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Landscape And Gender In Italian Opera: The Alpine Virgin From Bellini To Puccini (Cambridge Studies In Opera)
Synopsis

In this unusual study, Emanuele Senici explores the connection between landscape and gender in Italian opera through the emblematic figure of the Alpine virgin. In the nineteenth century, operas portraying an emphatically virginal heroine, a woman defined by her virginity, were often set in the mountains, most frequently the Alps. The clarity of the sky, the whiteness of the snow and the purity of the air were associated with the ‘innocence’ of the female protagonist. Senici discusses a number of works particularly relevant to the origins, transformations and meanings of this conventional association including Bellini’s La sonnambula (1831), Donizetti’s Linda di Chamounix (1842), Verdi’s Luisa Miller (1849), and Puccini’s La fanciulla del West (1910). This convention presents an unusual point of view - a theme rather than a composer, a librettist, a singer or a genre - from which to observe Italian opera ‘at work’ over a century.

Book Information

Series: Cambridge Studies in Opera
Paperback: 368 pages
Publisher: Cambridge University Press; 1 edition (January 29, 2009)
Language: English
ISBN-10: 0521107784
Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.8 x 9 inches
Shipping Weight: 1.4 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)
Average Customer Review: Be the first to review this item
Best Sellers Rank: #4,973,559 in Books (See Top 100 in Books)  #31 in Books > Humor & Entertainment > Sheet Music & Scores > Composers > Bellini  #148 in Books > Humor & Entertainment > Sheet Music & Scores > Composers > Puccini  #3378 in Books > Humor & Entertainment > Sheet Music & Scores > Forms & Genres > Opera

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