

**LES CONTES D'HOFFMANN:
THE TALES OF
HOFFMANN; FANTASTIC
OPERA IN FOUR ACTS**

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Les Contes D'Hoffmann: The Tales of Hoffmann; Fantastic Opera in Four Acts by Jacques Offenbach & Jules Barbier

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JACQUES OFFENBACH & JULES BARBIER

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OPERA IN FOUR ACTS**

LES CONTES D'HOFFMANN

(THE TALES OF HOFFMANN)

FANTASTIC OPERA IN FOUR ACTS

BOOK BY
JULES BARBIER

MUSIC BY
JACQUES OFFENBACH

ENGLISH VERSION BY LOUIS BAZIN

*Musical Edition of Les Contes d'Hoffmann
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30

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CHARACTERS

HOFFMANN	Tenor	LUTHER	Bass
COUNSELOR LINDORF	Bass or	NATHANAEI	Tenor
COPPELIUS		Bass	
DAPERTUITO	Baritone	HERMANN	Bass
DOCTOR MIRACLE		Bass	
SPALANZANI	Tenor	STELLA	Soprano
CRESPEL	Bass or Baritone	GIULIETTA	
ANDRES	Tenor	OLYMPIA	
COCHENILLE		Messo-Soprano	
FRANZ		Messo-Soprano	
PITICHINACCIO		Messo-Soprano	

NOTE

"Les Contes d'Hoffmann," opéra-comique, is one of two posthumous operas of the brilliant and facile French composer. It was his most cherished work, and his labors upon it extended over a period of years. For some time Offenbach had felt his end approaching, and he said to M. Carvalho, "Make haste to mount my piece; I am in a hurry and have only one wish in the world — to witness

the première of this work." He died, however, a few months before its first production, which took place, after it was finally revised and partly orchestrated by Guiraud, at the Opéra-Comique, Feb. 10, 1881. Here it was given no less than 101 times in the year of its production. It was also performed in Germany, and was being sung at the Ring Theatre in Vienna at the time of its configuration.

THE STORY OF THE ACTION

ACT I. — This act is really a prologue, and shows Hoffmann, a young poet, at the Tavern of Luther, drinking and carousing with his companions. They ask him for a song; he commences the fantastic Ballad of Klein-Zach, but midway of the tale wanders into a rhapsodic apostrophe to a beautiful woman. His companions accuse him of being in love; but he replies that for him such joys are past, and forthwith promises to relate to them the history of his three loves.

ACT. II. — OLYMPIA. At the house of the noted scientist, Spalanzani, who has invited a large company to witness the charms and accomplishments of his daughter, Olympia. Hoffmann,

who is attended by Nicklausse, has already become enamored of her by fleeting glimpses through a window. Olympia's appearance, her singing, receive enthusiastic praise from her father's guests, and Hoffmann's conquest is complete. Left alone with her while the other guests are at supper, he tells her of his passion, and thinks that it awakens in her an echo of response. Later there is dancing, and she waltzes so madly that she whirls him off his feet and is only stopped by her father, who conducts her to her room. A Dr. Coppélius enters in a rage, claiming to have been swindled by Spalanzani. He slips into Olympia's room, and presently a noise of breaking is heard. Out of

revenge Coppélius has smashed Olympia, who was only an automaton, cleverly constructed by Spalanzani. Hoffmann's dismay is pitiable.

ACT III. — GIULIETTA. The scene is in Venice at the house of Giulietta, who is beloved by Schlemil. She receives Hoffmann graciously, but Schlemil does not conceal his disgust at the young poet's arrival. Dapertutto bribes Giulietta, with a magic diamond, to enslave Hoffmann, who cares nothing for her. She succeeds in bringing him to her feet, and promises him the key of her room, which he must, however, procure from Schlemil. The latter refuses to yield the key, and a fight ensues, during which Hoffmann kills Schlemil. Hoffmann takes the key, and rushes to Giulietta's room, only to find it deserted, and to see her in a gondola, riding away in the embrace of another man, and laughing at his plight. Nicklausse drags him away to escape the police.

ACT IV. — ANTONIA. In Munich, at the house of Crespel, who seeks to keep his daughter Antonia hidden from the attentions of Hoffmann. Fearing that, together with her mother's voice, she has inherited her mother's consumption, Crespel forbids his daughter to sing. Hoffmann gains admission to the house unknown to Crespel, renews his vows to Antonia, and, at Crespel's approach, hides himself, to learn, if possible, why Antonia has been forbidden to use her voice. Through a conversation between Crespel and an evil magician named Doctor Miracle he learns the bitter truth; and later adds his entreaties to those of her father that Antonia will sing no more. She promises him; but when Hoffmann goes, Miracle appears to her, reproaches her for giving up her career in favor of a humdrum domestic existence with a lover whose unfaithfulness needs but to be proven, and fills her mind with doubt. Finally Miracle causes the ghost of Antonia's mother to appear, and the spirit adds her appeal to Miracle's reproaches, overwhelming Antonia, and finally inducing her

to join in singing with the supernatural voice. She pauses breathless, but Miracle urges her on and on, until she falls dying. Her frenzied father receives her in his arms, while Hoffmann, heart-broken, witnesses the tragedy.

