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words

Georg Buchner, 1813–1837

Iain McClure

Buchner compressed several lifetimes' worth of achievement into 23 years. By the time he died (of typhus), he was a university lecturer and he had written a ground-breaking dissertation *On Cranial Nerves*, the first revolutionary document in German history and two of the greatest plays ever written. *Danton's Death* was written in five weeks, during Buchner's flight into Switzerland from probable imprisonment. A gripping political drama, its insight into political intrigue is comparable to Shakespeare. *Woyzeck*, unfinished at Buchner's death, has inspired many of the key innovators in Western theatre. Rarely has such astounding promise been so cruelly cut short.

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