in Ireland, Germany, Hungary, Jersey and Bermuda.

WALTER DIXON (*Werther*)

Twice a Vocal Fellow at Tanglewood in USA and soloist at the Aldeburgh Festival, Walter has performed a wide range of cantata, oratorio and recitals throughout America and Europe. After performances in Australia in August and September, he returns to the USA. Walter's singing professor is Kenneth Woollam.

NICHOLAS GEDGE (*Le Bailli*)

Nicholas was born in Brecon, Wales and read Law at Cambridge. He studies with Mark Wildman, and has awards from the Countess of Munster Trust, Wolfson Foundation and Leverhulme Foundation. Roles include Betto,

Leporello, Surin (Vocal Faculty), Charon (Batignano), Collatinus (Cambridge), Inspector Otto (ENO Baylis Programme) and Colline (British Youth Opera).

ALED HALL (*Werther*)

Aled was born in Pencader. He graduated in music at University College of Wales Aberystwyth in 1990. Roles include Ismaele, Remendado, Marco and Nanki Poo. He has also given numerous oratorio performances. Aled studies with Kenneth Bowen.

VIOLETKA IVANOVA (*Charlotte*)

Violetka was born in Sofia, Bulgaria. There she studied and broadcast from the National Academy of Music, in oratorios and orthodox chants. She has also performed Bulgarian Chorus work in Sofia. Violetka joined the London Royal Schools' Vocal Faculty in 1991. Her professor is Kenneth Woollam.

FIONA MACDONALD (*Käthchen*)

Fiona MacDonald won the 1993 Wagner Society Bayreuth Bursary, and is holder of the Dame Eva Turner Scholarship for Dramatic Sopranos. She studies with Yvonne Minton, and recently sang Female Chorus in *The Rape of Lucretia* for Cambridge University Opera Society.

STUART MACINTYRE (*Albert*)

A Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother Scholar, Stuart MacIntyre has already appeared under Jean-Bernard Pommier and Franz Welser-Möst as soloist and sung with orchestras such as the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and the London Philharmonic. He studies with Norman Bailey.

CHRISTOPHER MALTMAN (*Albert*)

Christopher Maltman presently studies under Mark Wildman on the Opera Course. He enjoys a flourishing professional career, performing oratorio, opera and recitals in both the UK and Europe. Notable venues include the Royal Albert Hall, Sadler's Wells Theatre and the Purcell Room.

PAUL ROBINSON (*Brühlmann*)

Paul Robinson was a Choral Scholar at King's College, Cambridge. Operatic roles include Poacher (*Cunning Little Vixen*), Speaker

(*Magic Flute*), Ensemble (McQueen's *Line of Terror*) for Almeida Festival. Recordings include Wood's *St Mark Passion* and Goehr's *Death of Moses*. He studies with Mark Wildman.

JOHANN SMARI SAEVARSSON (*Johann*)
Johann studied at the Keflavik Music School and the New Music School in Reykjavik with Vincenzo-Maria Demetz. He was a soloist with the Opera Workshop, Reykjavik. Roles include the Drunken Poet (*The Fairy Queen*) and Don Bartolo with British Youth Opera. He studies with Mark Wildman.

EMMA SILVERSIDES (*Käthchen*)
Emma was born in Gloucester. First, she studied for five years under Janet Price at the Welsh College of Music and Drama. Emma has sung various roles including: Ottavia (*Coronation of Poppea*), Lucy (*The Telephone*, Menotti), Miss Wordsworth (*Albert Herring*), 2nd Boy (*Magic Flute*) and chorus in *Candide*. Her singing teacher is now Julie Kennard.

LUBA STUCHEVSKAYA (*Sophie*)
Luba was born in Moscow and studied there, making her London debut in March 1992 at the Queen Elizabeth Hall. She has since sung

at St James's Palace in the presence of The Queen Mother. She is currently studying with Margaret Kingsley and has won a Wolfson Foundation Scholarship, and taken part in the Metropolitan Opera Workshop. Last summer she sang Lisa in *The Queen of Spades*, and contributed to a concert for The Friends of Israel Opera.

TÓMAS TÓMASSON (*Le Bailli*)
Tómas Tómasson graduated from the Reykjavik College of Music. He has performed in many oratorios and recitals in Iceland. Operatic roles include: Sparafucile, Sarastro, Lodovico and Arasse. Future engagements include Mozart's *Requiem*, at the Barbican, and Bach's *St Matthew Passion*. He studies with Margaret Kingsley.

FIONA VAUGHAN (*Sophie*)
Fiona Vaughan attended Chetham's School of Music, Manchester before studying with John Kitchiner in London. Stage work includes roles in *Dido and Aeneas*, *The Queen of Spades*, and *Siroe* with the London Handel Society, whilst concert performances include *Messiah*, *Elijah*, *St John Passion*, Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle* and Britten's *Les Illuminations*.

