

THE TALES OF HOFFMANN

Music by
Jacques Offenbach

Libretto by
Jules Barbier and Michel Carré

English Version by
Donald Pippin
(1997)

© 1997 Donald Pippin
Exclusive Agent: Pocket Opera Inc.
San Francisco, California

All rights reserved. No part of this work may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever without permission, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Lindorf	a councilor of Nürnberg
Andr�as	servant of Stella
Bernard	a student
Nathaniel	a student
Luther	a tavern keeper
Hoffmann	a poet
Nicklausse	Hoffmann's companion
Spalanzani	a self-styled scientist and inventor
Cochenille	Spalanzani's servant
Copp�lius	another so-called scientist and rival of Spalanzani
Olympia	a mechanical doll
Giulietta	a courtesan
Schl�mil	her lover
Dapertutto	a sorcerer
Pittichinaccio	an admirer of Giulietta
Antonia	a singer
Crespel	her father, a councilor of Munich
Frantz	his servant
Dr. Miracle	
The voice of Antonia's mother	
Stella	an opera singer

The Muse

Students, ladies and gentlemen, servants

The Tales of Hoffmann

Offenbach

English Version by Donald Pippin

ACT I

The overture is about to start. Even before the first somber chords have sounded, the performance has already been hailed the event of the season -- Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, starring the incomparable Stella from Milan. Forget the rest of the cast. It's Stella's night, her long anticipated local debut, sold out weeks in advance. Too bad we're not going to hear it.

Instead, like the many others who were unable to obtain last minute tickets at any price, here we are, relegated to the bar next door -- Luther's tavern, located with convenient access to the backstage dressing rooms. In fact, from an inner window, by standing on tiptoe, you can get a tiny glimpse of the stage. A favorite hangout for Hoffmann, the promising young poet, and his boisterous friends. Though normally somewhat erratic, on this very special night you can bet your life that he will show up, drawn, as he might put it, by an irresistible magnet. Would you believe it? He is in love again. And with the prima donna, no less -- the dazzling, the one and only Stella. But already their brief but passionate romance has apparently ended with a quarrel. Is the rift beyond repair? Will she deign to see him after the performance? Sad to say, this will not be the first time that his love life has gone off the rails. A victim of his own over-active imagination, he is too often lost in that feverish world, too often haunted by the past. Tonight he is more than ever on edge.

Equally certain to show up is the Councilor Lindorf, who also has designs on the glamorous leading lady. Frankly, I wish he would just stay home. The less we see of him the better. Although he does not quite qualify as the devil incarnate, there's something spooky about the man, off putting, -- hard to say why -- well, aside from the fact that he is surly, arrogant, overbearing, unscrupulous,

manipulative and just plain malevolent. Furthermore, for some reason or other he seems to carry a lasting grudge against Hoffmann. Despite all, he does have a magnetic, at times hypnotic, charm and a diabolical approach to seduction that seems to be oddly successful. Hoffmann has good reason to eye him uneasily.

Oh, yes. Someone else we are about to run into. After all, she seems to have made the tavern her permanent home, mainly, I suppose, to keep an eye on Hoffmann. Not exactly a real person, though she does look and talk like one. Well, sort of. The lyre she's holding might give you a clue. Call her a guiding force, a refuge, a tyrannical taskmistress, a not always reliable source of inspiration -- in short, the Muse, with whom Hoffmann has had a hectic, on-again off-again relationship that has left her disgruntled. Often neglected, ignored, cast aside for more vivid attractions, still she is not yet ready to write him off as a lost cause. On the contrary, after watching a series of his romantic disasters with ever growing exasperation, she is determined to claim him exclusively for her own.

So to recapitulate: the Councilor Lindorf and the Muse share a common goal -- to see that the breach between Hoffmann and Stella becomes permanent. Obviously, little can be done until after her final curtain call, still more than two hours away. So until then, like Hoffmann and his friends, like Lindorf, like the Muse, we'll just have to pass the time as best we can. Perhaps Hoffmann can be induced to tell the extraordinary tales of his three lost loves . . . Better order another beer.

Scene: In Luther's Cellar, Nürnberg

SPIRITS OF WINE AND BEER: *(offstage)*

Glou glou glou glou
Speaking for wine ...
Glou glou glou glou
Speaking for beer ...

Share with friend and neighbor
Pleasure after labor.
With friend and neighbor
Share some pleasure after labor.

When the mood is gray

Chase dull care away
Chase it far away and keep it at bay.
Keep it well at bay.
Chase dull care away.
Glou glou glou

THE MUSE

(entering with lyre in hand)
Though truth may dwell on lonely heights,
The Muse, in radiant apparel,
Is sometimes met on misty nights
Residing in a barroom barrel.

Unwilling to capitulate,
For Hoffmann here I watch and wait,
A poet-dreamer (choose the order)
Whose glass is seldom filled with water.

Once grateful for my inspiration,
Now heedless of my righteous wrath,
Again he takes the downward path
That leads to loss and desolation.
Infatuated, he pursues
The prima donna, not the Muse.

Rejected, no, I'll not surrender;
My lyre becomes both sword and shield.
And heaven help the brash contender
That braves me on the battlefield.

But not content with idle bluster,
More subtle means I'll have to muster.
The hapless hero I'll attend
As young Nicklausse, his faithful friend.

And thus of neither sex, but neuter,
I'll snatch him from the star's embrace,
And hasten his return to grace
By rounding up a rival suitor.
The Councilor Lindorf will do,
And look! He enters, right on cue.

(Lindorf enters, with Andr as, as the Muse fades away)

LINDORF Councilor Lindorf, you idiot! Do I have to spell it out?

ANDR AS No, sir.

LINDORF And you, I take it, are an errand boy. For the prima donna.

ANDR AS Yes, sir.

LINDORF The dazzling Stella, from Milan.

ANDRÉAS Yes, sir.

LINDORF They say that she is irresistible.

ANDRÉAS Yes, sir.

LINDORF Worshipped by scores of lovers.

ANDRÉAS Yes, sir.

LINDORF One of whom she favors.

ANDRÉAS Yes, sir.

LINDORF To whom this very moment you are on your way to deliver a little note.

ANDRÉAS Yes, sir.

LINDORF A little note that you might be willing to sell.

ANDRÉAS Sir!

LINDORF Here is ten, and count yourself lucky.

ANDRÉAS No, sir.

LINDORF Twenty ... Thirty. Never mind. (*lifting his cane*) I have other means of persuasion ... All right, forty.

ANDRÉAS Sold!

LINDORF Highway robbery. This had better be worth it. Well, what are you waiting for? The letter is delivered. Go to the devil.

ANDRÉAS Yes, sir!

(he exits)

LINDORF Yes, sir. No, sir. Let's see if the mistress is less monosyllabic. I suppose some might quibble, but after all, the letter is mine. I paid for it. To Hoffmann! Yes, I had a hunch. These women! The world at their feet, and who do they fall for? A poet and a drunkard. That's life. A key, no less! "My darling, I did not mean to hurt you. In two hours, after the performance, I shall be waiting. Take your revenge as you will. Your adoring Stella." My unsuspecting prima donna! In two hours your door will open, but it will be Councilor Lindorf who discreetly enters your scented boudoir. Oh, you will have no cause for complaint. I cannot make you sigh, but I can make you shiver.

In the role of the languishing lover
I cut a contemptible figure,
But never say die till it's over,
Till it's over.

Approaching love a colder way,
The devil's part I choose to play.
To woo my darling I rely
Upon a stern hypnotic eye.
From Satan I derive the art
Of firing up the heart.
In pursuit, I persevere
And prevail by using fear,
Naked fear!

And you, fair prima donna —
The talk of the town, and you know it —
Now wasting yourself on a poet,
On a poet!

The door that leads to your boudoir
Late tonight I'll open wide,
Boldly then to step inside.
My rival is preferred, I hear,
But little that matters to me, my dear,
When I have got the key.
By your bed I shall arrive,
Maybe old, but still alive, much alive!

The gala performance in progress not thirty feet away, the first act nearly over, two hours still to go before Don Giovanni is consumed by fire. Here I shall have to wait, carouse with Hoffmann and his cronies, while playing the spy.

LUTHER *(enters, followed by waiters)*
Hurry, hurry! Bustle about.
I want tables ready, glasses out.
Scamper, scurry!
The public soon will flock around
To see the prima donna crowned.
Hustle, hustle!
The reigning diva they will greet
And toss their flowers at her feet.
The coronation shall proceed!
Come on, you loafers, gather speed.

(Nathaniel, Bernard and a crowd of students enter in high spirits)

CHORUS OF STUDENTS
Go look, look, look, look.
Where is the lazy host?
Did he get lost?
What does he think a tavern's for?
We come to drink,
You come to pour.

A round of cheer! Drink up and have another.
More beer and wine
For thirsty friends of mine.
For here it's man to man and brother-brother.
So pour the wine
For friends of mine.
So pour the wine.
For thirsty friends of mine.
The beer! The wine!

BERNARD Luther is here the master.
Tra la la la la!
Why are his feet not faster?
Tra la la la la!

