



A GERMAN CLASSIC: INAUGURAL PRIZE CEREMONY 2018

The grand prize ceremony for the inaugural essay competition, 'A German Classic' was held in the Blackwell Hall, the Bodleian Library, Oxford, on 19th June 2018.

The competition was inaugurated with generous sponsorship by Jonathan Gaisman, QC, with the aim of inspiring interest in great German writers and providing an incentive to engage with an influential German work in depth.

At the ceremony, Jonathan Gaisman gave a speech to introduce the prize and outlined its aims, by highlighting the significance of and joy derived from engaging with German literature.

The prizewinners for 2017/18 are as follows:

First Prize (£500): Cecilia Marchant
Hessle High School and Sixth Form College



Second Prize (£300): Francis Bristow
Lancaster Royal Grammar School



Third Prize (£100): Beth Molyneux
Urmston Grammar School



The essay by Lucy Buxton, The Lady Eleanor Holles School, was awarded Highly Commended by the judges.

Congratulations to all our prize-winners, and we would like to thank the entrants from schools across the UK who gave up part of their summer to write substantial and thought-provoking essays on a wide range of aspects of *Faust*. The essays were a pleasure to read.

Here are some comments from this year's prize-winners about the competition:

'*Faust* is such an extraordinary work and I'm really grateful to have had the opportunity to explore the play, especially Gretchen's moving story. Thank you for providing the critical reader and links to the Youtube videos; they really enhanced my understanding of the text. Since writing the essay I have found it amazing how often Goethe and *Faust* seem to crop up in literature, music and art. It is truly an inspirational work.' (Cecilia Marchant)

'I thought the competition was a wonderful opportunity and enjoyed it immensely. It gave me a unique chance to delve into one of the greatest works of German literature and gave me the confidence to form my own interpretations.' (Beth Molyneux)

'When I realised that the essay was on Faust, I was particularly interested because years ago, before I was born, my Grandad bought on a whim, a second hand dual translation of Faust Part I that he gave to my mum. To my knowledge, no-one in the family ever read it but it became a permanent fixture on the bookcase and when I saw the competition title, I remembered that we already had a copy. Our book is very old and a lot of the pages are loose but it was only when I came to write my bibliography that I discovered that our version was published in 1892! I used a more modern edition too but I found it interesting to compare the different translations of the text.

Had I not entered this competition then I have to admit that I would not have read Faust at this stage of my education. However I'm so glad that I did because before I read it, I hadn't realised that I enjoyed poetry so much. I was amazed at Goethe's ability to maintain such a rhyming scheme and also surprised at how moved I was by Gretchen's downfall. Reading Faust inspired me to read some more of Goethe's poetry and look into the background of some of them such as "Heidenröslein" and "Gefunden".' (Francis Bristow)

Right: Jonathan Gaisman introduces the German Classic Prize at the Prize Ceremony as part of the Oxford German Olympiad Prize-Giving, in the Bodleian Library's Blackwell Hall.





Above: Lucy Buxton receives her certification of 'Highly Commended' from Jonathan Gaisman and Professor Katrin Kohl.

Below: Jonathan Gaisman addresses the audience at the Oxford German Olympiad Prize-Giving.

