

PHILEMON ET BAUCIS

Music by Charles Gounod

Libretto by Jules Barbier & Michel Carré

First Performance: Opéra-Comique, Paris, February 18, 1860

In a storm, Jupiter and Vulcan arrive on earth to punish the Phrygians for sacrilege. They ask for shelter at the cottage of the happy peasant couple, Philemon and Baucis, who receive them hospitably. Jupiter taunts Vulcan with the indiscretions of Venus, while their hostess, meditating on her long contented life with Philemon, nevertheless regrets her lost youth. At supper Jupiter causes the water pitcher to remain miraculously full, thus betraying his godship to Baucis. Then the god grants Baucis's wish for restored youth, and woos her himself. She is flattered, and even consents to kiss the god, but Philemon is jealous. Vulcan tries to intervene, and the atmosphere becomes so quarrelsome that Baucis begs Jupiter to restore them to their former state. Touched by her piteous pleas, he does not renounce his gift of youth but vows to leave the couple in peace.