STUDENTS The beer! The wine!

LUTHER Of course, at once!
Yes, here you are.

BERNARD Slower than cold molasses.
Tra la la la la!
Fill up the empty glasses.
Tra la la la la!

STUDENTS The beer! The wine!

LUTHER Of course, of course!
Here right away.

NATHANIEL Why study Aristotle?
Open another bottle.

STUDENTS Buy now and pay tomorrow
Cash you can always borrow.

LUTHER Of course, of course!
Yes, right away.

STUDENTS A round of cheer! Drink up and have another.
More beer and wine
For thirsty friends of mine.
For here it's man to man and brother-brother.
So pour the wine
For friends of mine.

A toast to liberty and pleasure,
To friends and loyalties we treasure.
So pour another round of cheer,
A round of beer and wine;
Of beer and wine.

LUTHER How was Stella?

NATHANIEL Ravishing! Liquid gold from the gods. Legato smoother than

silk. The caress of the phrasing! The hint of rubato ...

BERNARD No Hoffmann yet? Without our friend to spin a tale or two, we've a long night ahead.

NATHANIEL Luther, you barrel of beef,
Why is Hoffmann not around?

BERNARD Was your wine so lethal that
It knocked him out and laid him flat?

OTHERS We want him found!

LINDORF (I want him slain.)

NATHANIEL *(to Luther)*
Be off! Better go find him.
Do I make my meaning plain?

LUTHER My friends, he opens the door.
With Nicklausse, by the way.

STUDENTS The two at last are here.
Hooray! Hooray!

HOFFMANN *(enters with Nicklausse)*
So here I am.

NICKLAUSSE Me, too.

HOFFMANN *(to Luther)*
A chair, sir, and a glass,
Then a pipe.

NICKLAUSSE Excuse me, friend. Try to recall:
I drink, I smoke,
I sit in a chair, same as you.

NATHANIEL And us.

OTHERS Double-order, pipe and all.

NICKLAUSSE Notte e giorno mal dormire ...

HOFFMANN Not that tiresome tune!

NICKLAUSSE You're the master.

BERNARD This sulky mood for you is odd.

NATHANIEL So out of sorts and so downcast,
Upon what nettles have you trod?

HOFFMANN In a landscape cold and dead,
Laid waste by a northerly blast.

NICKLAUSSE Where a beggar made his bed
Passed out, and feeling no pain.

HOFFMANN In fact, hearing him snore,
I felt a tug of envy.
The gutter! The gutter! The gutter!
There if I sleep
I might forget the past.

BERNARD Sleeping on what?

HOFFMANN Cement.

BERNARD Over your head?

HOFFMANN The sky.

NATHANIEL Bedding you down?

HOFFMANN The rain.

BERNARD Nothing wrong, I assume?

HOFFMANN No.

NATHANIEL To clear away the clouds
There's nothing like a song.
The chorus we'll provide.

OTHERS We can sing along.

HOFFMANN Do.

NATHANIEL Something bright and upbeat.

BERNARD The song about the rat?

NATHANIEL No, let's do better than that.
I don't suppose
You know the song of old Kleinzach.

OTHERS Of course he knows
The song of crazy old Kleinzach.

HOFFMANN Well, well. Here goes.

HOFFMANN Inside a rundown shack going back long ago,

OTHERS A tale of long ago.

HOFFMANN There lived Kleinzach, a sight that would frighten a crow.

OTHERS A sight to frighten crows.

HOFFMANN A slob so slack, his teeth were black
And his knees for no reason would go click clack,
Click clack! Click clack!
The knees of old Kleinzach!

HOFFMANN No man of mode, when clad he was sewed in a sack ...

OTHERS A bulky burlap sack.

HOFFMANN And seldom spoke except for a croak or a quack.

OTHERS A crow-like croak or quack.

HOFFMANN A bore, he had one more drawback,
For his jaw would implausibly go crick crack,
Crick crack! Crick crack!
One more for old Kleinzach.

(drifting off)
Ever present like a haunting vision ...

OTHERS Ever present like a vision ...

HOFFMANN My desire, my hope, my inspiration.
My destiny, my pain, my passion.

 Even now ... Lovely,
Fair and gentle as when
With heart and soul afire
I left behind hearth and home
To follow on her trail
And pursue like the wind
Over hill, over dale.

 Oh, the sparkle of sunlight on her golden hair!
Subtle shadows at play on her elegant throat.
Her eyes that clearly told me “Yes, I care ...”
The allure of her smile,
My delight and despair!

 Then as we rode along
Inside a silken carriage,
She sang so sweet a song
Of lovers bound for marriage,

HOFFMANN Transported by the sound,
We shared a world apart.
We shared a world apart,
Transported by the sound
Whose echo will rebound
Forever in my heart.

NATHANIEL What a hopeless romantic!
To whom do you refer? Kleinzach?

HOFFMANN Kleinzach? ... Of her I was dreaming.

NATHANIEL Her?

HOFFMANN No ... No person ... None.
Or at best a mirage. None!
As for old Kleinzach,
Once again getting back ...

Uncouth and coarse of manner, alas and alack;

OTHERS Alas, alas, alack.

HOFFMANN For rudeness of retort he had mastered the knack,

OTHERS The nasty, nasty knack.

HOFFMANN A mug of ale, or a cup of sack
And the lout would undoubtedly go smack smack,
Smack smack! Smack smack!
Says boorish old Kleinzach.

Bah! This beer could not be flatter.
Bring over the punch.

OTHERS Hooray for the punch!

HOFFMANN Cheerio!

OTHERS Cheerio!

HOFFMANN As long as we're merry, what does it matter?

OTHERS As long as we're merry, what does it matter?

OTHERS Luther is here the master.
Tra la la la la!
Why are his feet not faster?
Tra la la la la!
Buy now and pay tomorrow.
Tra la la la la!
Cash you can always borrow.
Tra la la la la!

NICKLAUSSE At last we're talking sense,
The mood again on track. Oh,
Yes! A song, a pipe of tobacco,
And to hell with passion and pain.

NATHANIEL In love! There Hoffmann goes again.

HOFFMANN Not a chance! The thought is absurd.
No, my romantic days are past.

LINDORF Heh! Heh! Heh!

How many times I've heard!
Each grand passion is the last.

HOFFMANN *(recognizing him)*
It's you! Speak of hell or the devil,
He appears in person.

NICKLAUSSE
The wig! Little present from his wife,
To conceal the horns she also gave.

HOFFMANN *(graciously)*
By the way, how does old Sir Malice
Come into the scene
Casting omens of doom?

LINDORF *(equally polite)*
By the very same door
You also use, my green
Flower still waiting to bloom.

HOFFMANN
You parasite, you trouble shooter,
Old Satan's partner and recruiter —
You come to hunt the prey?

LINDORF
On me your compliments are wasted,
Like sour wine best left untasted,
Better yet, thrown away.

HOFFMANN
No grape on the vine has yielded
The wine you would throw away.

LINDORF
Unlike a few men I could mention,
For what I consume I pay.

HOFFMANN
With money no doubt you've stolen
From me or a starving friend.

LINDORF
When do poets and fools have money?
First they borrow, then they spend.

HOFFMANN
To my foe of many faces
Who affords me no relief.

LINDORF
To a fool in whose embraces
Lovers all have come to grief.

NICKLAUSSE
Mere exchange of lyric pleasantries:
Two classic shepherds in a myrtle grove,
Rivals in love, boasting in rhyme
Of a proud disdain in language sublime.

HOFFMANN
I foresee ... now ... as before ... danger looming.
After a meeting, I leave him assuming
Thunder and lightening will fall on my head.
Under a curse, I live in dread.

If I gamble I'm bound to go broke.

LINDORF Not if you mastered the rules of the game.

HOFFMANN Drinking wine, even sipping, I choke.

LINDORF You fail to swallow — Am I to blame?

HOFFMANN Making love ...

LINDORF Ha ha ha! So you're a lover after all?

HOFFMANN So what?

NATHANIEL You're not the first of us to fall.
For example ...

To start with William, man to man,
He pines for Leonor,
So sincere, so angelic.
Bernard adores Cathleen,
And I, no ancient relic,
Would die for Anne.

HOFFMANN Sweet Leonor — the perfect lady.
And cold Cathleen — a wind-up doll
With missing heart.
And costly Anne — you must be mad,
Enamored of a proven tart.

BERNARD So we safely then may assume
That your beloved has no blemish.

HOFFMANN My beloved? One beloved?
Oh, no! Say instead, there were three.
Three beauties played a single role
That filled my heart with light and air.
Shall I tell you my tale
Of pursuit and despair?

STUDENTS Do! Do! Do!

Glass in hand, close to one another,
Let us hear our tormented brother.
Light a pipe, settle in your chair
While the smoke curls into the air.

HOFFMANN To begin with ...

STUDENTS Attention! Attention!

HOFFMANN The first of three I worshipped
Was named Olympia ...

