



Opera 101: A Complete Guide to Learning and Loving Opera

By Fred Plotkin

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Opera 101: A Complete Guide to Learning and Loving Opera By Fred Plotkin

Opera is the fastest growing of all the performing arts, attracting audiences of all ages who are enthralled by the gorgeous music, vivid drama, and magnificent production values. If you've decided that the time has finally come to learn about opera and discover for yourself what it is about opera that sends your normally reserved friends into states of ecstatic abandon, this is the book for you. *Opera 101* is recognized as the standard text in English for anyone who wants to become an opera lover--a clear, friendly, and truly complete handbook to learning how to listen to opera, whether on the radio, on recordings, or live at the opera house. Fred Plotkin, an internationally respected writer and teacher about opera who for many years was performance manager of the Metropolitan Opera, introduces the reader (whatever his or her level of musical knowledge) to all the elements that make up opera, including:

- A brief, entertaining history of opera;
- An explanation of key operatic concepts, from vocal types to musical conventions;
- Hints on the best way to approach the first opera you attend and how to best understand what is happening both offstage and on;
- Lists of recommended books and recordings, and the most complete traveler's guide to opera houses around the world.

The major part of *Opera 101* is devoted to an almost minute-by-minute analysis of eleven key operas, ranging from Verdi's thunderous masterpiece *Rigoletto* and Puccini's electrifying *Tosca* through works by Mozart, Donizetti, Rossini, Offenbach, Tchaikovsky, and Wagner, to the psychological complexities of Richard Strauss's *Elektra*. Once you have completed *Opera 101*, you will be prepared to see and hear any opera you encounter, thanks to this book's unprecedentedly detailed and enjoyable method of revealing the riches of opera.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Just as the title says, this is a basic primer on what opera is, what to look for and what to listen to. There is nothing stuffy in Plotkin's style, which is clear and idiomatic. The book also boasts a foreword by supertenor Plácido Domingo.

Review

Newcomers to opera receive a fine guide to learning about opera appreciation, written by a performance manager for the Metropolitan Opera. Eleven famous operas are reviewed in a step-by-step listener's guide which covers the basics of learning about the opera's form, style, and scene challenges. -- *Midwest Book Review*

About the Author

Fred Plotkin is the author of the bestselling and acclaimed *Opera 101: A Complete Guide to Learning and Loving Opera*, which is the standard text in North American for discovering the glories of opera. He writes for the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *Opera News*, *Das Opernglas*, and *Gourmet*. He lectures on music for leading institutions, including Columbia University, the Juilliard School, and the Smithsonian. Plotkin is a popular guest on the intermission features of the Chevron Texaco-Metropolitan Opera broadcasts, and many shows on National Public Radio. An expert on Italy, he has written five definitive books on Italian food and wine.

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