EPILOGUE. Takes us back to the scene of the first act. Hoffmann's recital is at an end, and his companions leave him. The Muse appears to him and offers the consolations and rewards of Art as a panacea for his broken heart. For a moment he is roused to enthusiasm; but presently, overcome with his potations at Luther's tavern and the emotion of his reminiscences, he falls face forward upon the table — and sleeps.

First performed at the Théâtre de l'Opéra-Comique, Paris, Feb. 10, 1881, with the following cast:

HOFFMANN	<i>M. M. Talazac</i>
LE CONSEILLER LINDORF	} <i>Taquin</i>
COPPÉLIUS	
DAPERTUTTO	
LE DOCTEUR MIRACLE	
SPALANZANI	<i>Gourden</i>
CREPSEL	<i>Belhomme</i>
ANDRÉS	} <i>Grivot</i>
COCHENILLE	
FRANTZ	
MÂTRE LUTHER	<i>Troy</i>
NATHANÆL	<i>Chenevrière</i>
VOLFRAMM	<i>Piccaluga</i>
HERMANN	<i>Tesh</i>
VILHELM	<i>Cotin</i>
STELLA	} <i>Mmes. Izou</i>
GIULIETTA	
OLYMPIA	
ANTONIA	} <i>Ugalde</i>
NICKLAUSSE	
LA MUSE	<i>Moll</i>
UN FANTÔME	<i>Dupuis</i>
Conductor, Léon Carvalho.	

LES CONTES D'HOFFMANN

ACT I

The tavern of Master Luther.

(The interior of a German inn. Tables and benches.)

Chorus of Students.

Drig, drig, drig, master Luther,
Brand of hades,
Drig, drig, drig, bring us thy beer,
Bring us thy wine,
Till morning dawns,
Fill up my glass,
Till morning dawns,
Fill up our pewter pots!

Nathanael.

Luther is a brave man,
Tire lan laire,
On the morrow we will brain him,
Tire lan la!

Chorus.

Tire lan la!
(They strike their cups on the tables.)

Luther

(going from table to table.)

Here, gentlemen, here!

Hermann.

His cellar is a goodly spot,
Tire lan laire,
We'll pillage it on the morrow,
Tire lan la!

Chorus.

Tire lan la!
(Knocking of glasses.)

Luther.

Here, gentlemen, here!

PREMIER ACTE

La taverne de Maître Luther.

(Intérieur d'une taverne allemande. Cà et là, des tables et des bancs.)

Choeur des Etudiants.

Drig! drig! drig! maître Luther,
Tison d'enfer,
Drig! drig! drig! à nous ta bière,
A nous ton vin,
Jusqu'au matin
Remplis mon verre,
Jusqu'au matin
Remplis les pots d'étain!

Nathanael.

Luther est un brave homme;
Tire lan laire!
C'est demain qu'on l'assomme;
Tire lan la!

Le Choeur.

Tire lan la!
(Ils frappent les gobelets sur les tables.)

Luther

(allant de table en table)

Voilà, messieurs, voilà!

Hermann.

Sa cave est d'un bon drille;
Tire lan laire!
C'est demain qu'on la pille
Tire lan la!

Le Choeur.

Tire lan la!
(Bruit de gobelets.)

Luther.

Voilà, messieurs, voilà!

Wilhelm.

His wife is a daughter of Eve,
Tire lan laire,
And on the morrow we will steal her,
Tire lan la.

Chorus.

Tire lan la !

Luther.

Here, gentlemen, here!

Chorus.

Drig, drig, drig, master Luther, etc., etc.
(The students seat themselves, drinking and smoking, on all sides.)

Nathanael.

Praise God, my friends, for the lovely being!
As in a masterpiece of Mozart
She lends the charm of a true and pleasing
voice!
It is the gift of nature
And the triumph of art!
My first toast shall be to her;
I drink to Stella!

All.

We drink to Stella!

Nathanael.

How is it Hoffmann is not here?
Ah, Luther, you portly tun,
What have you done with our Hoffmann?

Hermann.

Your wine it is that's poisoned him,
You've killed him, by my faith!
Give us our Hoffmann!

All.

Give us Hoffmann.

*Lindorf**(aside).*

To the devil with Hoffmann!

Nathanael.

By Heaven! Bring him to us,
Or your last day has dawned.

Wilhelm.

Sa femme est fille d'Eve;
Tire lan laire;
C'est demain qu'on l'enlève;
Tire lan la!

Le Choeur.

Tire lan la!

Luther.

Voilà, messieurs, voilà!

Le Choeur.