End of the Prologue

Act I

Scene: a room in Spalanzani's home — a scientist's study

SPALANZANI There! Go to sleep, child. Look at her. Lovely, sweet, docile, obedient. What more could a father want? And on top of that, my passport to fame and riches. Oh, yes! Put her on display, and I'll get back far more than the five hundred I lost when my bank suddenly went out of business. But I worry about Coppélius. No, no! I won't even think about him. A share-holder indeed! A petty peddler of eyeglasses, nothing more! I want to concentrate on making tonight's party worthy of the occasion. *(Hoffmann enters)* Hoffmann! So prompt. Right on time. My favorite pupil.

HOFFMANN Unworthy of his master.

SPALANZANI And modest to a fault. But I repeat: no more poetry, no more music. Stick to science, and you will someday be a professor like myself. Forgive me if I seem a bit distracted. Tonight I'm giving a grand reception.

HOFFMANN In honor of your daughter, I believe.

SPALANZANI Her public debut. She will be a sensation. Science can go no further.

HOFFMANN Science? Your daughter? I don't quite see the connection.

SPALANZANI Never mind. She sings, she dances. And what a disposition!

COCHENILLE *(entering)* Oh, sir! The caterers are waiting for final instructions.

SPALANZANI You must excuse me. A busy day. So much to do. I'll return shortly. *(Spalanzani and Cochenille exit)*

HOFFMANN With faith, I'll rise to the occasion
 And become a master of science.
 By shifting winds I'm tossed about,
 But I must prove myself deserving.
 Though the challenge seems unnerving,
 I'll not give way to doubt.

 We are close ... Do I dare?

(he pulls aside the curtain, revealing Olympia who is apparently sleeping)

HOFFMANN There sleeping ... And maybe sharing
 A dream of lovers come together.

HOFFMANN Two people meet
 And never more can be divided,
 United, it would seem,
 By a hope, by a dream,
 Without reserve confided,
 To make a marriage perfect and complete.

 Kind heaven, send me power

To kindle and inspire,
Ah! That love may come to flower
Within that sacred fire.

Burn on and on,
By watchful angels ever tended,
As lovers, starry-eyed,
By the flame purified,
Embrace in rapture blended
With kisses softer than the down of swan.

Kind heaven, send me power
To kindle and inspire,
Ah! That love may come to flower
Within that sacred fire.

NICKLAUSSE

(entering)
My friend! Somehow I knew
That here you would be found.

HOFFMANN

Hush!

NICKLAUSSE

And why? Because here the lovely Olympia lies asleep.
Gaze on in admiration.

HOFFMANN

Such an angel one can but worship.

NICKLAUSSE

Too soon you may have second thoughts.

HOFFMANN

For one in love
No second thoughts are needed.

NICKLAUSSE

(with skepticism)
One look will do, and through a window!

HOFFMANN

One alone told me all
To light the fire of love.

NICKLAUSSE

The inflammable heart!
And does she know that Rome is burning?

HOFFMANN

No.

NICKLAUSSE

Write to her.

HOFFMANN

I'm still afraid.

NICKLAUSSE

If on fire, you must speak.

HOFFMANN

The risk is even greater.

NICKLAUSSE

Then I see no recourse:
You must woo her in song.

HOFFMANN

But Spalanzani's scathing.

He disapproves of music.

NICKLAUSSE He approves
Only of a certain newly invented plaything.

Lifelike with blue enamel eyes,
Her talents I could itemize,
A painted doll, but not improper;
Though painted, not improper.

One day she found the perfect friend;
In harmony the two would blend;
A strutting rooster made of copper,
A rooster made of copper.

HOFFMANN Explain. I fail to get the point.

NICKLAUSSE Ah! —
Each favored with a hidden spring,
This pair would pirouette and sing,
Accompanied by harp or zither,
By harp or zither.

Blessed with a further gift, I fear,
Downcast and with a liquid tear,
Her batting eyes could say come hither,
Come hither.

COPPÉLIUS (*entering*) Ha ha! Just between us, I don't think my old friend Spalanzani will be any too pleased to see me. No, no! Coppélius is not so easy to get rid of. (*seeing Hoffmann*) What have we here? A newcomer? And what is he gazing at? Of course, Olympia. Our own Olympia!

NICKLAUSSE (Their own Olympia?)

COPPÉLIUS Young man, if you please. Oh, sir! Oh, sir!

HOFFMANN (*finally noticing*) You spoke?

COPPÉLIUS Coppélius is the name, friend and colleague of professor Spalanzani, and a merchant by trade — barometers, thermometers, hygrometers. Reduced prices for today only. Can I interest you in a barometer?

HOFFMANN No, thank you. I take the weather as it comes.

COPPÉLIUS A philosopher — one who peers into things. I also carry eyes, marvelous, amazing eyes ...

HOFFMANN You mean spectacles?

COPPÉLIUS Eyes that show you what you want to see. Real eyes, living eyes that render black or white, as you determine: Black as night raven, or white as ermine.

I've got eyes, probing eyes
That can pierce the outer layer.
Try on these eyes and become
A supernatural surveyor.

Eyes like these you need but wear
To find a woman's soul,
Even when none is there.

Probing eyes, piercing eyes
I offer you, sir, to sample.
Pick a pair ... Pick a pair. See!

Come, explore the core of a woman.
On her virtue ought you to gamble?
If found unsound, you're also free
To see the truth you want to see.
You prefer brunette,
That is what you get.

COPPÉLIUS Put on my probing eyes,
If you dare scrutinize
The mystery that underneath the surface lies.

HOFFMANN I'll take them! (*takes the glasses*)

COPPÉLIUS Of course. Three ducats, please.

HOFFMANN (*peering at Olympia*) Revelation! Until now I was blind!
A thousand times even more beautiful than before!

COPPÉLIUS Three ducats, please.

HOFFMANN My angel, my glorious ...

COPPÉLIUS Three ducats, please.

HOFFMANN A celestial vision, beheld for the first time.

NICKLAUSSE I believe he wants three ducats.

HOFFMANN Then pay him at once.

NICKLAUSSE The privilege of friendship. He looks, I pay.

COPPÉLIUS What true lover can dispense with my spectacles?

SPALANZANI (*returning*) There! Everything under control. What? Coppélius!

COPPÉLIUS Dear Professor ...

SPALANZANI But we agreed on the terms. I thought it was all settled.

COPPÉLIUS Not in writing. So think again.

SPALANZANI Bloodsucker! Dear Hoffmann, you'll excuse me. A little business that I have to settle.

COPPÉLIUS Five hundred and we'll call it quits.

SPALANZANI Five hundred on top of what I've already paid you?

COPPÉLIUS Perhaps then you would prefer to share the profits, fifty-fifty.

SPALANZANI But she is my daughter. I am her father.

COPPÉLIUS Only in part. She has my eyes.

SPALANZANI Not so loud! Not so loud! (The one thing I was never able to figure out. No choice but to settle as quietly as possible.) You said four hundred?

COPPÉLIUS Five hundred. And I give up all rights, including the eyes.

SPALANZANI In writing?

COPPÉLIUS In writing.

SPALANZANI I'll give you a check. Only fools carry cash.

COPPÉLIUS Your bank is a sound establishment?

SPALANZANI Solid as Gibraltar.

COPPÉLIUS Very well. A deal is a deal.

HOFFMANN (What merchandise are they haggling over?)

COPPÉLIUS I sign, you sign. Friend to friend.

SPALANZANI One partner to another. (Wait till he tries to collect.)

COPPÉLIUS By the way, just a notion. Now that your daughter is yours to do with as you like, why not marry her off? You think I'm joking? Look around.

SPALANZANI My pupil?

COPPÉLIUS He looks stupid enough.

SPALANZANI Merely naive and innocent.

COPPÉLIUS Think it over. I'm off to the bank.

(he exits)

SPALANZANI You may be late already.

COCHENILLE *(entering)* Oh, sir! They are here! Your guests are arriving.

SPALANZANI And the party begins.

GUESTS No genial host anywhere,

None anywhere,
Entertains with greater flare;
With greater flare.
Music and food made to order,
Both made to order.
What a pleasure, what a pleasure to attend!

GUESTS Come, come, our fine learned friend,
Come learned friend.
We want to meet your fair daughter,
Said to be so ravishing,
Her talent an inspiration.
Oh do, sir, have her sing
To honor the occasion.

SPALANZANI (*spoken*) You have a treat in store. I bow to your request.
How could I deprive you of such a pleasure? Of course you must hear my daughter
sing. One moment, please.

(*he goes*)

NICKLAUSSE (*to Hoffmann*)
We're now about to see
At somewhat closer quarters
This fair phenomenon that drives you wild.

HOFFMANN In wonder I await.

SPALANZANI (*enters, leading Olympia*)
A father's pride and joy!
May I present dear Olympia, my own child.

GUESTS Enchanting, enchanting!

What bright, delightful eyes!
Her figure unneglected,
The gown so well selected —
A model on display.

We platitudinize
In calling sheer perfection.
The spotless, clear complexion
That takes the breath away.

HOFFMANN A queen to be adored.

NICKLAUSSE Her Majesty has scored.

SPALANZANI (*to Olympia*)
They praise you and applaud.

NICKLAUSSE I'm less than overawed.