The next London Royal Schools' Vocal Faculty production

will be

The Knot Garden

by

Sir Michael Tippett

Conductor James Lockhart

Producer Mike Ashman

Designer Bernard Culshaw

4, 5, 7 and 8 July 1994

in the Britten Theatre, Royal College of Music

Tickets (priced £12.50, £7.50 and £3) are available from Opera Ticket Office, Royal College of Music, Prince Consort Road, London SW7 2BS. Booking opens 23 May 1994.

ROYAL ACADEMY OF MUSIC SINFONIA

First Violins

Maya Magub
Yukiko Ogawa
Yuki Hayakashi
Candice Wood
Khin Yee Lo
David Williams
David Holmes
Corinne Gerend
Charles Tait
Sung Choi

Second Violins

Jonathan Hartley
Hazuki Yamamoto
Rachel Maisey
Jostein Grøthe
Rhona Duncan
Ikuko Goto
Alison Dods
Shuntaro Sato

Violas

Erik Jensen
Philip Bartai
Marietta Ku
Caroline Webb

Cellos

Amy Claricoates
Sarah Barnes
Iagoba Fanlo
Benedict Rogerson

Basses

Richard Alsop
Robin Wood

Flutes

Jane Lewis
Julian Berry

Oboes

Philip Riordan
Simon Dewhurst

Clarinets

Tracey Paddock
Rachel Elliott

Alto Saxophone

Shirley Van Vledder

Bassoons

Rebecca Menday
Hazel Granthier

Horns

Jerome Arnouf
Adrian Fuller
Richard Bayliss
Elizabeth Strauchen

Trumpets

Jamie Stoneman
Matthew Warren

Trombones

Bradley Turnbull
Fiona Moverley
Daniel Starling

Tuba

Robin Haggart

Timpani

Maki Kurihara

Percussion

Laura Scott
David Neville
Joe Applewhite

Harp

Julia Thornton

Chamber Organ

Huw Williams

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Grateful thanks to the Royal Academy of Music Guild for motorising the front of house tabs
Sets built by ESP (UK) Ltd and painted by Andrew Taylor and Steve Warren

Costumes hired from Angels/Berman's Ltd

Additional costumes and accessories made by Reginald Hanson, Angela Henry, Sheila Martel and Luke Pascoe.

Grateful thanks to: Gainsborough Flowers of 43 Marylebone High Street

Fisons Scientific Equipment

Nick Butler, Department of National Heritage, Kensington Gardens

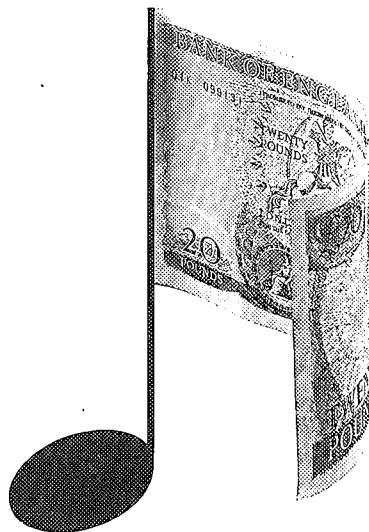
Sainsburys

Selfridges Food Hall

Cover illustration: engraving from a 19th century edition of Goethe's *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* (Royal Opera House Archives)

These performances are given by permission of Editions Heugel, Paris/United Music Publishers Ltd, London

Patrick Collins and Ian Genner are students of Mountview Theatre School



One good note deserves another.

Please send a donation, large or small, to:

MUSICIANS BENEVOLENT FUND

PATRON HM THE QUEEN

16 OGLE STREET, LONDON W1P 7LG.

(REGISTERED CHARITY 228089)

Kensington Chimes Barbican

Music Shops

SHEET MUSIC • BOOKS • INSTRUMENTS & ACCESSORIES

Kensington Music Shop

9 Harrington Road,
South Kensington,
London SW7 3ES.
Tel: 071-589 9054. Fax: 071-225 2662

Chimes Music Shop

44 Marylebone High Street,
London W1M 3AD
Tel: 071-935 1587. Fax: 071-935 0457

Barbican Music Shop

Cromwell Tower,
Barbican,
London EC2Y 8DD.
Tel: 071 588 9242. Fax: 071-628 1080

Opening hours for all shops:
9-5.30, Sat 9-4

- ◆ *An abundance of printed music and books from worldwide publishers.*
- ◆ *Instrument hire, repairs and accessories.*
- ◆ *Gifts with a musical theme.*
- ◆ *Musically-qualified staff with substantial experience in the trade.*
- ◆ *Prompt mail order service.*
- ◆ *Discounts for libraries, schools, professionals, teachers and students.*
- ◆ *Free delivery service twice weekly to schools and libraries in Central London.*