



Rounding Wagner's Mountain: Richard Strauss and Modern German Opera (Cambridge Studies in Opera)

By Bryan Gilliam

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Richard Strauss' fifteen operas, which span the years 1893 to 1941, make up the largest German operatic legacy since Wagner's operas of the nineteenth century. Many of Strauss's works were based on texts by Europe's finest writers: Oscar Wilde, Hugo von Hofmannsthal and Stefan Zweig, among others, and they also overlap some of the most important and tumultuous stretches of German history, such as the founding and demise of a German empire, the rise and fall of the Weimar Republic, the period of National Socialism, and the post-war years, which saw a divided East and West Germany. In the first book to discuss all Strauss's operas, Bryan Gilliam sets each work in its historical, aesthetic, philosophical, and literary context to reveal what made the composer's legacy unique. Addressing Wagner's cultural influence upon this legacy, Gilliam also offers new insights into the thematic and harmonic features that recur in Strauss's compositions.

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Review

"... [a] fine piece of work ... beautifully written, subtle, authoritative and perceptive ... elegant and important ... [This] book is refreshingly literate, learned, economical and unerringly incisive."

Leon Botstein, President, Bard College

About the Author

Bryan Gilliam is a Bass Professor in Humanities at Duke University, North Carolina. He is the author of Richard Strauss's Elektra (1996) and The Life of Richard Strauss (Cambridge, 1999) and editor of a number of books, including Music and Performance during the Weimar Republic (Cambridge, 1994) and Music, Image, Gesture (2005). His numerous book chapters and articles include the biographical entry on Richard Strauss in The Revised New Grove Dictionary of Music. He serves on the Strauss editorial board in Munich and has given lectures in the US, Austria, Germany, and the UK.

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