GUESTS What bright, delightful eyes!
Her figure unneglected,
The gown so well selected —

A model on display,
Unseen, unreal until today. Tip top!

SPALANZANI Dear ladies, gentlemen!
I announce with delight,
That my daughter has prepared
A little surprise for tonight.
The child, eager to please on this special occasion,
If you so wish ...

NICKLAUSSE (Her father needs little persuasion.)

SPALANZANI Has consented to sing,
While of course demonstrating her talent
On piano, mandolin, or harp.
So the choice we leave to you.

COCHENILLE (*from the back of the stage*)
The harp!

BASS VOICE (*offstage*) The harp!

SPALANZANI Well, well. Cochenille,
Go hurry, look around.
The harp even you will not fail to find.

HOFFMANN (Her voice I long to hear!)

NICKLAUSSE (They say that love is blind.)

SPALANZANI (*to Olympia*)
Dear, don't be nervous.
They are friends, never fear.

OLYMPIA So! So!

COCHENILLE (*returning with harp*)
Here you are.

SPALANZANI Attention, one and all.

COCHENILLE L—let her begin.

GUESTS Attention all! Attention all!

OLYMPIA From the lark in leafy sedges
To the cuckoo and the dove,
Birdies all, they warble pledges,
All day long they warble pledges
Of love.
All day, pledges of love. Ah! —
In echo their call is rendered
By tender Olympia.
Olympia. Ah! —

CHORUS Hear their call in echo rendered
 By our tender Olympia,
 Singing of love,
 Only of love.

OLYMPIA Like the hill and dale surrounding,
 Down below and high above,
 Hear my heart also resounding
 With love,
 Also only with love. Ah! —
 In echo their call is rendered
 By tender Olympia.

CHORUS Hear their call in echo rendered
 By our tender Olympia,
 Singing of love,
 Only of love.

HOFFMANN So deeply felt, so profound!

NICKLAUSSE Frank appraisal by a lover.

SPALANZANI Gentlemen, come!
 Follow the ladies.
 Supper first, then a ball.

GUESTS Supper first, then a ball!

SPALANZANI Or perhaps you prefer
 The order reversed.

GUESTS No, no! We vote to start with supper.
 The food, the food is first.
 Dancing can wait.

SPALANZANI No further debate.

HOFFMANN *(approaching Olympia)*
 Dare I venture ...

SPALANZANI *(interceding)*
 Ah, the child is tired;
 Be patient for now.

OLYMPIA *(as Spalanzani touches her shoulder)*
 So, So!

SPALANZANI She agrees. Till the ball
 Can begin,
 You might be of service
 By staying close at hand
 To keep a watchful eye.

HOFFMANN Sheer delight!

SPALANZANI (I'll stand by
To listen on the sly.)

NICKLAUSSE She's not eating tonight?

SPALANZANI No.

NICKLAUSSE (So unworldly, so ethereal.)
(the winding of a spring is heard)
That sound!

SPALANZANI Think nothing of it.
From outside. Immaterial.

COCHENILLE To the table! Supper's ready.

GUESTS Even now getting cold.
Come along!
No genial host anywhere,
None anywhere,
Entertains with greater flare.
(all exit except Hoffmann and Olympia)

HOFFMANN At last alone, just you and I!
My heart so eager ...
You ... me ... alone ...
A flood of words would be too meager.
Olympia, be my own!
Full of hope and desire,
Unworthy as I am,
Let me gaze and admire.

OLYMPIA *(Hoffmann touches her shoulder)*
So! So!

HOFFMANN Silent but profound
And deeper than the ocean,
Your eyes reveal a fund
Of fire and devotion.

OLYMPIA So! So!

HOFFMANN As you speak,
I hang upon your breath,
And hear a sigh
That tells me you are mine till death.

Ah, speak and we'll explore
The horizons that open
When two people in love
Can share so completely
That on one pair of wings
Above the world
They soar.
Kind heaven, send me power

To kindle and inspire,
Ah! That love may come to flower
Within that sacred fire.

*(He passionately presses Olympia's hand, she rises at once
and moves about in different directions, then goes out.)*

Why, oh why has she fled?
No answer, no reply.
Dearest, what have I said?
I'll know the truth or die.

NICKLAUSSE *(He starts to follow her out; Nicklausse appears.)*
Spoilsport! This raving and ranting
While others are having the fun.

HOFFMANN Nicklausse! No wonder I'm delirious.
With me she's in love!

NICKLAUSSE I assume you haven't heard
The rumor circulating?

HOFFMANN Let silly people talk!

NICKLAUSSE She is dead.

HOFFMANN My darling!

NICKLAUSSE She's never been alive.

HOFFMANN I feel it more than ever.
True love! This I swear.

(they exit)

COPPÉLIUS *(rushing in)*
Default! Collapse! The check was a joke,
The blasted bank gone up in smoke.
Me! Betrayed by a swine!
But revenge will be mine,
And blood will spill.
A fraud! A hoax! So!
Now I'm out to kill.

(exits)

SPALANZANI *(to Cochenille)*
High time for the waltz.

COCHENILLE The latest from old Vienna.

HOFFMANN *(to Olympia)*
For this dance may I have the honor?

SPALANZANI Go ahead, take the gentleman's hand.
You may!

OLYMPIA *(as Spalanzani touches her on the shoulder)*
Oh! Oh!

(Hoffmann and Olympia dance, exiting at the end of the chorus)

GUESTS Twirling and gliding,
Never colliding,
Light on her feet,
A sight to see!

Heavenly sweet,
Demure, discreet,
As dutiful daughters ought to be.

Twirling and gliding,
Never colliding,
Light on her feet,
A sight to see!

Heavenly sweet,
Demure, discreet,
As a doting daughter should be.

HOFFMANN *(from outside)*
Slow down, my dear.

SPALANZANI Stop her at once! Oh, somebody stop her!

GUESTS Who will be first to volunteer?

NICKLAUSSE They will break up before it's over,
From sheer exhaustion.

(Hoffmann and Olympia reappear, waltzing faster and faster.)

GUESTS Oh la la!

SPALANZANI Stop at once!
Enough!

(taps Olympia on the shoulder; she stops suddenly)
No more tonight, my daughter.
Mustn't get too excited.
Time to retire.
Kind Cochenille,
You will take her up to her room.

COCHENILLE
GUESTS B-b-bedtime, I presume.
Her singing and her dancing
Are both indeed entrancing.
His darling one can call
Belle of the ball.
Off! To bed before
We beg for more.

(Olympia and Cochenille exit)

NICKLAUSSE *(indicating Hoffmann)* Finished off?

SPALANZANI No. Though alas, his glasses are shattered
Through and through,
He'll revive, good as new.

GUESTS Ever the lover

NICKLAUSSE He'll revive, good as new.

GUESTS He will recover.

COCHENILLE *(entering in great alarm)*
The man with the glasses is here!

SPALANZANI From my Olympia keep him away!

HOFFMANN What is to fear? *(loud offstage noise)*

SPALANZANI God help us! She could fall and break!

HOFFMANN So fragile? *(he exits)*

COPPÉLIUS *(entering)*
Ha, ha! Your doll has had her day.

SPALANZANI You scum!

COPPÉLIUS You thief!

SPALANZANI You rat!

COPPÉLIUS You snake!

SPALANZANI You fiend!

COPPÉLIUS You Satan!

HOFFMANN *(returning)* A mere machine! An automaton!

GUESTS Ha ha ha! A love ill-fated;
Talented but automated.
Passion turns to panic:
Where to find a good mechanic?

HOFFMANN A mere machine!
A painted doll!

GUESTS Passion turns to panic;
Call for a mechanic.

COPPÉLIUS Ha ha ha! Take a look.
You snake! You crook!
You thief! You scum!

You snake! You thief!
You viper! I destroy!
Ha ha! Annihilated!
No more to sing, no more to dance. Ha ha!
Ha ha ha ha! No more to sing and dance.
Never more sing and dance.
A fraud! A fake!
Thus terminated.

SPALANZANI You rat! You crook!
You thug! You scum!
You rat! You thug!
To slash ... out to slash and destroy!
Annihilated!
My pride and joy.
No more will my doll sing and dance.
Gone are my hopes and plans.
To break, to slash, destroy!
My doll no more will dance.
Debut ill-fated,
Thus terminated.

COCHENILLE Annihilated!
His doll will never more sing and dance.
Never sing, never dance.
From the start a love ill-fated,
With a doll infatuated.
From the start a love ill-fated,
Thus terminated.

GUESTS A love affair
Beyond repair
Thus terminated.
Ha ha ha! A love ill-fated,
Talented but automated.
Shock and despair,
The former lover devastated,
With a doll infatuated,
From the start a love ill-fated,
Thus terminated.

End of Act I

Act II

We are in Venice, a gallery overlooking the grand canal. The night is warm with barely a ripple on the water. Possibly the most romantic place on earth. Fortunately, Hoffmann has learned his lesson. He has vowed never to fall in love again.

Scene: Giulietta's luxurious palace on the Grand Canal in Venice

(from offstage)

NICKLAUSSE Tender night, oh friend of love,
In you we yearn for cover,
Shielding bliss from probing light,
Oh tender night of love.

