



On Opera

Bernard Williams

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Bernard Williams was one of the most influential moral philosophers of his generation. A life-long opera-lover, his articles and essays, talks for the BBC, contributions to the Grove Dictionary of Opera, and programme-notes for The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, and the English National Opera, generated a devoted following. This elegant volume brings together these widely scattered and largely unobtainable pieces, including two that have not been previously published. It covers an engaging range of topics from Mozart to Wagner, including sparkling essays on specific operas by those composers as well as Verdi, Puccini, Strauss, Debussy, Janacek and Tippett. Two aspects of music are of central importance to Williams: the demands of composing, performing and staging opera on the one hand, and the immediacy and power of its emotional purchase, the ability of music to move both the heart and the intellect, on the other. Reflecting Williams's brilliance, passion, and clarity of mind, these essays engage with, and illustrate, the enduring appeal of opera as an art form. Bernard Williams was Knightsbridge Professor of Philosophy, Cambridge University, Monroe Deutsch Professor of Philosophy, University of California, Berkeley, and White's Professor of Moral Philosophy, Oxford University. He was a member of the board of the English National Opera in London, and author of many articles on music.

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