

G. SCHIRMER'S  
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JACQUES OFFENBACH  
LES  
CONTES D'HOFFMANN  
*(The Tales of Hoffmann)*

VOCAL SCORE

Paper, \$2.00 net

Cloth, \$3.00 net

NEW YORK  
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BOSTON  
THE BOSTON MUSIC CO.

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THE BOOK BY  
JULES BARBIER

English Version by  
CHARLES HENRY MELTZER

THE MUSIC BY  
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## Story of the Opera

In Offenbach's "Tales of Hoffmann" may be found an interesting operatic example of the "story within a story," a method of presentation which has always been popular with writers of fiction and which has now developed into a legitimate and effective form of stage technique. Hoffmann is a young poet who has been unfortunate in his love-affairs; and his stories of these affairs, which are acted in detail, form the body of the opera.

In an introductory scene, generally known as the "Prologue," Hoffmann is shown with his chum, Nicklausse, in the midst of a company of revellers in Luther's Tavern. In spite of the merry drinking-songs and the light-heartedness of his companions Hoffmann is melancholy. He is accused of being in love and for a while succeeds in assuming a forced cheerfulness, answering the gibes of his friends with a jolly little song describing an amusing dwarf named Kleinzach. But he soon wanders into an incoherent recital of the charms of a mysterious lady, and on being further rallied and questioned by his comrades he agrees to tell them the tales of his three luckless love-affairs.

The first act shows the magnificent home of the learned Dr. Spalanzani, who tells his pupil, Hoffmann, of the beauty of his "daughter" Olympia. Hoffmann is enchanted with the girl at his first distant view of her and does not realize that she is only a mechanical doll, the invention of Spalanzani and a certain Dr. Coppelius. The latter soon enters, and succeeds in selling Hoffmann a pair of magic eye-glasses which have the effect of making Olympia appear to the wearer as a real human being. Spalanzani, who is in financial straits, hopes to retrieve his fortunes through the wonderful automaton and accordingly buys from Coppelius the complete rights to the invention, paying him with a draft which he knows will not be honored. After the departure of Coppelius, Spalanzani entertains a large company of guests to whom he proudly exhibits the marvellous Olympia. Hoffmann falls even more deeply in love with her after he has heard her sing. Left alone with her for a few moments he declares his passion and, meeting with no response, dances with her. She whirls him around until he is exhausted, running into the other dancers and causing general confusion and laughter. Spalanzani finally succeeds in stopping the mechanism which Hoffmann had unconsciously started, and has the doll removed from the room. Coppelius enters suddenly, in a fury at having been cheated by Spalanzani, and rushes into the corridor; a crashing sound is heard and in a moment the guests realize that Coppelius has taken vengeance by smashing the automaton in pieces. Hoffmann is overcome with horror and chagrin, and as the guests make merry at his expense the curtain falls.

The scene of the second love-affair is Venice. *Giulietta*, a famous beauty, is holding court on the banks of the Grand Canal, and *Hoffmann* is introduced to her by his friend *Nicklause*, who, however, warns him against her charms. *Hoffmann* is on his guard, but succumbs through the magic of a ring given to *Giulietta* by a conjurer, *Dappertutto*. In a passionate love-scene he begs her to fly with him and leave her patron, *Schlemil*, forever. *Giulietta* is piqued at his former coldness and determines to play a trick on him. She tells him that he must procure the key of her room from *Schlemil*, after which she will join him in flight. *Hoffmann* obtains the key by killing *Schlemil* in a duel, but when he comes to claim *Giulietta* for his own he finds her just departing in a gondola with another lover, a misshapen and dwarf-like creature known as *Pittichinaccio*. *Nicklause* barely succeeds in saving *Hoffmann* from arrest, and as the curtain falls the ironic strains of the amorous Venetian barcarolle are heard in the distance.

The third and last affair is the most tragic of all. *Hoffmann* is in love with *Antonia*, the daughter of *Crespel*, a musician. She suffers from a malignant fever which will prove fatal if she over-exerts herself with singing. Her father has forbidden her to use her voice, but she still permits herself an occasional song in the company of *Hoffmann*, who is unaware of her danger. The malignant *Dr. Miracle*, who pretends to be a physician but is in reality a fiend with hypnotic powers, is supposedly restoring *Antonia* to health. In reality he intends to kill her as he killed her mother. When *Hoffmann* learns the truth he also forbids *Antonia* to sing, but *Dr. Miracle* now has her in his power and uses all his wiles to accomplish his villainous purpose. Finding *Antonia* alone he persuades her that her dead mother desires her to sing. He even conjures up a voice which *Antonia* believes to be that of her mother, and then tempts her further with the magic strains of his violin. *Antonia's* defense is finally broken down; she yields to the temptation and sings herself to death. *Crespel* and *Hoffmann* enter just in time to hear her last words. The frenzied father accuses the young man of the murder of his child, while *Dr. Miracle* gloats over the success of his plot.

A short Epilogue completes the opera, showing again *Luther's Tavern* and *Hoffmann* drinking with his friends. They applaud his stories and all join in the rousing song of the Prologue. *Hoffmann* again simulates a philosophical cheerfulness and finally lapses into a brooding stupor as his noisy companions leave him and the curtain falls.

## CHARACTERS OF THE DRAMA

OLYMPIA GIULIETTA ANTONIA STELLA*	} Soprano Four rôles sung by the same artist	ANDRÈS COCHENILLE PITTICHINACCIO FRANTZ	} Tenor Four rôles sung by the same artist
NICKLAUSSE A VOICE HOFFMANN SPALANZANI NATHANAËL CRESPEL LUTHER	Mezzo-Soprano Mezzo-Soprano Tenor Tenor Tenor Bass or Baritone Bass or Baritone	LINDORF COPPÉLIUS DAPPERTUTTO MIRACLE HERMANN SCHLÉMIL WILHEM	} Bass or Baritone Four rôles sung by the same artist  Bass or Baritone Bass or Baritone Speaking part

First performed at the Opéra-Comique, Paris, February the 10th, 1881

\*In the present arrangement the rôle of Stella is omitted

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