NICKLAUSSE and GIULIETTA
Friendly dark must yield to dawn;
Too soon the song is over.
Time for caution later on
When dark must yield to dawn.

GIULIETTA Oh, warm and gentle breeze,
With the kiss of a lover
As we together glide
On a smooth flowing tide,
Whisper low,
Whisper low ...

NICKLAUSSE Oh, warm and gentle breeze,
Whisper low.
As together we glide,
Whisper low.

BOTH Tender night, oh friend of love,
In you we yearn for cover,
Shielding bliss from probing light,
Oh tender night of love.
Spread a shielding cover,
Oh tender night of love.

(Giulietta and Nicklausse enter slowly)

HOFFMANN *(to Nicklausse)* Don't worry. I'm in no danger. Not I! To be a fool for love? To shake and shiver, a fall at beauty's feet, to wallow in despair, sigh away long and lonely nights — no! This game I've outgrown. From now on I am dedicated to the goddess of frivolity and laughter.

HOFFMANN When love becomes solemn or sad,
Too bad!
For laughter and wine I prefer
By far!

When tortured with delight,
With pain and pressure,
Put out the raging fire
With a glass at leisure.
For I can boast
That love will last
A day at most.

Absurd to pass up a pleasure
For deep soulful eyes.

In wine and music the measure
Of true rapture lies.
To hell with doleful tears and sighs!

You wonderful ladies appear
So dear.
But dangerous demons you hide
Inside.

The door to paradise
With smiles you open;
Alas, we pay the price
When the pledge is broken.

The look so sweet,
So warm, sincere,
Is sheer deceit,
A thin veneer.

Absurd to pass up a pleasure
For deep soulful eyes.
In wine and music the measure
Of true rapture lies.
To hell with sad, forlorn sighs.

SCHLÉMIL (*entering*) So love goes out the window! You have found new diversion.

GIULIETTA Unfair! I was faithfully yours, my dear, for three whole days.

PITTICHINACCIO Fancy! A record!

SCHLÉMIL Hold your tongue.

GIULIETTA Did you expect more? Come, here is someone I want you to meet, a poet just arrived, young Hoffmann, a rising star, whose fame has preceded him to Venice.

SCHLÉMIL (*ungraciously*) Delighted.

HOFFMANN (*equally so*) Delighted.

GIULIETTA (*to Schlémil*) Pretend at least to smile.
(*to everyone*) Everyone, come along for a hand of cards.

GUESTS A game!

PITTICHINACCIO Ladies, gentlemen, this way.

NICKLAUSSE (And that way goes our money.)

SCHLÉMIL (*to Giulietta*) Your hand.

GIULETTA Come all! The cards await.

OTHERS A game of chance! Let's go.

(all exit except Hoffmann and Nicklausse)

NICKLAUSSE A word! Two horses now in harness Nearby are waiting.
At the first sign of folly you will head for the border.

HOFFMANN Little danger of love. Childish dreams rudely crash
On the shores of real life. Who could fall for a brazen harlot?

NICKLAUSSE I could point to Schlémil.

HOFFMANN Friend, I am not Schlémil.

NICKLAUSSE But the devil has many cards to play.

(Dapertutto enters unobserved)

HOFFMANN If again he lures me into love, I deserve the fiery furnace. No more!

NICKLAUSSE No more!

(they leave)

DAPERTUTTO *(alone)* You boast. But I've not yet begun. The eyes of
Giulietta are my weapon of choice. Even Schlémil was compelled to succumb
to the power that lies in beauty. Yes, with her as my accomplice, I shall capture
his soul. He will fall without a whimper. But first, to seduce the seducer ...

Sparkling stone, power lies
In fanning the flames of desire.
Tantalize, dazzle her eyes,
And lure my moth to the fire.

Like a hunter, the seducer
Goes out to capture the fair.
Helpless creature, beware!
When the shiny hook is baited
For sure your fall is fated,
Drawn to visions of splendor
But blinded by the glare.

Sparkling stone, dazzle her eyes,
Enticing her into your snare,
Fanning flames of desire,
Luring her on, luring her on.

Stoking the fire, luring her on,
All-powerful stone,
Dazzle her eyes.
To work, luring her on!

(Giulietta enters, her gaze captured by the diamond that Dapertutto shows her)

DAPERTUTTO *(to Giulietta, putting the ring on her finger)*
A present, from your devoted admirer.

GIULIETTA And what can I do to be of service?

DAPERTUTTO How well we understand each other. Coming to the point, you have mastered the game of seduction. Put to the test, for me you stole Schlémil's shadow. But I am a connoisseur, a collector, a man of varied tastes. I must have lots of toys to play with. Hoffmann, for example ...

GIULIETTA You want his shadow as well?

DAPERTUTTO Not his shadow but his reflection, lifted from the mirror.

GIULIETTA A delicate maneuver. Easier said than done. It would require his cooperation.

DAPERTUTTO Do you doubt the power of those eyes?

GIULIETTA A power not unlimited.

DAPERTUTTO You may be right. Yes, yes, of course. Hoffmann — proud, idealistic, unbending, possibly too great a challenge. Besides, he seems rather to look down on you. To try and fail ... I understand.

GIULIETTA Watch! I shall make a toy of his heart! (*Hoffmann enters*)

DAPERTUTTO (*retiring*) To work ... to work ...

GIULIETTA You're not leaving the party?

HOFFMANN Leaving Venice as well.

GIULIETTA Why pretend? Do you think I don't know? You distrust and despise me. You think me shallow, mercenary, unfeeling. But you're a cold, heartless brute. Do as you will ... Be off ... (*suddenly in tears*) Why should you care if I suffer?

HOFFMANN Your tears tell me all I need to know. Yes, I love you! And I am not leaving.

GIULIETTA That love can cost you your life!

Oh, beware!
You run a race with time.
A moment of delay
Can only lead to death.
The love I share will be forever lost
If you linger.
In my very arms
You will be slain by Schlémil.
Your safety is all that I pray for.
My life I would give in a moment.
Go! Go!
Tomorrow I shall join you,
This on my soul I swear.

HOFFMANN A bursting blaze I feel

Of rapture and despair!
What newly lighted spark
Has set my soul on fire?
In your appeal I hear
A soft angelic choir.
Your melting eyes reveal
The answer to a prayer.

HOFFMANN

Two stars in a radiant sky!
And your breath, like a soothing narcotic,
Celestial, divinely erotic,
That enslaves with merely a sigh.
A heavenly warmth
Like a soothing narcotic
That caresses,
And enslaves with merely a sigh.

Defenseless with desire,
Transformed for good or ill,
Your answer I am still
Burning to hear:
What spark has set my soul on fire?

GIULIETTA

You can prove that your love
Is beyond mere affection
With a gift that I long for and need.

HOFFMANN
GIULIETTA

My darling, name it!
But first promise
Not to laugh as I plead.
The gift I have in mind
Is your clear-cut reflection,
The image in the glass
Of your face,

Your expression.
Put yourself in my place
And try to understand.

HOFFMANN

What! Are you mad!
Out of your senses?

GIULIETTA

No! Perfectly simple to do.
Once lifted from the mirror,
It will stay in my heart,
Where I want only you.

HOFFMANN

In your heart!

GIULIETTA

In my heart.
How can I make my longing clearer?
Thus we shall never part.

HOFFMANN

Never part?

GIULIETTA Maybe mad, maybe not,
 But your image I crave and demand.

 Love, though for now we must be parted,
 You leave a gift that will remain.
 Day and night I'll gaze, reminded
 That you'll return again.
 In my heart you will remain
 My own, remain my own!

HOFFMANN The road I travel now recharted,
 I leave a gift that will remain.
 Day and night you'll then be reminded
 That I'll return,
 That I'll return again
 Your own, return again your own!

BOTH Though today we are torn asunder,
 After dark will come the dawn.
 Though today we are torn asunder,
 After dark comes dawn,
 The light of dawn.

SCHLÉMIL (*entering*) Together! Just as I thought.

GIULIETTA Schlémil!

SCHLÉMIL (*beckoning guests*) Come, see what I've found. We've been abandoned for the poet, who appears well entertained. (*guests enter*)

HOFFMANN My rival!

GIULIETTA Say nothing ... He has my key, the key I intend for you. I love you, and you alone.

PITTICHINACCIO (*quietly, to Schlémil*) Shall we kill him?

SCHLÉMIL Wait a while.

DAPERTUTTO (*to Hoffmann*) Young man, are you ill? You look paler than a ghost.

HOFFMANN I? Pale?

DAPERTUTTO (*handing him a looking glass*) See for yourself.

HOFFMANN Lost!

DAPERTUTTO Something lost? Something missing?

HOFFMANN My reflection! It's gone. The mirror is empty. Have I become the devil's plaything?

NICKLAUSSE Ask the lady.

GUESTS Ha ha ha! Panic and dismay! Poor man! What a loss? Where can it be?

NICKLAUSSE Come, I warned you. Let's get away from here before you lose everything else. Horses are waiting.

