



## **Analyzing Opera: Verdi and Wagner (California Studies in 19th-Century Music)**

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*Analyzing Opera: Verdi and Wagner* explores the latest developments in opera analysis by considering, side by side, the works of the two greatest opera composers of the nineteenth century. Although the juxtaposition is not new, comparative studies have tended to view these masters as radically different both as musicians and as musical dramatists. Wagner and his "symphonic opera" set against Verdi "the melodist" is one of many familiar antitheses, and it serves to highlight the particular terms from which comparisons are often made. In this book some of the leading and most innovative music scholars challenge this view, suggesting that as we become more distant from the nineteenth century, we may see that Verdi and Wagner confronted largely similar problems, and even on occasion found similar solutions.

But more than this, *Analyzing Opera* sets out to demonstrate the richness and variety of modern analytical approaches to the genre. As the editors point out in their introduction, today's musical scholars increasingly question the usefulness of organicist theories in analytical studies, and, as they do so, opera seems to become an ever more central area of investigation. Opera is peculiar: its clash of verbal, musical, and visual systems can produce incongruities and extravagant miscalculations. It invites a multiplicity of approaches, challenges orthodoxy, and embraces ambiguity. The sheer variety of essays presented here is witness to this fact and suggests that analyzing opera is one of the liveliest (and most polemical) areas in modern-day musical scholarship.

In addition to the editors, the contributors to the volume are Philip Gossett, John Deathridge, James A. Hepokoski, Joseph Kerman, Thomas S. Grey, Matthew Brown, Anthony Newcomb, Martin Chusid, David Lawton, and Patrick McCreless.

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