



ARRIGO  BOITO  
MEFISTOFELE

RENÉ PAPE · JOSEPH CALLEJA · KRISTINE OPOLAIS · KARINE BABAJANYAN  
BAYERISCHES STAATSORCHESTER · CONDUCTED BY OMER MEIR WELLBER  
STAGED BY ROLAND SCHWAB · BAYERISCHE STAATSOPER



UNITEL CLASSICA



ARRIGO BOITO  
**MEFISTOFELE**

Orchestra **Bayerisches Staatsorchester**  
Chorus **Chorus and Children's Chorus of  
the Bayerische Staatsoper**  
Conductor **Omer Meir Wellber**  
Stage Director **Roland Schwab**

Mefistofele **René Pape**  
Faust **Joseph Calleja**  
Margherita **Kristine Opolais**  
Marta **Heike Grötzinger**  
Wagner **Andrea Borghini**  
Elena **Karine Babajanyan**  
Pantalis **Rachael Wilson**  
Nerèò **Joshua Owen Mills**

Produced by **Metis Film**  
Video Director **Tiziano Mancini**

shot in  
**4K**  
ULTRA HD  
(3840 x 2160)

Length: approx. 140'  
Shot in HDTV 1080/50i  
Cat. no. A 050 50272

A production of **UNITEL CLASSICA**  
in cooperation with **Bayerische Staatsoper**

Bayerische  
Staatsoper

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Best-known today as the librettist of Verdi's final Shakespearean masterpieces, *Otello* and *Falstaff*, the multi-talented Arrigo Boito was also a journalist, a poet and a fine composer in his own right. Hugely ambitious in scope, and some 20 years in the making, his first (and only completed) opera, *Mefistofele*, sets out to encompass nothing less than the whole of Goethe's vast poetic drama *Faust* (part I and II).

Unlike Gounod's more familiar version, Boito's opera focuses not just on the human tragedy of Faust's callous seduction of the innocent Margherita (Goethe's Gretchen) but also on the original poem's more metaphysical conflict between Good and Evil. Thus, at the start, we see Mefistofele betting God that he can tempt the old philosopher Faust into the ways of sin, while, at the end, we witness the devil's defeat as the disillusioned and dying Faust finally has a fleeting vision of happiness and is redeemed.

Making his debut at the Bayerische Staatsoper with Munich's first ever staging of Boito's masterpiece, director Roland Schwab (a protégé of the legendary Ruth Berghaus) plays devil's advocate by setting the opera in what looks like a garbage-strewn nightclub that then transforms into a geriatric hospital ward, by way of a drunken detour to Munich's own Oktoberfest. Is Hell, then, simply the hell-on-earth that passes for the modern world?

Singing "with clear, strong bass lines" (*Deutschlandradio Kultur*), René Pape plays Mefistofele as the sardonic leader of a satanic cult. As Faust, his slave, Maltese tenor Joseph Calleja "hits his high notes with formidable vigour" (*Financial Times*). Latvian soprano Kristine Opolais's Margherita "shines with understated Grace Kelly elegance" (*Opera Today*), while as Elena – the fabled Helen of Troy – Armenian soprano Karine Babajanyan "shines with heroic high notes" (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*). Finally, in the pit, Israeli conductor Omer Meir Wellber "holds all the musical textures together with admirable control" (*BR Klassik*).



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ENTERTAINMENT GMBH

Tel. +49.30.30306464  
mail@cmajor-entertainment.com



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