HOFFMANN Too late! My love is here, and here I stay!

Enticed by love or lust to follow
A haunting phantom fraught with pain
Along a path so often fatal,
Reason cries to me: Not again!

Fortune's favors I blindly squander,
Drunk on dreams that lure me on.
Searching ever, I shall wander
On winding roads that lead to parts unknown.

Enflamed, I follow
A phantom fraught with pain
Along a path so often fatal
As reason cries: No, not again!
As reason cries: Not again!

Fortune's favors I squander;
In vain,
Searching in vain, I wander
On long, winding roads to parts unknown,
Long winding roads to parts unknown.
On long, winding roads
That lead to parts unknown,
Onward, onward, to parts unknown.
Unknown.

DAPERTUTTO Foolish man, I gaze in wonder
As a phantom lures you on.
Your charmer with eyes so tender
Has sold her heart for a sparkling stone.
Foolish man, to trust her with your own.

Foolish man, so prone to blunder;
Foolish man, speaking with candor:
Fond of you, but of gold still fonder,
Her beauty she'll not squander,
And to love she'll not surrender.

Foolish man, in case you wonder,
The fault is yours alone.
Yes, the fault is all your own,
Your own.

GIULIETTA My heart in love I would surrender,
But my eyes are drawn to sparkling stone.
Of diamonds I'm even fonder,
So the poet's embrace I disown.

My charm and beauty I'll not squander.
With eyes so drawn to sparkling stone
The poet's embraces I disown.

Though all for love I would surrender,
No need have I to pause and ponder.
At heart, I'm even fonder
Of rare and sparkling stone.
And you, my dear,
And you, my dear, alone
Shall wander.

NICKLAUSSE Poor man! You fool, so prone to blunder,
Forever falling down.
Enslaved by love, you knuckle under,
Wherefore and why I tend to wonder.
I have eyes of my own,
And I fear her heart is made of stone.

As phantoms lure you on,
To love you knuckle under,
Only to walk on winding roads alone,
Alone!

SCHLÉMIL Loathsome rival, I'll not surrender;
So, even though for now you have won,
I'm far from done.
Ever a tireless contender,
I've a sword to bring you down,
For I play second to none,
I play second to none.
Bow to none.
Fall and cry surrender
When my sword is drawn.
En garde!

PITTICHINACCIO Foolish man, foolish man!
Pause for a moment to ponder:
Can you believe she will squander
Her beauty of body
After all's said and done?
Poor man!

CHORUS Poor man! So prone to blunder,
Pause for a moment to ponder,
Pause and ponder.
Be resigned and leave her alone,
Leave the lady alone.
Go safely while you can.
Leave her while you can.
Better to wander on your own.
Run, run while you can.
Just run!

GIULIETTA Let us end the play.

With time growing shorter,
Over the tranquil water
Music calls us away.

NICKLAUSSE *(to Hoffmann)* You're coming?

HOFFMANN Not yet.

NICKLAUSSE Do as you like. (But I'm staying to keep watch.)

SCHLÉMIL What are you waiting for?

HOFFMANN To get from you a certain key, that I must have.

SCHLÉMIL You will have it only with my life.

HOFFMANN Very well, then. I'll have both.

SCHLÉMIL That remains to be seen. En garde!

DAPERTUTTO You have no sword? Use mine.

HOFFMANN You are too kind.

(They fight. Schlémil falls, Hoffmann takes the key, rushes into Giulietta's apartment)

CHORUS *(offstage)*
Tender night, oh friend of love,
In you we yearn for cover,
Shielding bliss from probing light,
Oh tender night of love.
Spread a shielding cover,
Oh tender night of love.

HOFFMANN *(returns)* The key! I've got it!

GIULIETTA *(appears just as Hoffmann returns)* But I've moved out!

DAPERTUTTO And what do you plan to do with your poet?

GIULIETTA Leave him to you. *(stepping into a gondola, with Pittichinaccio)*

PITTICHINACCIO My angel!

HOFFMANN *(realizing her treachery)* The serpent!

NICKLAUSSE Hoffmann! Hoffmann! The police! Run!

(Nicklausse drags Hoffmann off)

End of Act II

ACT III

Scene: Crespel's home in Munich, a room with a harpsichord, violins on the walls, and a large portrait of a woman

ANTONIA Gentle dove, barred from her lover ...

A memory so sweet,
Yet day by day more painful.
His distant face and voice
I can see, I can hear.
My love, your face and voice
Far away
I can see, I can hear.

Gentle dove! Barred from her lover,
Far away she has flown
To this day faithful as ever,
Still her song lingers on:

“My heart is all I have to offer,
But it remains yours alone.
Even far, far away,
I am yours, yours alone.”

Gentle dove! Barred from her lover,
Far away, far away she has flown.

Pretty flower, tell me the answer.
In despair, I implore:
Does he care, loving as ever?
Is he true as before?

For you, my lover I grieve and suffer,
And from my throat my sorrows pour.
However far, far away,
You alone I adore.

Gentle dove! Barred from her lover,
Far away, far away she has flown.

CRESPEL (*entering*) Darling child, please! For my sake, remember your promise. Do not sing. It breaks my heart. Your mother ...

ANTONIA The greatest singer in all of Germany! How I dream of following in her footsteps! To walk onto the stage, to breathe new life into the works of the masters, to feel a hushed audience hanging on every note. Then thunderous applause! You once encouraged me, and now ... no matter. You have spoken. I shall do as you wish. (*she leaves sadly*)

CRESPEL She thinks me cruel. But no. Not tyrannous but terrified. She looks, she sounds so like her mother, the wife that I adored. The same fatal signs: the drawn cheek, the feverish glow whenever she sings, animating her beauty even as it devours. Antonia! My one and only daughter! Am I to lose again all that I live for? No, I shall not let it happen. That cursed Hoffmann! It was

he, not I, that encouraged her, stirring up grandiose ambitions. Thank God, I managed to snatch her away from him. He will not, he must not find her!

FRANTZ (*entering*) Sir, your meeting at the philharmonic ...

CREPEL Frantz, you are to open to no one, as I've said before.

FRANTZ Certainly, right this minute. (*starts to leave*)

CREPEL Where are you going?

FRANTZ To open the door.

CREPEL No, no, no! I said, open to no one!

FRANTZ (If he mumbles, how does he expect me to understand?)

CREPEL How I am cursed and tormented!

FRANTZ You want the curtains mended?

CREPEL Never mind. Just leave me alone.

FRANTZ You need a loan, sir?

CREPEL I give up! (*he rushes out*)

FRANTZ What a boss! Cranky, always out of humor, impossible to please. I must say that as a servant I earn my pay.

Night and day I am meek and quiet,
At every person's beck and call.
A lowly lackey, so to speak,
I even turn the other cheek.
Yet I have talent — no one can deny it.
And when I sing, I enthrall.
Thus endowed, I'm not complaining.
Tra la la la ...
Does the lark sing quite so well?
Tra la la la ...
Or the nightingale, pray tell?
Tra la la la ...
Oh, if I had training!
If I had training ...
If only, only I had training!
Tra la la la ...

My bel canto could stand improvement,
For song in fact is not my line.
The dance is where I truly shine,
I have a talent awesome to behold.
Notice the poise, the poetry of movement.
A native gift, so I'm told,
Known of masters long departed.
Tra la la la ...

On the stage where I belong
Tra la la la ...
I could still be going strong.
Tra la la la ...
If I'd only started.
If only only
If only, only I had started.
Tra la la la ... *(he falls exhausted into a chair)*

HOFFMANN *(entering with Nicklausse)* Frantz! My old friend. Wake up, wake up!

FRANTZ Eh? Who is there? Mister Hoffmann! Can it be you?

HOFFMANN None other. And happy at last to have found your hiding place.
After six months of searching.

NICKLAUSSE On horse, on foot, scaling mountains, fording rivers ...

HOFFMANN How is my beloved?

FRANTZ What a shame! He just went out.

HOFFMANN Dear me, deafer than ever.

NICKLAUSSE But one of the best!

FRANTZ Oh, no, sir! Just a servant, not a guest.

HOFFMANN Antonia, please! Go tell her that I'm here.

FRANTZ Of course. And I can hardly wait to tell old Crespel. *(he exits)*

HOFFMANN *(at harpsichord)*
Floating along on the air
Is a song of warmth and wonder;
Only the lover can understand ...

ANTONIA *(entering)*
My own!

HOFFMANN *(taking Antonia in his arms)*
Dearest Antonia!

NICKLAUSSE *(leaving)*
They say that three's a crowd.

ANTONIA I knew it in my heart!
You loved me all along,
And love has led you here.

HOFFMANN From deep inside I knew
You also shed a tear.

HOFFMANN then ANTONIA
Secure in the arms of a lover,

The pain of the past is over
Husband and wife,
Now it's for life.
I am yours; you are mine
Till the stars cease to shine.
You are mine
Till the stars in the heavens no longer shine.

BOTH

Unto love let us surrender,
Bound by pledges strong yet tender.
Forever that light will shine,
A sacred, holy shrine;
Our fire will burn forever.

