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CLARION REVIEW ★★★★☆

Faust: My Soul be Damned for the World, Volume Two

E.A. Bucchianeri
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With its blood-red title and gothic print of the elderly Faust leafing through a heavy tome of incantations the cover of *Faust: My Soul Be Damned for the World* may be off-putting to some; but readers shouldn't judge this book by its cover.

In the second volume of E.A. Bucchianeri's *Faust: My Soul be Damned for the World* a staggering and comprehensive exploration of both Goethe and Dr. Faust readers are introduced to the poet and his massive masterpiece *Faust*. In a one-page introduction readers learn that Goethe started the first draft of his opus in his early twenties and finished it eight months before his death at the age of eighty-two.

The creation of *Faust* spanned several ages from the Sturm und Drang (Storm and Stress) movement through Weimar Classicism and into the beginnings of the Romantic era. These periods of literary historical and social change heavily influenced Goethe's writing. Yet other factors also played an important role in the evolution of *Faust* including Goethe's diverse studies in the disciplines of art music alchemy the occult law politics the physical and natural sciences and others. And like with all writers Goethe's personal life provided inspiration for the character of Dr. Faustus and the first-time inclusion of a love interest—Margareta.

Part biography of the poet and part literary analysis of his work Bucchianeri's research is exhaustive. She includes several amusing yet trivial anecdotes of how as a student at the University in Leipzig Goethe transformed himself from Franconian country bumpkin to fashionista fop with the accompanying mannerisms. However the core of Buccianeri's study lies in the deep scrutiny of Faust detailing Goethe's hidden symbolism and prophecies of the future within the work itself.

Throughout the text Bucchianeri cites several references and footnotes them. These include the poet's own autobiography and *The Life of Goethe* by the German literary critic Albert Bielshowky. At the end of the book a select chronology is provided yet academics researchers and librarians will fault the author for not including an index or the bibliography which is only found in volume one. In addition some readers might be perplexed by the absence of the Bucchianeri's credentials. However no one can dispute that Bucchianeri is passionate about her subject. *Faust: My Soul be Damned for the World* is a very welcome addition to both public and personal libraries.
REBECA SCHILLER (February 12, 2009)

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