Autumn Italian Opera Verismo Modernism 1890 1915

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Earlier in this opera, a courtier puts a curse on the Rigoletto for helping the Duke seduce his daughter. Later, in this scene from Act III, Gilda has fallen in love with the Duke, but he is already ...

Romantic Musical Examples

Esa-Pekka Salonen was far too bright, and far too talented, to be fooled by modernism ... always say about City Opera that it teaches you new repertory. The score is a strange, and effective, ...

The first full-length study of the last great era of Italian opera

Luigi Dallapiccola is widely considered a defining figure in twentieth-century Italian musical modernism, whose compositions bear passionate witness to the historical period through which he lived. In this book, Ben Earle focuses on three major works by the composer: the one-act operas Volo di notte ('Night Flight') and Il prigioniero ('The Prisoner'), and the choral Canti di prigionia ('Songs of Imprisonment'), setting them in the context of contemporary politics to trace their complex path from fascism to resistance. Earle also considers the wider relationship between musical modernism and Italian fascism, exploring the origins of musical modernism and investigating its place in the institutional structures created by Mussolini's regime. In doing so, he sheds new light on Dallapiccola's work and on the cultural politics of the early twentieth century to provide a history of musical modernism in Italy from the fin de siècle to the early Cold War.

This series explores the conceptual frameworks that shape or have shaped the ways in which we understand music and its history, and aims to elaborate structures of explanation, interpretation, commentary and criticism which make music intelligible and which provide a basis for argument about judgements of value. The intellectual scope of the series is broad. Some investigations will treat, for example, historiographical topics, others will apply cross-disciplinary methods to the criticism of music, and there will also be studies which consider music in its relation to society, culture and politics. Overall, the series hopes to create a greater presence for music in the ongoing discourse among the human sciences. --Book Jacket.

Virginia Woolf famously claimed that, around December 1910, human character changed. Aesthetic Technologies addresses how music (especially opera), the phonograph, and film served as cultural agents facilitating the many extraordinary social, artistic, and cultural shifts that characterized the new century and much of what followed long thereafter, even to the present. Three tropes are central: the tensions and traumasNCultural, social, and personalNassociated with modernity; changes in human subjectivity and its engagement and representation in music and film; and the more general societal impact of modern media, sound recording (the development of the phonograph in particular), and the critical role played by early-century opera recording. A principal focus of the book is the conflicted relationship in Western modernity to nature, particularly as nature is perceived in
opposition to culture and articulated through music, film, and sound as agents of fundamental, sometimes shocking transformation. The book considers the sound/vision world of modernity filtered through the lens of aesthetic modernism and rapid technological change, and the impact of both, experienced with the prescient sense that there could be no turning back.

Alessandra Campana explores how operas and their stage manuals participated in the making of a modern public in late nineteenth-century Italy.

Verdi's operas—composed between 1839 and 1893—portray a striking diversity of female protagonists: warrior women and peacemakers, virgins and courtesans, princesses and slaves, witches and gypsies, mothers and daughters, erring and idealised wives, and, last of all, a feisty quartet of Tudor townswomen in Verdi's final opera, Falstaff. Yet what meanings did the impassioned crises and dilemmas of these characters hold for the nineteenth-century female spectator, especially during such a turbulent span in the history of the Italian peninsula? How was opera shaped by society—and was society similarly influenced by opera? Contextualising Verdi's female roles within aspects of women's social, cultural and political history, Susan Rutherford explores the interface between the reality of the spectators' lives and the imaginary of the fictional world before them on the operatic stage.

"A major contribution...not only to Puccini studies but also to the study of nineteenth-century Italian opera in general."—Nineteenth-Century Music Review"In this groundbreaking survey of the fundamentals, methods, and formulas that were taught at Italian music conservatories during the 19th Century, Nicholas Baragwanath explores the compositional significance of tradition in Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti, Verdi, Boito, and, most importantly, Puccini. Taking account of some 400 primary sources, Baragwanath explains the varying theories and practices of the period in light of current theoretical and analytical conceptions of this music. The Italian Traditions and Puccini offers a guide to an informed interpretation and appreciation of Italian opera by underscoring the proximity of archaic traditions to the music of Puccini. "Dense and challenging in its detail and analysis, this work is an important addition to the growing corpus of Puccini studies....Highly recommended."—Choice

"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.

When Mona Lisa smiled enigmatically from the cover of the Italian magazine Epoca in 1957, she gazed out at more than three million readers. As Emma Barron argues, her appearance on the cover is emblematic of the distinctive ways that high culture was integrated into Italy’s mass culture boom in the 1950s and 1960s, a period when popular appropriations of literature, fine art and music became a part of the rapidly changing modern Italian identity. Popular magazines ran weekly illustrated adaptations of literary classics. Television brought opera from the opera house into the homes of millions. Readers wrote to intellectuals and artists such as Alberto Moravia, Thomas Mann and Salvatore Quasimodo by the thousands with questions about literature and self-education. Drawing upon new archival material on the demographics of television audiences and magazine readers, this book is an engaging account of how the Italian people took possession of high culture and transformed the modern Italian identity.

Giacomo Puccini (1858–1924) is the world's most frequently performed operatic composer, yet he is only beginning to receive serious scholarly attention. In Giacomo Puccini and His World, an international roster of music specialists, several writing on Puccini for the first time, offers a variety of new critical perspectives on the composer and his works. Containing discussions of all of Puccini’s operas from Manon Lescaut (1893) to Turandot (1926), this volume aims to move beyond clichés of the composer as a Romantic epigone and to resituate him at the heart of early twentieth-century musical modernity. This collection’s essays explore Puccini’s engagement with spoken theater and operetta, and with new technologies like photography and cinema. Other essays consider the philosophical problems raised by "realist" opera, discuss the composer’s place in a variety of cosmopolitan formations, and reevaluate Puccini’s orientalism and his complex interactions with the Italian fascist state. A rich array of primary source material, including previously unpublished letters and documents, provides vital information on Puccini’s interactions with singers, conductors, and stage directors, and on the early reception of the verismo movement. Excerpts from Fausto Torrefranca’s notorious Giacomo Puccini and International Opera, perhaps the most vicious diatribe ever directed against the composer, appear here in English for the first time. The contributors are Micaela Barberino, Leon Botstein, Alessandra Campana, Della Casaidei, Ben Earle, Elaine Fitz Gibbon, Walter Frisch, Michele Girardi, Arthur Groos, Steven Huebner, Ellen Lockhart, Christopher Morris, Arman Schwartz, Emanuele Senici, and Alexandra Wilson.