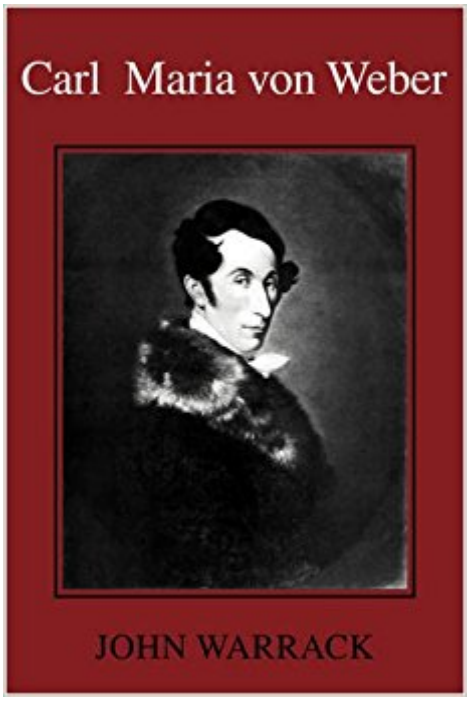
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Carl Maria Von Weber



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Synopsis

The first edition of John Warrack’s study of Weber was published in 1968 and quickly became recognized as the standard ’life and works’ - indeed the best book on Weber in any language. The second edition was produced in 1976 to mark the 150th anniversary of Weber’s death in London, and is reissued here. John Warrack’s study gives a detailed account of the life in which the music is discussed (with analysis and music examples) in chronological order. It is a scholarly study based on first-hand research in German and other archives, but it is also elegantly written, and fully alive to general cultural and historical implications. It is a book for the music-lover as well as the scholar. This second edition contains a new concluding chapter, an important select bibliography of over 100 entries, and a useful family tree which was not in the first edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

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Warrack’s earnest 1968 effort is one of the most tedious, least readable musical biographies I’ve ever encountered. It is competently written but with zero flair for bringing the people, places, and period to life. The extensive musical analysis with examples does nothing to enrich or enliven the

plodding narrative--long on minute biographical detail, short on living, breathing people. Yet Weber's career itself was anything but dull. Like Mahler almost a century later and despite similarly fragile health, he was a workaholic conductor and opera director as well as a composer, and he traveled and performed in any number of European cities and countries during his short life. A more imaginative biographer could have made much of these circumstances.Weber was a great original and, at least in his groundbreaking operas if not in his more traditional instrumental music, well ahead of his time in establishing the German Romantic style that Wagner brought to fruition. I began this book hoping to learn how Weber conceived and developed this new Romantic music, but I failed to find any such enlightenment. Warrack hardly begins to explain or even acknowledge Weber's dual personality: how a composer of brilliant but conventional virtuoso pieces for piano and clarinet came to compose "Der Freischutz" and other operas filled with expansive melodies, dark mystery, and romantic sweep.Some more recent biographies of musicians and others are overly fictionalized and novelistic, but this one fails in the opposite direction. Music historians may hold it in some esteem, but the general music-loving reader should avoid it.

Not 5 stars because I prefer more serious analysis of his music

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