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In Search of Opera (Paperback)

By Carolyn Abbate

Princeton University Press, United States, 2003. Paperback. Condition: New. Revised ed.. Language: English . Brand New Book. In her new book, Carolyn Abbate considers the nature of operatic performance and the acoustic images of performance present in operas from Monteverdi to Ravel. Paying tribute to music's realization by musicians and singers, she argues that operatic works are indelibly bound to the contingency of live singing, playing, and staging. She seeks a middle ground between operas as abstractions and performance as the phenomenon that brings opera into being. Weaving between opera's facts of life and a series of works including *The Magic Flute*, *Parsifal*, and *Pelleas*, Abbate explores a spectrum of attitudes towards musical performance, which range from euphoric visions of singers as creators to uncanny images of musicians as lifeless objects that have been resuscitated by scripts. In doing so, she touches upon several critical issues: the Wagner problem; coloratura, virtuosity, and their critics; the implications of disembodied voice in opera and film; mechanical music; the mortality of musical sound; and opera's predilection for scenes positing mysterious unheard music. An intersection between transcendence and intense physical grounding, she asserts, is a quintessential element of the genre, one...



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Reviews

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