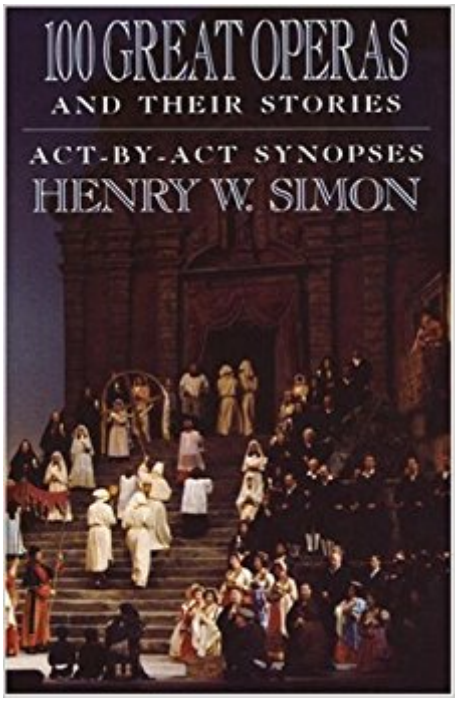
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100 Great Operas And Their Stories: Act-By-Act Synopses



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Synopsis

An invaluable guide for both casual opera fans and aficionados, 100 Great Operas is perhaps the most comprehensive and enjoyable volume of opera stories ever written. Ã Â From La Traviata to AÃƒÂ da, from Carmen to Don Giovanni, here are the plots of the worldÃ¢â ¬â„¢s best-loved operas, told in an engaging, picturesque, and readable manner. Written by noted opera authority Henry W. Simon, this distinctive reference book contains act-by-act descriptions of 100 operatic works ranging from the historic early seventeenth century masterpieces of Monteverdi to the modern classics of Gian-Carlo Menotti. Ã Â In addition to highlighting the most important aspects of each opera, the author discusses the main characters, the famous turnings of plot, and the most significant arias. Here, too, is a wealth of anecdotes concerning literary background, past performances and stars, and production problems of the great operas.

Book Information

Paperback: 554 pages
Publisher: Anchor; Revised edition (May 1, 1989)
Language: English
ISBN-10: 0385054483
ISBN-13: 978-0385054485
Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 1.2 x 8 inches
Shipping Weight: 14.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)
Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 40 customer reviews
Best Sellers Rank: #153,709 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #46 inÃ Â Books > Arts & Photography > Performing Arts > Reference #231 inÃ Â Books > Humor & Entertainment > Sheet Music & Scores > Forms & Genres > Opera #269 inÃ Â Books > Arts & Photography > Music > Musical Genres > Opera

Customer Reviews

An invaluable guide for both casual opera fans and afficionados, this volume contains act-by-act descriptions of operatic works ranging from the early seventeenth century masterworks of Monteverdi and Purcell to the modern classics of Menotti and Britten. Written in a lively anecdotal style, entries include character descriptions, historical background, and much more.

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A great collection of the 100 most beloved operas. Very helpful for any aspiring opera singer, such as myself, to dig up interesting information about the background of the opera, the plot, where and when the arias take place, and many interesting factoids about the origin of the librettos and the circumstances under which the composer chose to write the opera. An absolute must-have for an opera lover!!!

This book is EXCEPTIONAL. One of my very best references -- and there are other good ones -- for top-rated operas. First of all, it is not easy to pick 100 "Great" operas to build the list on. Secondly, his research is astounding. I learned things about operas I thought I knew pretty well. Third -- his writing style is delightful. Fourth - he does a good job of briefly telling the story of how the opera came to be, and of how it has fared since premiere.I am a lifelong fan of the Milton Cross book "Complete Stories of the Great Operas" - a wonderful book, but in many respects Simon’s book is better. More conversational, a bit more current, more readable, more concise on the synopsis, and a bit more background information. Both books are quite dated. If I were to recommend just ONE of these to come out in a new edition, it would be Simon’s -- with about 50 more operas included. The one downside of the book IMHO is that it is limited to only 100 operas, and of course they were all in the repertoire before the 1960 publication date.GIving this book five stars is a very easy decision for me. Thanks to .com for leading me on to it in the first place.

This is a neat book for newcomers and seasoned listeners alike. If you need a light paperback to take with you while you are travelling or use it as a reference material at home before or after viewing an opera on DVD/Blue ray, this is it.This is not your gigantic coffee table book of operas, chock a block with picture etc.; it is a modest paperback with no photos. The author writes with a wry humour and provides 100 operas with a synopsis of the work, how the work came to be composed, and the circumstances etc. - followed by an act by act explanation. Each opera is a chapter and is explained in about 4 to 5 pages. I found the author’s writing style engaging, injecting humor on several occasions. The author also writes in a casual and easy to read style. No pedantic paragraphs or complex musical terminology is used to show off the author’s authority.I am a big opera enthusiast who just started out some months ago. The greatest way for me to get know the repertoire is to buy DVD and blue rays (if I relied on going strictly to opera performances in my city

-not having the advantage of being in New York - aka MET, I ’d probably only get to know 3 operas a year and I have 100’s to get to know). So I watch operas in the comfort of my home, getting acquainted with the stories, the singing and the music. What I noticed consistently is that the DVDs/Blue rays I order come with a very small booklet which at times have very little write up in terms of synopsis. So I started relying On Wikipedia for the story and details of the act till I checked out this book on . Since I like to see the first viewing of an opera without knowing anything about it so that I have no plot spoilers, I do not look up the plot in this book if it is the first time I am seeing that opera. After seeing it once on DVD/Blue-ray, I refer to this book and read the story and it makes a lot more sense to me. I found myself re-reading certain opera chapter on any given day with no apparent reason, but to browse through and read something. Each reading gets me more interested in the opera. Some opera chapters require reading and re-reading (esp. if you start seeing 3 operas a week, you can get your stories and characters mixed up). Some operas like Berlioz’s Les Troyens have a long story arc and it helps to refresh your memory quickly by reading that chapter if you have 10 minutes to kill. You can have the book by your side while watching the Blue-ray or even take it to opera performance as it is not too heavy.Just don’t expect each chapter to be an exhaustive essay on the opera because the author has to cover 100 operas in over 500 pages. Some operas take more pages case in point, Wagner’s ring cycle due to the amount of material to cover. For subjects like the ring, you are better off buying separate books which analyses all of Wagner’s 4 operas, since there is so much to read up on. I think this is a great book, although it may seem modest and unglamorous; but Henry W Simon’s writing is great. In other words, no pomp and splendor type coffee table book with glossy photographs etc., but packs a punch and gives you the information you need to the point. Get this book and enjoy your operas.

good book for every opera lover. Act by act to all most staged operas. very informative to read before going to opera

condition of book was ok however i had just seen ’nebecco’ and wanted to read the plot, characters etc so bought the book - unfortunately ’nebecco’ was not included !

so glad i found this book. i had one years ago when i was learning about different operas. now that i’m 80 i forget who wrote what. Was it Verdi or Pucci? this is the perfect book for looking things up.

I CONTINUE TO USE THIS FOR LOOKING UP OPERAS, AND I AM VERY PLEASED WITH IT.

THANKS FOR HAVING THIS VALUABLE BOOK WHEN EVER I WANT TO LOOK UP AN OPERA.

Entertaining, informative, and a treat to read!!!! An excellent anthology of great operatic works.

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