



L'ESCHERE  
EDITORE

# Christopher Marlowe

Renaissance dramatist



# Christopher Marlowe

## Life and Works

- Born in 1564.
- Educated at **Cambridge University**.
- Member of the group of playwrights called '**The University Wits**'.
- Was greatly **admired** as a playwright in his time.
- His **short life** was wild and violent. He was killed in 1593, at the age of 29, in a tavern in London.
- Reputation based on four great plays:  
*Tamburlaine* (1587-1588), *The Jew of Malta* (1590), *Edward II* (1592) *Doctor Faustus* (1604).



# Christopher Marlowe

## Style and Themes

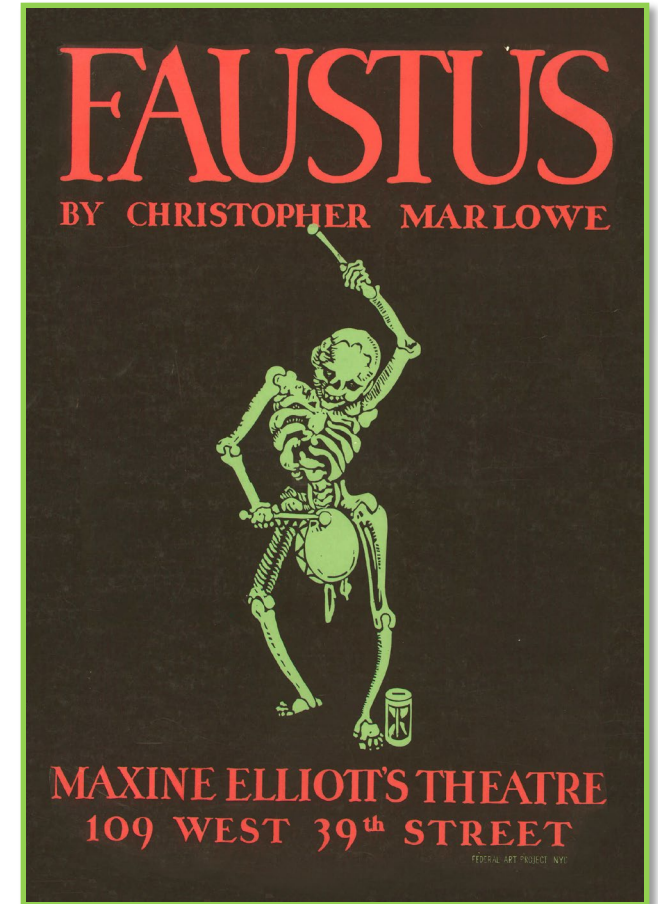
- His tragedies portray a **tragic hero** who lives in a world beyond that of ordinary human experience, is dominated by a **single passion** and meets a **tragic end** which always occurs in a frightening way.
- He uses **powerful language** which, like the subject matter, is not that of everyday life.
- He established **blank verse** as the predominant verse form of Renaissance drama.



# Doctor Faustus

## Content

- *Doctor Faustus* was written sometime between **1588 and 1592**.
- It is based on the **medieval legend of Faustus**.
- Faustus has a thirst for knowledge.
- His thirst becomes an **obsession**.
- The language of the play is rich in refined **imagery** and **literary, religious, and philosophical references**.
- The play contains **allegorical characters** such as Virtue and Evil.



# Doctor Faustus

## Storyline

- The protagonist, **Doctor Faustus**, is a proud scholar who finds human science too limited and turns to magic. He signs a pact with the devil, **Mephistopheles**, in which he exchanges his soul for twenty-four years of knowledge and pleasure beyond the realm of human capacity.



# Doctor Faustus

## Storyline

- When the time to pay his debt comes for Faustus, however, he regrets his choice. He voices his anguish and despair while he tries to find ways to escape **eternal damnation**.
- When his final moment comes, he cannot escape and has to surrender his soul to the devil.



# Sources and references

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- Slide 1: *The face Mask or Bulkhead art*, by Rick Kirby, Canterbury, Kent, United kingdom. © raymond orton/Shutterstock.
- Slide 2: *Christopher Marlowe's Portrait*. Wikimedia Commons/Public Domain.
- Slide 3: Mephistopheles, sketch of the costume created by Betout. Parigi, Bibliothèque-Musée De L'Opéra National de Paris-Garnier.
- Slide 4: Playbill for Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*. Work Projects Administration Federal Art Project, New York City/commons.wikimedia.org/PD.
- Slide 5: Title page of *The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus* by Christopher Marlowe, 1631 edition. Public Domain.
- Slide 6: A scene from Marlowe's play *Doctor Faustus* staged at the Globe in London. Arthur Darvill as Mephistopheles. [www.thetribeonline.com/Matthew Dunster, Doctor Faustus, 2011](http://www.thetribeonline.com/Matthew_Dunster_DoctorFaustus_2011).

