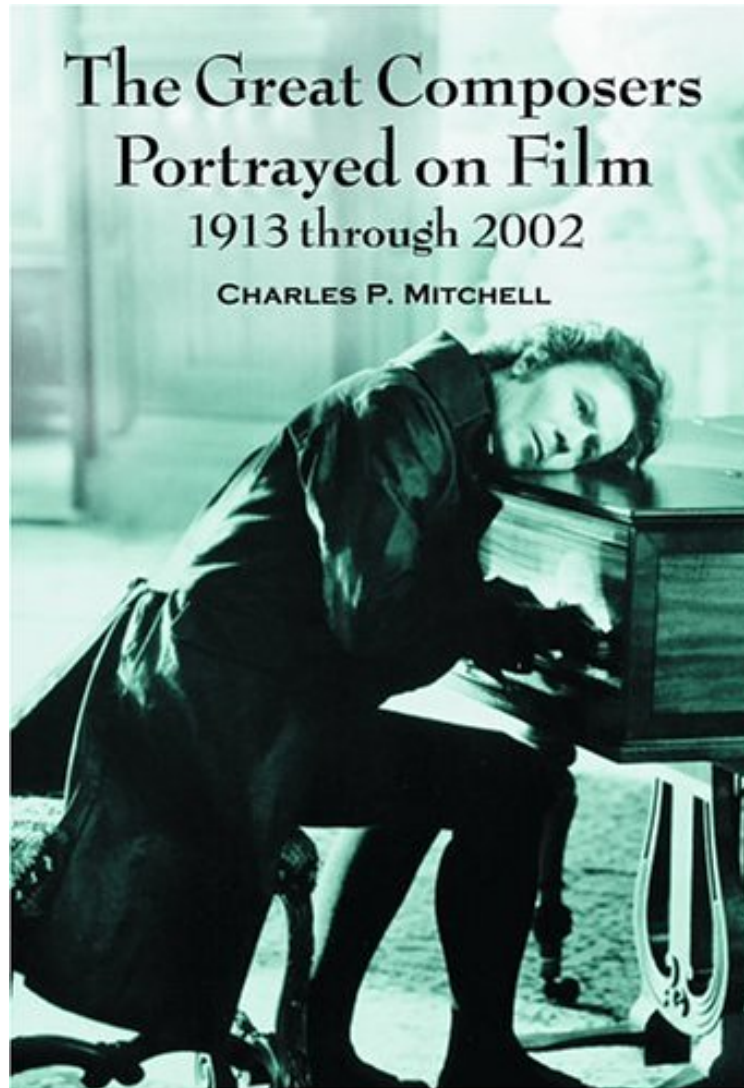


The Great Composers Portrayed on Film, 1913 Through 2002

Charles P. Mitchell

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Charles P. Mitchell : The Great Composers Portrayed on Film, 1913 Through 2002 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Great Composers Portrayed on Film, 1913 Through 2002:

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. An Extensive Review of Great (and not so great) FilmsBy Mr. DarcyThis book is a detailed review of the films of 64 composers who have been represented in biopics, TV shows and documentaries. You would be justified, but incorrect, in assuming that the contents are limited to those usually classified as "classical." This book is extensive enough to include such popular (or once popular) composers as Victor Herbert and Scott Joplin, and some surprises as Bernard Herrmann. It is particularly fine on Shostacovich,

Tchaikovsky, Wagner, Ives and Arthur Sullivan. Since the author compares the movie to the real life, this is a good place to get basic biographical facts (yes, Mozart's laugh was as annoying as Tom Hulce's). You might also assume that only biopics were included. However, for the sake of completeness, it includes not only reviews of the great films, such as Amadeus, but even of the less, such as Bill Ted's Excellent Adventure (with a cameo by Beethoven, that most excellent Bon Jovi fan.). The author includes not only the expected, but a good number of lesser known (at least in the US) films. He also gives thoughtful reviews of some pictures that didn't get much of a chance in the theatre, such as Richard Burton's Wagner. The author has viewed some terrible films so you don't have to, and found some good ones you may have missed. It is clear that, with a few exceptions, the quality of the films is in the music. In fact, these films may be the best way to find it, particularly since most of them include only the "hits." Many of the studios, writers and directors had little regard for the facts of the composers' lives. They were either too scandalous, or not scandalous enough. One defense is over the director Ken Russell, who made a large number of composer-related films, in addition to Tommy, The Music Lovers, Women in Love, The Devils, and Lisztomania. Russell, whom I consider the purple paisley leisure suit of directors, actually knew something about his subjects. So he used his odd fantasies to comment on his subjects, and they make more sense when you know the context. There is enough in this volume to start another book on Russell himself. The book also includes a section on fictional composers in film, and instructions on how to get the obscure films. Good as a textbook or for browsing.

This book intends to serve as a comprehensive filmography to biographical films featuring the lives of the great classical composers, including any figures whose music is likely to be performed in the concert hall or opera stage. A few of the 63 performances analyzed are Richard Burton as Richard Wagner, Cornel Wilde as Frederic Chopin, Gary Oldman as Ludwig van Beethoven, Tom Hulce as Mozart, and Katherine Hepburn as Clara Schumann. Arranged in alphabetical order by composer's name, each section begins with a brief evaluation of the composer and then analyzes the feature films portraying the composer. Emphasis is given to the factual accuracy of the screenplay, the validity of the portrayal, and the film's presentation of the composer's music. The work also includes full film credits and recommended documentaries about each composer. Two appendices support the text, one listing films about fictional composers and the other listing composers on series television. The work is illustrated with stills and posters and concludes with a full index.

"Extensive index...useful" --Arba "A masterwork of research and a triumph of film and music commentary. Mitchell's command of the subject covers an extraordinary spectrum. For anyone with a passion for music and movies, this book hits the right notes" --New York Resident "In-depth analyses of many movies" --Katahdin Times. About the Author Professional librarian Charles P. Mitchell, author of *The Hitler Filmography* (2002) and *The Devil on Screen* (2002), has served two terms as chairman of the Southern Maine Library District. His writings about music have appeared in *High Fidelity*, *The Listening Post*, *Goldmine*, *The Forecaster*, and *The Music Box*. He hosted radio shows about classical music in New York City and Portland, Maine.