Secure in the arms of a lover,
The pain of the past is over
Husband and wife,
Now it's for life.
I am yours; you are mine
Till the stars cease to shine.
You are mine
Till the stars in the heavens no longer shine.
I am yours, you are mine
Alone.

HOFFMANN

True love has no need of secrets.
Let me share a nagging worry
That is weighing on my mind.
Though I blush to confess,
I'm jealous of your music.
No room for me.

ANTONIA

You and your wild imagination!
My song for me has meaning
Because I sing to you.
But come! Will you forbid me my daily practicing,
Like my cruel father?

HOFFMANN

Not to sing?

ANTONIA

He has laid down the law:
I practice now the virtue of silence.
Starting tomorrow!

HOFFMANN

(Very strange, very odd.)

ANTONIA

This song we shared before ...
Come over beside me
And hear again the voice
You loved so much,
Maybe now even more.

HOFFMANN

Your hands have started trembling;
Your eyes begin to smolder.

ANTONIA Hear once again the song
 So often sung together.

HOFFMANN Our song of love ...

ANTONIA So often sung together ...

HOFFMANN Together.

ANTONIA Floating along on the air
 Is a song of warmth and wonder:
 Only the lover can under-
 Stand the bliss and despair.

Oh, that my wandering lover might hear
The song grown stronger,
Recalling a time of days sublime
And skies turned clear.

Remember the rose newly budding in June;
Too soon is the chill of November,
Too soon the chill of November,
Cold November.

HOFFMANN Floating along on the air
 Is a song of warmth and wonder:
 Only the lover can under-
 Stand the bliss and despair.

Oh, that my wandering lover might hear
The song grown stronger,
Recalling a time of days sublime
And skies turned clear.

The beauty now lighted by flashes of fire
Will later expire in the ashes;
Later will expire in the ashes,
In the ashes.

BOTH Floating along in the air
 Is a song of warmth and wonder,
 A tender song of love.

(Antonia appears about to faint)

HOFFMANN My darling! Is something wrong? You are not well.

ANTONIA Nonsense. Too much happiness. That's all. Let's continue.

HOFFMANN Hush!

ANTONIA Someone on the steps. It must be my father. Quick! He mustn't see
you until I've had a chance to prepare him. Come with me.

(She leaves; Hoffmann starts to follow, then stops)

HOFFMANN No! She is hiding something from me. I have to find out what it is.

CRESPEL (*returning*) Odd. I thought I heard singing. I even suspected for a moment that Hoffmann had found our hiding place. A poet! A musician! Of all people for her to fall in love with!

FRANTZ (*rushing in after him*) Oh, sir! At the door, a man in black, asking for you.

CRESPEL His name?

FRANTZ No, not insane. He's a Doctor. Dr. Miracle.

CRESPEL Dr. Miracle! Bolt the door. Hurry.

FRANTZ Yes, I mustn't keep him waiting.

CRESPEL Fool! Keep him out! Dr. Miracle? No, Dr. Death knell. An assassin, a gravedigger, who enters a house only to leave it desolated, with the icy touch of his hand, the dry click-clack of his bottles, the raven-like sound of his voice: "One daily dose! One daily dose." He came to see my wife the very day that she died ...

DR. MIRACLE (*entering*) Thank you, my good man. And where is my friend Crespel? And his adorable daughter? I am not usually kept waiting.

CRESPEL Stay where you are.

DR. MIRACLE Ah, Monsieur Crespel! What a pleasure to meet again. It has been too long. But I understand that our darling Antonia is not well.

CRESPEL On the contrary. She has never been better.

DR. MIRACLE Could I have been misinformed? The unwholesome influence of Hoffmann, the engagement broken off at your insistence, the sudden flight ... and now the troublesome fever that seems to recur whenever she succumbs to the demon of music. Ha ha ha!

CRESPEL (*in despair*) He knows everything ... everything.

DR. MIRACLE Alarmingly similar to the dread disease that ravaged her mother and led to her untimely death. I'd better take a look.

CRESPEL Go away! You killed my wife and now you come for my daughter.

DR. MIRACLE Oh, dear! Have I made you uneasy?
(*he pulls up a chair and sits down*)

CRESPEL Viper! What are you doing?

DR. MIRACLE For your peace of mind, I shall treat her at a distance.

To overcome the disease
We'll need a diagnosis.

HOFFMANN (I'm chilled to the marrow.)

CRESPEL (I'm chilled to the marrow.)

DR. MIRACLE I'll examine her myself,
Whether you will, or not.
Yield, as you have no choice.
Bow to the greater force.

HOFFMANN and CRESPEL
His motive still unclear,
What menace in his voice!
Here rooted to the spot
I stand, with no recourse
But fear, only fear.

DR. MIRACLE Come! Take a seat over here.
When you've no better choice
Unto the greater force
Yield, despite the fear.
Conquer fear.

CRESPEL Go ahead. Make it brief.

DR. MIRACLE *(to an imaginary Antonia)*
Won't you kindly sit down?

CRESPEL I'd rather stand.

DR. MIRACLE My dear, let us start with your age.

CRESPEL Age? Mine?

DR. MIRACLE I'm asking your daughter, sir.

HOFFMANN (Is this a joke?)

DR. MIRACLE Your age, if you please. To the point!
Nineteen!
Ah! The springtime of life!
And now ... I'll need your hand.

CRESPEL My hand?

DR. MIRACLE Hush! Checking on the pulse.

HOFFMANN (Lord! Is this happening to me?
Or am I dreaming?)

DR. MIRACLE The beat ... rapid and weak, at best.
Disturbing symptom. Now sing.

CRESPEL No, no! Not that!
For her it's suicide.

DR. MIRACLE I said! ...

ANTONIA *(from within)*
Ah!

DR. MIRACLE See the feverish glow
And the flush of her cheek,
And the hand tightly pressed
To her bosom, like so.

CRESPEL Is he mad?

DR. MIRACLE I should be distressed
Were she to die.
So lovely, yet so weak.
A doctor can but try.

CRESPEL Enough! No more!

DR. MIRACLE You will require my expertise to save
Your daughter from an early grave.
These bottles I have held
On reserve, a last resort.
One daily dose ...

CRESPEL Enough! Enough!
You have a nerve!
A murderous fiend
Masquerading as friend.

DR. MIRACLE One daily dose, one dose a day,
I recommend ...

Fortunate daughter, stand
By as I take command.
Father, be happy knowing
All is on course, and going
As planned.
All as planned.

HOFFMANN Where will it end? Where will it end?

DR. MIRACLE Lucky girl, understand
I have taken command.
Placing faith in a stranger,
You down play the danger.
Father, you've had your day;
Now it's my way.
No Satan, no fiend out of hell,
Ha ha! All's going well.
One dose a day.

Placing faith in a stranger,
You down play the danger
And ward off the end.
I lead the way.

Yes, father, now you'll obey.
One dose a day I recommend ...

CRESPEL Be off! You Satan from hell,
You fiend! To me no harmless stranger,
I know you well.
Source of mortal danger. Be off!
Out of my house, you fiend!
Satan from hell,
For my daughter a mortal, mortal danger.
Gather your goods together.
Out of my house! Back to hell!
And spare a grieving father. Be off, be off!
Satan! Satan! Satan! Farewell!

HOFFMANN Taking death by the hand,
My love will make her well,
Facing danger together.
Oh, vile, Satanic stranger,
You fiend out of hell!
How dare you laugh,
How dare you scoff at a father?
You fiend, be off!
I'll make her well.

(Miracle and Crespel exit)

HOFFMANN *(alone)* A death sentence hanging over her! So that explains her father's fear and hostility. I must back him up, ask her to give up singing, but how? I don't want to frighten her. Love alone can induce such a sacrifice.

ANTONIA *(returning)* My dearest, you look so troubled!

HOFFMANN Because I have a difficult request to make of you. It concerns your music, your career, your tantalizing dream. I'm asking you to give it all up for the humbler role of wife and mother.

ANTONIA Give up singing?

HOFFMANN Entirely.

ANTONIA And you?

HOFFMANN I give you myself, without reserve. My life is yours.

ANTONIA Then so be it.

HOFFMANN And love will open for us both a new life. But your father may return any moment. Till tomorrow ...

ANTONIA Till tomorrow ...

(Hoffmann exits)

(alone) With my father he has joined forces. Ah, well! My tears I shall ignore. I gave my word, and I shall sing no more.

DR. MIRACLE

(suddenly appearing behind Antonia)

What, never sing again?
On silence you've decided?
So foolish, so misguided,
To sacrifice in vain.

A talent I revere!
The acclaim! The career!
Blessed gift from above,
The envy of your neighbor.
To give it up for love,
For drudgery and labor.

Imagine, though, instead,
A royal road ahead —
You step upon the stage,
The debut long awaited.
You give with all your heart,
And a star is created.
A sublime final note —
The crowd begins to roar,
Brava, encore, encore!

They shower you with glory.
But no, your life is done,
Not even twenty-one.
This triumph you would trade
For rapture soon to fade,
For squalling babies
And the pangs of purgatory.

