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Evenings at the Opera: An Exploration of the Basic Repertoire

Jeffrey Langford

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Evenings at the Opera: An Exploration of the Basic Repertoire Jeffrey Langford (Amadeus). Evenings at the Opera: An Exploration of the Basic Repertoire is a collection of essays based on Jeffery Langford's lectures at the Manhattan School of Music and inspired by his pre-performance talks at the Metropolitan Opera Guild. It presents a unique view of the stylistic development of nearly 200 years of opera history (from Mozart to Britten), with special attention to the question of how the genre's competing components of action, music, and text combine to make effective music drama. Taking a thematic (rather than a purely historical) approach to this exploration of selected works from the standard repertoire, Langford engages the reader in the fundamental question of how the shifting aesthetics of opera from one composer to another, one country to another, and one era to another have resulted in vastly different solutions to the problem of how to make a dramma per musica (drama in music), as the Italian inventors of opera first called it. Going beyond mere plot synopsis, he guides the reader through analysis of specific issues of musical form, style, and technique to shed new light on the perennial question of "how opera (sometimes) works."

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