Drig! drig! drig! maître Luther, etc., etc.
(Les étudiants s'assoient, boivent et fument dans tous les cotés.)

Nathanael.

Vive Dieu! mes amis, la belle créature!
Comme au chef-d'œuvre de Mozart
Elle prête l'accent d'une voix ferme et saine!
C'est la grâce de la nature,
Et c'est le triomphe de l'art!
Que mon premier toast soit pour elle!
Je bois à la Stella!

Tous.

Vivat! à la Stella!

Nathanael.

Comment Hoffmann n'est-il pas là?
Eh! Luther!... ma grosse tonne!
Qu'as-tu fait de notre Hoffmann?

Hermann.

C'est ton vin qui l'empoisonne!
Tu l'as tué, foi d'Hermann!
Rends-nous Hoffmann!

Tous.

Rends-nous Hoffmann!

*Lindorf**(à part).*

Au diable Hoffmann!

Nathanael.

Morbleu! qu'on nous l'apporte,
Ou ton dernier jour a lui!

Luther.

Gentlemen, he is at the door,
And Nicklausse is with him.

All.

Hurrah, 'tis he.

Lindorf

Let's watch him. (aside).

Hoffmann

(entering with solemn demeanor).

Good day, friends.

Nicklausse.

Good-day.

Hoffmann.

A chair, a glass,
A pipe...

Nicklausse

(mocking).

Pardon, my lord, no offence intended,
But I drink, smoke and sit like you... place
for two!

Chorus.

He's right... place for both of them.

(HOFFMANN and NICKLAUSSE seat themselves; HOFFMANN holds his head in his hands.)

Nicklausse

(sighing).

Notte a giorno mal dormire...

Hoffmann

(triumphantly).

Shut up, devil take you!

Nicklausse

(quietly).

Yes, master.

Hermann

(to HOFFMANN).

Oh, oh, why are you in such bad temper?

Nathanael

(to HOFFMANN).

Indeed, one scarcely knows you.

Luther.

Messieurs, il ouvre la porte,
Et Nicklausse est avec lui!

Tous.

Vivat! c'est lui!

Lindorf

Veillons sur lui. (à part).

Hoffmann

(entrant d'un air sombre).

Bonjour, amis!

Nicklausse.

Bonjour!

Hoffmann.

Un tabouret! un verre!
Une pipe!

Nicklausse

(railleur).

Pardon, seigneur!... sans vous déplaire,
Je bois, fume et m'assieds comme vous...
part à deux!

Le Chœur.

C'est juste!... Place à tous les deux!

(HOFFMANN et NICKLAUSSE s'assoient; HOFFMANN se prend la tête entre les mains.)

Nicklausse

(tristement).

Notte a giorno mal dormire...

Hoffmann

(triumphant).

Tais-toi, par le diable!

Nicklausse

(tranquillement).

Oui, mon maître.

Hermann

(à HOFFMANN).

Oh! oh! d'où vient cet air fâché?

Nathanael

(à HOFFMANN).

C'est à ne pas te reconnaître.

Hermann.

What thorny path have you trodden?

Hoffmann.

Alas! I've come by a withered flower
Frozen by the northern wind.

Nicklausse.

And yonder, near this door,
Stumbled over a sleeping drunkard.

Hoffmann.

'Tis true... that rascal, by Jove, I envy him!
Let's drink, and like him, let's sleep in the
gutter.

Hermann.

Without pillow?

Hoffmann.

The stones!

Nathanael.

Without curtains?

Hoffmann.

The sky!

Nathanael.

With no covering?

Hoffmann.

The rain!

Hermann.

Have you a nightmare, Hoffmann?

Hoffmann.

No, but this evening
Just now at the theatre ...

All.

Well?

Hoffmann.

I hoped to see once more...
The deuce... why reopen old wounds?
Life is short... We must enjoy it by the way.
We must drink, sing, laugh, as we may,
What though we weep to-morrow!

Hermann.

Sur quelle herbe as-tu donc marché?

Hoffmann.

Hélas! sur une herbe morte
Au souffle glacé du nord!...

Nicklausse.

Et là, près de cette porte,
Sur un ivrogne qui dort!

Hoffmann.

C'est vrai!... Ce coquin-là, pardieu! m'a fait
envie!
A boire!... et, comme lui, couchous dans le
ruisseau.

Hermann.

Sans oreiller?

Hoffmann.

La pierre!

Nathanael.

Et sans rideau?

Hoffmann.

Le ciel!

Nathanael.

Sans couvre-pied?

Hoffmann.

La pluie!

Hermann.

As-tu le cauchemar, Hoffmann?

Hoffmann.

Non, mais ce soir,
Tout à l'heure, au théâtre...

Tous.

Eh bien?

Hoffmann.

J'ai cru revoir...
Baste!... à quoi bon rouvrir une vieille blessure?
La vie est courte!... Il faut l'égayeur en chemin.
Il faut boire, chanter et rire à l'aventure,
Sauf à pleurer demain