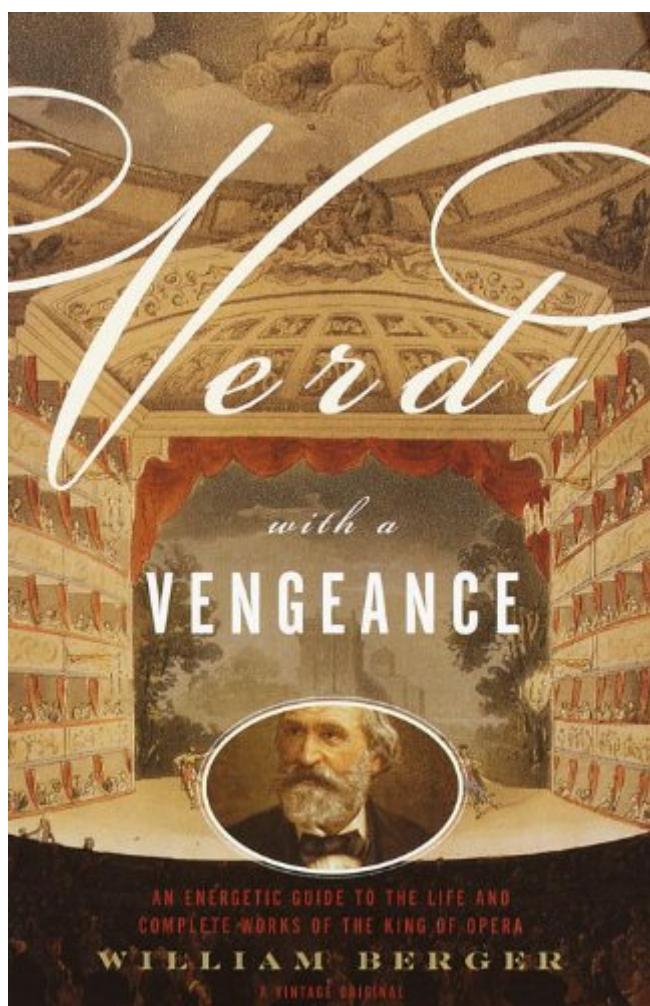


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Verdi With A Vengeance: An Energetic Guide To The Life And Complete Works Of The King Of Opera



Synopsis

Everything you could possibly know about Verdi and his operas, from the brilliant and humorous author of *Wagner Without Fear*. If you want to know why *La traviata* was actually a flop at its premiere in 1853, it's in here. If you want to know why claiming to have heard Bjorling's Chicago performance of *Il trovatore* is the classic opera fan faux pas, it's in here. Even if you just want to know how to pronounce *Aida*, or what the plot of *Rigoletto* is all about, this is the place to look. From the composer's intense hatred of priests to synopses of the operas and a detailed discography of the best recordings to buy, it can all be found in *Verdi with a Vengeance*. William Berger has given another improbable performance, serving up a book as thorough as it is funny and as original as it is astute, an utterly indispensable guide for novice and expert alike. From the Trade Paperback edition.

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Customer Reviews

I have lived with this book for a little over a year; it rests on a table next to my chair so that I can access it frequently, as I do. I have referred to it in several reviews of Verdi on DVD and thought that

in justice to this fine work, I should comment briefly on why it is so important to my enjoyment of Verdi's operas. First, there is an adequate biography. I have and consult the definitive biography by Ms. Phillips-Matz, but for the quick reference, Mr. Berger works very well: there is enough detail to answer most any question I have had. Second, all of the operas are outlined as to plot and discussed. No, this is not Budden's three volume tome of the 1970's (if memory serves), but again, unless one can sight read an orchestral score, Budden takes some effort to get through. Berger is much more easy on the attention span, but still with plenty of detail. When I came to opera, there were only four or five of Verdi's operas that had been recorded, and those were cut substantially (all those vulgar cabalettas!) It is gratifying to see all the early Verdi" treated with affectionate respect. Third, there is a short, succinct guide to audio recordings with some absolutely delicious editorial remarks (he mentions Canadian tenor Richard Margison sounding like he was channelling Ethel Merman and notes that a well known soprano's high notes could kill goldfish in a bowl!) Sad to say, the book was written before the surge of DVDs. Fourth is the quality of writing: Berger has a crisp, grammatic style that maintains interest. Part of this, I am sure, reflects his obvious love of Verdi's output. So in sum, gentle reader, I recommend this book without reservation. It's a winner!!

This short guide to Verdi's life and works is an indispensable gem for anyone wanting to learn more about Italy's greatest operatic composer! Berger gives a succinctly informative sketch of the complex composer's life. He adds chapters on Verdi books, CD'S, Videos, staging of Verdi operas and a helpful glossary of operatic terms. The most helpful and longest part of the book deals with a brief synopsis of each opera in the Verdian canon from the obscure "Oberto" to the Master's final comic masterpiece "Falstaff." Berger lists the characters of each opera, makes witty comments on the big arias and scenes in each opera and also provides historical information on the production of each opera. I had earlier read Berger's excellent "Wagner Without Fear" and was so impressed with his writing that I eagerly turned to Berger's guide to Verdi. I understand he is now working on a similar guide to the life and operas of Puccini which will be received by this reviewer with gratitude. If you are a novice to operatic enjoyment or a seasoned Verdian this work will be a delight. I highly recommend it for your consideration!

Viva Verdi! William Berger provides a useful guide to all of the Verdi operas from the obscure "Oberto" to the classic comedic masterpiece "Falstaff" which closed the operatic master's oeuvre. Berger's book is similar to the treatment he earlier applied to Richard Wagner in his " Wagner Without Fear." This means:a. Succinct but on target plot summaries of all Verdi's operas including

the Verdi Requim.b. Brief chapters on the staging of Verdi's operas; Verdi's works on CD and outstanding books on the Busseto genius for anyone wanting to know more about the King of Italian lyrical opera. Berger's work is worthwhile reading for the operatic novice or the veteran opera fan who wants to brush up on the labyrinthical plot of "Il Trovatore" or explore how Verdi's music has been used as soundtrack for motion pictures. Berger's book on Verdi is a treat for everyone enjoying opera who also relishes good writing done with wit, charm and panache! I eagerly await a similar guide on Puccini which I have learned is in the works from the pen of Berger! Highly recommended!

Great book.

I chose this because I wanted to learn more about Verdi the person. I was not disappointed, he was not as nice a person as I thought. The detail was limited but very good. Also the part on opera in Verdi's time was most interesting. The chapters on each of Verdi's operas is good goes into enough detail to make it very interesting. All in all a good choice to learn about Verdi and his music

Introducing my partner to opera. Took him to il trovatore and realized I am a horrible ambassador. Despite being a regular opera goer my whole life, I have zero proselytizing skills. This book was very helpful. Enjoyable for everyone. Engaging without being annoying. Not too long. He loved it.

As an inveterate Verdi fan, I had no idea what interest this book could hold for me. However, I found it a total delight. To be sure, I know the plots of almost all of Verdi's operas - although they are very detailed and amazingly close to the libretti. But most of all, I loved the author's copious, very appropriate and frequently extremely witty comments. I sang along with practically all of them and haven't had so much fun in a long time. Whether you are new to Verdi or a longtime worshipper of his music, do yourselves a favor and get this book. Steffi B. Rath

The author does a fantastic job sharing his love of opera. He divides his information by telling about the composer's life and then giving information about each of Verdi's works. After you learn about Verdi's life, you can pick and choose which of his works you want to learn more about.

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