ANTONIA

Hypnotic is the spell;
I shudder to reply.
A messenger from hell,
Or summons from on high?
No, no! Glory and fame
Are no key to salvation.
For love I can forgo
The temptation of pride.
I scorn the applause and the standing ovation
For a hearth by my husband's side.

DR. MIRACLE

Living for love is blind illusion.
This Hoffmann, like his brothers,
Is hardly one to trust.
Only your beauty he adores.
Soon enough he'll turn to others
To find satisfaction and food for his lust.

ANTONIA

No! Cruel and absurd!
Be off, you creep!
I shall not listen further.
Yes, I gave him my word;
That vow I mean to keep.
I've sworn a sacred oath

I never shall repent.
I love him with a faith
Ever strong and secure.
His love is heaven-sent;
Like mine, it will endure.

Ah! Who will save my soul
From myself, my own demon?
(looking at her mother's picture)
Oh, mother! Oh, my mother!
Advise your daughter ...

DR. MIRACLE *(returning)*
So brazen! You dare to rouse the dead.
Your mother!
What if it were she
Here dictating all I've said?
Remember, it was she who gave all to the art
You discard with disdain.
She speaks ...

THE VOICE Unhappy child.

ANTONIA Oh!

DR. MIRACLE Yes, listen ...

THE VOICE Unhappy child.

DR. MIRACLE She calls ...

ANTONIA Ah! The voice of my mother! ...

THE VOICE Darling child, you are strong. Be brave.
With advice and support
I return from the grave.
Time is short and the way is long:
Give your heart to no man,
But only to beauty, art, and song.

ANTONIA Oh, mother! Hearing my cry of pain,
My soul you have come to save.

DR. MIRACLE May I venture to explain?
When you perform, she lives again.
The gift that death snatched away
Rises up from the grave.

THE VOICE My daughter, sing!

DR. MIRACLE A message from heaven!
Looking down, she rejoices.
Recalling former glory
Now in you she rejoices.

THE VOICE My daughter, sing!
Cast off the fear.

ANTONIA A message from heaven!
Oh, mother! In song we're united.
Dear mother!
You live again in song.

DR. MIRACLE Her extinguished torch relighted,
Reawakened by song.
In your song be united,
Her extinguished torch relighted.

THE VOICE Darling child, you are strong. Be brave
With advice and support
I return from the grave.
Time is short and the way is long:
Give your heart only to song.

ANTONIA In our song reunited,
You live, you live again,
Transcending sorrow, transcending pain,
From the grave returning.
Dearest mother! Dearest mother!

DR. MIRACLE In your song reunited,
She lives again.
Stirred by your song,
And the torch is relighted.
Stirred by your song she lives again.

ANTONIA Say no more!
I shall die if I continue to sing.
In a fierce, raging fire
Of confusion I'm devoured.

DR. MIRACLE Who loves a coward or quitter?
And why do you fear?
Your own mother is come
To inspire and encourage.

 Hear the voice imploring you,
Your own mother imploring.

THE VOICE To inspire and encourage.

ANTONIA Oh, mother! Your voice I hear.

DR. MIRACLE Your own mother come
To guide and encourage ...

THE VOICE Sing the song that I long to hear.

ANTONIA Ah! Newly fortified with courage ...

THE VOICE and DR. MIRACLE

Sing on, with courage.

THE VOICE

Darling child, you are strong, be brave,
With advice and support
I return from the grave.
Time is short and the way is long:
Turn your heart as before
Entirely to art and song.

ANTONIA

Your own child, now I'm strong and brave,
With advice and support
You return from the grave.
Time is short and the way is long.
All my heart I'm devoting to art and song.

DR. MIRACLE

She has come to encourage
Putting art over marriage.
Words from the heart,
Nothing to fear.
Prompted by love,
She has come to encourage
Putting art over marriage,
Here to guide you and encourage
Devotion to art and song.

ANTONIA

To art and song I surrender,
Overcome by blazing light and fire,
Sacred fire, sacred fire,
Overcome by a blazing light,
By a blaze of heavenly light and fire,
By a fire divine.

To art and song I cry surrender.
A spark has set my soul afire.
Inspired by song, I reach to heaven.
My soul can soar again.
To art and song I cry surrender
Inspired, I reach to heaven
Where my soul can soar again.

THE VOICE

Soaring to heaven,
In you my song goes on and on,
Clear of tone, like my own,
Continue!
Ever reminded,
I'm rewarded.
In you my song goes on and on,
Darling daughter, sing on.

To a life crowned with splendor
You can aspire.
Ah! A moment of glory is mine again,
For my song goes on and on.

DR. MIRACLE Hear your mother call from heaven,
 Call down from heaven.
 In your song, her glory goes on.
 To art and song surrender,
 Sing on and on.
 As your mother calls down from heaven,
 Darling daughter, sing on.
 Though a life crowned with splendor
 Kindles the fire,
 One moment, a moment of glory
 Barely begins, and poof — all gone.

(The picture fades, Dr. Miracle disappears, Antonia collapses, Crespel rushes in)

CRESPEL Oh, my child! Antonia! ... My only child!

ANTONIA Oh, father! ... From the grave ...
 Mother called me ... my mother ...
 She was here.
 He also returned ...
 Floating along on the air,
 What is the song I hear?
 Joy and yearning, pain and rapture,
 Ah! An innocent song of love ...
 (she dies)

CRESPEL Oh, speak again! My own!
 My darling, speak again!
 My daughter! My own child!
 Slain by that poet.
 Curse the day!
 My darling, hear me.
 Come back to me, my darling.

(Hoffmann rushes in, with Nicklausse)

CRESPEL You monster, you have murdered my child. Her death I blame on you
Her blood is on your hands ... but wait. A knife! A knife for your throat.

NICKLAUSSE Driven mad.

HOFFMANN *(to Nicklausse)* Hurry, and call for help. Go get a doctor! Go get a
doctor!

DR. MIRACLE *(reappearing)* You called?
(taking Antonia's hand, which falls lifeless) Dead.

CRESPEL My God! Oh, my child! My daughter!

HOFFMANN Antonia!

End of Act III

EPILOGUE

Scene: In Luther's Cellar

HOFFMANN So thus concludes my tale of thwarted passion — the three loves that will stay forever branded into my heart. Drink up!

NICKLAUSSE To Olympia, to Giulietta, to Antonia!

STUDENTS Viva, viva, viva!

LUTHER Gentlemen! The performance is over. The audience is going wild. They are cheering for the prima donna.

NATHANIEL Stella triumphant!

LINDORF The diva that will soon be mine.

HOFFMANN My beautiful Stella! Have my stories all been of you? The innocent doll, the treacherous courtesan, the driven artist — are they three people, or are they one, named Stella?

NICKLAUSSE To Stella, the three-faced phenomenon!

HOFFMANN One more word, and I'll smash you like a glass into smithereens!

NICKLAUSSE So that's my reward for loyalty, devotion, fortitude, vigilance, foresight ...

NATHANIEL And modesty.

NICKLAUSSE And modesty.

HOFFMANN Friend, forgive a madman. Let me propose the toast: To madness and intoxication! Down with thought, memory and feeling!

So now for the punch! Cheerio!
As long as we're merry
What does it matter?

STUDENTS Hooray for the punch! Cheerio!
As long as we're merry
What does it matter?

Luther is here the master,
Tra la la la ...
Why are his feet not faster?
Tra la la la la ...
Buy now and pay tomorrow;
Tra la la la la ...
Cash you always can borrow.
Tra la la la la!

A round of cheer.
Drink up and have another.

More beer and wine
For thirsty friends of mine.
For here it's man to man and brother-brother.
So pour the wine for thirsty friends of mine. (*students exit*)

HOFFMANN No more love! No more anything! Nothing! Nothing!
(*The muse appears*)

THE MUSE (*spoken*) And I? Have you forgot your faithful friend
Whose calming hand has dried your many tears?
The Muse, who causes sorrow to ascend
In dreams and reveries to higher spheres?
Am I then nothing? No! Let passion's storm
Subside in vigorous and lyric line.
The lover dies; the poet finds new form,
And thus reborn, lives on. Hoffmann, be mine!

HOFFMANN Oh, star in a desolate night,
Be my solace and guide in the dark,
Oh, breathe on the smoldering spark
And renew my source of light.
Oh, breathe on the spark,
On the smoldering spark,
And renew my source of light,
Muse, hereafter, I'm yours alone!
(*he sinks into his chair*)

STELLA (*entering, gushing with excitement*) My darling! What a night! I've
never sung better. The ovations!... Hoffmann! Asleep?

NICKLAUSSE No, ma'am. Passed out. You have come too late.

STELLA Asino! Porcaccio!

LINDORF (*entering*) Stella!

NICKLAUSSE The Councillor Lindorf will be happy to escort you.

LINDORF Allow me ...

STELLA Charmed! (*They leave together arm in arm, Stella blissfully
chattering, while Hoffmann remains sound asleep.*)

STUDENTS A round of cheer!
Drink up and have another.
More beer and wine
For thirsty friends of mine.
For here it's man to man and brother-brother.
So pour the wine
For thirsty friends of mine.

End of the Opera