

IF I WERE YOU

Music by Jake Heggie
Libretto by Gene Scheer

Based on the book *Si j'étais vous*, by Julien Green
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Commissioned by Merola Opera Program

IF I WERE YOU is a contemporary story of identity with echoes of classic literature, from *Faust* to *Jekyll & Hyde*.

PLOT

Fabian Hart is a dispirited young man. An aspiring writer, a dreamer yearning for adventure and a way out of his stifling existence, he would sell his very soul to be somebody else. Brittomara, the devil, appears in several guises and reveals to him a supernatural power: by singing an ancient, secret phrase, Fabian will be able to transfer his soul into another person's body to live their life. Thus begins the perilous journey as Fabian moves his lost soul from person to person in search of a better identity: sometimes running away, sometimes running toward, leaving a trail of human wreckage and hollow shells. At the core of his journey is his quest to be loved by Diana, a vivacious, powerful young woman. When the promise of profound love compels him to return to his original body, he struggles to decide whether it is better to live forever pretending to be someone else, or die for love as yourself.

CHARACTERS

(Tessitura listed following character description with extremes of range in parentheses)

BRITTOMARA (mezzo-soprano or dramatic soprano): The devil; an incredibly sexy, beautiful, seductive woman. She will also play an auto mechanic, a bartender, a hairdresser, and other roles.

(G#3) B3 – G#5 (Bb5)

DIANA (soprano): a beautiful, popular, ebullient, 24-year old woman.

(C#4) E4 – A5 (B5)

FABIAN (tenor): a young writer and restless dreamer in his early 20s; filled with self-doubt, he feels unlovable and yearns to break away. He lives in a small apartment in the town where he grew up, his chance to go away to college cut short by his father's sudden death.

(C3) E3 – A4 (B4)

SELENA (soprano): Diana's close friend since childhood. (D4) F#4 – A5

PUTNAM (bass-baritone): Fabian's boss; a boorish, unpleasant, wealthy, older man.

(G2) B2 – D4 (E4)

PAUL (baritone): a very handsome, dangerous young man, a drug dealer and a bit of a brute. He's quite a flirt and has a reputation for playing the field. He's currently dating Rachel.
(C3) D3 – E4 (G4)

RACHEL (mezzo-soprano): Paul's current girlfriend. C#4 – F#5 (G5)

DAVID (tenor): a young, very successful photographer. E3 – A4

JONATHAN (baritone): a cop Db3 – E4 (G4)