



Opera: Composers, Works, Performers (Ullmann)

By András Batta

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Opera is one of the most fascinating and lively art forms of our time. It appeals to all the senses and transcends barriers of language and culture. In doing so, it is neither antiquated nor elitist: continual changes in both repertoire and the production of established operas are reflections of developments in present-day society. This magnificent, richly illustrated book contains most of what is covered by contemporary repertoires and allows one to experience first hand all the vitality of the world of opera.

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Editorial Review

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Packed with production photographs, studio portraits, and historical illustrations galore, this encyclopedic volume consists mainly of articles about the approximately 350 works in today's opera repertoire. Entries are arranged alphabetically by the composers' last names, and each begins with a biographical sketch followed by a synopsis of each composer's operatic works (or work, in the case of opera's several one-hit wonders), lavishly illustrated by performance photographs (nearly all of which are of European productions). Often the entries include a line or two of musical notation from the score. In addition to the entries, readers will find a glossary of musical terms, an index of the works mentioned, a selected bibliography, and an opera chronology listing works from Monteverdi's *Orfeo* (1607) to John Adams' *Doctor Atomic* (2005) and Philip Glass' *Appomattox* (2007). Indexes of persons and subjects are also provided, and there is a list of the musical excerpts cited in the text that gives each work's title as well as that of the aria or motif (theme) it illustrates. A one-page "Journey through Operatic History" lists the page numbers of the special short articles scattered throughout the text, among them "Mozart and Salieri," "Operatic Life in London," and "Toscanini and the Metropolitan Opera." Although this reviewer did find two mistakes in captions of photos from Willy Decker's production of *La Traviata*, with its reasonable ticket price and sumptuous production values, *Opera: Composers, Works, Performers* will find a place in most performing-arts collections and on the bookshelves of opera fans. --Carolyn Mulac

About the Author

András Batta studied musicology and violoncello at the Franz Liszt Music Academy in Budapest, where he has also been teaching music history since 1979. He also arranged numerous music broadcasts on Hungarian radio, in Budapest, and on ORF, Vienna.

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