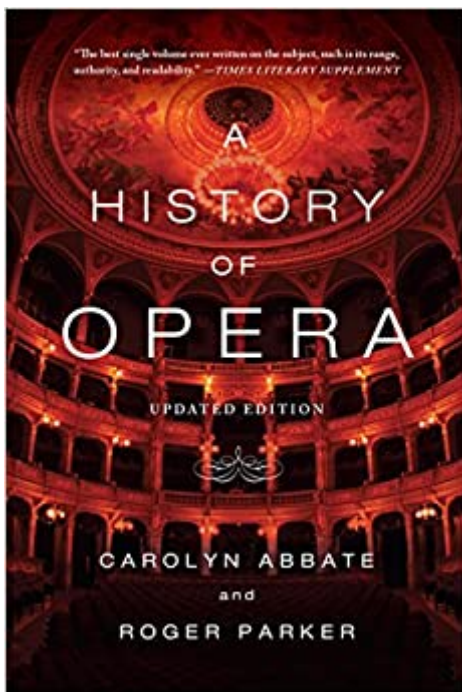


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A History Of Opera



Synopsis

“The best single volume ever written on the subject, such is its range, authority, and readability.” —*Times Literary Supplement* Why has opera transfixed and fascinated audiences for centuries? Carolyn Abbate and Roger Parker answer this question in their “effervescent, witty” (Die Welt, Germany) retelling of the history of opera, examining its development, the musical and dramatic means by which it communicates, and its role in society. Now with an expanded examination of opera as an institution in the twenty-first century, this “lucid and sweeping” (Boston Globe) narrative explores the tensions that have sustained opera over four hundred years: between words and music, character and singer, inattention and absorption. Abbate and Parker argue that, though the genre’s most popular and enduring works were almost all written in a distant European past, opera continues to change the viewer physically, emotionally, intellectually with its enduring power. 24 pages of illustrations

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Customer Reviews

“A history of opera is not lightly undertaken in this Age of Information, particularly when it attempts to survey the entire 400-year period.” —Abbate and Parker are up to the task and have more than succeeded in this thoughtful, wide-ranging look at this art form. The opening chapter sets the stage with an overview of a number of operatic issues, including words and music, the question of reality onstage, and popularity and conventions in staging. Succeeding chapters

discuss opera's origins, major composers, and styles at length. This is not a dry recitation of musical facts but a collection of interesting, well-reasoned discussions supported by abundant references to contemporary writings, critical studies, biographies, and other sources. Opera fans who wish to go beyond program notes will appreciate the care and scholarship that went into this rich and elegant history. --Carolyn Mulac --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"Fantastically clear-sighted and down-to-earth . . . focuses on what opera is and was rather than what it should be or would like to have been. . . . Their virtuosic spring-clean of opera's past reveals an art form quite different to the one that we come across today." - The Telegraph (UK)
"Reason to applaud . . . vast scholarly authority is put to the service of a narrative both lucid and sweeping." - Jeremy Eichler, Boston Globe
"Unfailingly intelligent . . . their coverage of every period in opera's history is scrupulous and provocative." - Kirkus Reviews
"Will surely become essential reading for anyone seeking an engaging and highly informed chronicle of the great composers and their works." - Daniel Snowman, Opera
"A highly idiosyncratic and personal history of opera. [It] has a brio, insouciance, and even irreverence that are very much their own." - G.W. Bowersock, The New Republic
"Fresh . . . brave, challenging and, above all, useful." - Literary Review

The authors are great specialists, who nevertheless know how to write for a large readership. This is a brilliant example of great scholarly expertise turned into a readable text.

There is no hardcover version of the 2015 update.

This book helped me fill in many gaps in my opera education, and enhanced my understanding of opera. Great book!!!

I developed a love for opera only about 20 years ago and have gradually not only built up a list of favorites, but also am now able to enjoy operas that at earlier stages I found too difficult. This book tells me why. More, by showing me how the art form has evolved, and why, I now have a much better appreciation for what is happening in good opera. Particularly helpful for me was the way the authors explain in some detail, using arias and scenes from many well-known operas, how the cord

changes, and musical themes and refrains tell the story as much or more than the libretti. I've wondered why there are so few contemporary operas that are successful or have any hope of entering into the repertory. This book discusses that issue in great detail in the final chapter - for me, worth the price of the book right there.

This is a beautiful with wonderful pictures of opera scenes from the history of the opera. I have several very old history of the Opera books, but none as up to date as this and complete as this.

Exceptional detail is taken to provide an accurate history of opera from the Florentine Camerata to the present day. Wonderful reference!

This history of opera tells me all the things that I have wondered about for years. It makes opera history make sense for me

Two excellent scholars try too hard to lower their intellectual intensity and sophistication for the popular market. Their previous work is clearly superior.

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