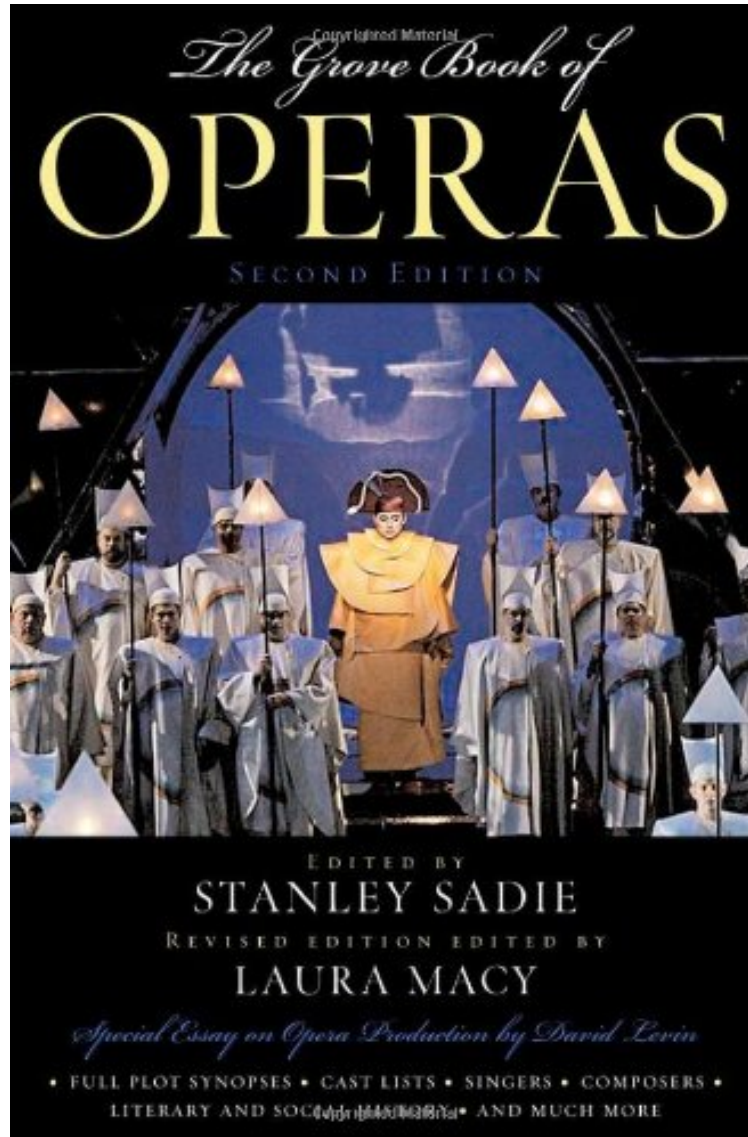


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The Grove Book of Operas

From Oxford University Press

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From Oxford University Press : The Grove Book of Operas before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Grove Book of Operas:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Great Source for Warhorse and Contemporary OperasBy Barb WGreat go-to reference work to brush up on operas I regularly go to at Michigan Opera Theatre in Detroit and the Met in HD Live at a local movie theater (shoutout to AMC Forum 30 in Sterling Heights, MI). The fact that it includes a fair number of 20th century contemporary operas makes it even more valuable. Very nice glossary and indices, too!10

of 11 people found the following review helpful. Pretty successful
By Melomane (aka A.B.)
The book distinguishes itself with the unusual inclusion of rare works (eg I DUE FOSCARI), which almost all other guides of the same size totally ignore: it isn't - as the previous reviewer claims - 'leaving out content [ie lesser-known works] that only the most committed aficionado [sic] would demand and actually use'. I just wish that the editorial board got rid of the indices: the 60 pages wasted on merely role names and excerpts could have covered many other unfamiliar operas (eg DIE AEGYPTISCHE HELENA). One slightly bothersome inconsistency is that (for some strange reason) only particular roles are mentioned in connection with their famous interpreters: eg while there are long lists of well-known performers of Parsifal, Brunnhilde, and Wotan, we're not told which singers made parts like Leonora (IL TROVATORE), Don Giovanni, and Falstaff their own. Another inconsistency is that the Introduction focuses only on contemporary production: what about the pre-modern periods? The absence of a discography isn't a disadvantage: like the indices, it is as unnecessary as the missing chronology. But the cover is depressing, so are the accompanying pictures taken from 'updated' productions. Though this is a welcome addition to any opera library, I can't part with KOBBE'S COMPLETE OPERA BOOK (Harewood and Lascelles), THE VIKING OPERA GUIDE (Holden, Kenyon, and Walsh), THE PAN BOOK OF OPERA (Jacobs and Sadie), OPERA GUIDE (Westerman), 50 FAVORITE OPERAS (England), 100 GREAT OPERAS AND THEIR STORIES (Simon), as well as THE OPERA COMPANION and THE COMPANION TO 20th-CENTURY OPERA (Martin).
1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.
Handy gift for an Opera Lover
By Gary Payton
I bought this as a Christmas gift. Person thought it was a handy book to read before going to most operas. I can't judge the book by how well it was written or how well informative it is, but based on the person who I gave it to says the book is useful to give enough information before going to a performance.

First published in 1996 to great critical and popular acclaim, the Grove Book of Operas, is a collection of synopses and descriptions of over 250 operas. Each succinct yet insightful entry is written by a leading authority on the opera and includes a full synopsis of the plot, a cast list, a note on the singers in the original production, and information on the origins of the work and its literary and social background. Contributions conclude with a brief comment on the particular work's place in operatic history. A glossary offers brief and accessible definitions of terms that may be unfamiliar to the reader. And indices of role names and of arias and ensembles allow the reader to find operas containing their favorite aria or a well-known character. The second edition brings the book up to date with several recently composed operas and a fascinating introductory essay by David Levin on opera performance in the 21st century. Recent additions to the operatic repertory included for the first time in this edition include Nicholas Maw, Sophie's Choice; Poul Ruders, A Handmaid's Tale; John Adams, Death of Klinghoffer; and Mark Adamo, Little Women. Covering all operas in the current repertory along with some less-well-known early and very modern ones, this is an ideal volume for the general opera lover.

From School Library Journal
Grade 9 Up
This definitive update of Sadie's The New Grove Book of Operas (Oxford Univ., 2003; o.p.) includes, as did the earlier edition, full-plot synopses, cast lists from premiere performances, and biographical data on composers, all alphabetically arranged by opera. Seven minor operas have been cut from this work (including Der Barbier Von Bagdad and Penelope), and eight new hopefuls have been added (among them Emmeline, The Mother of Us All, and Sophie's Choice). Otherwise, the text is, word for word, the same as the earlier edition. The illustrations have changed: new black-and-white photos are scattered throughout the text, and sections of color photographs show sets, costume designs, posters, and scenes from various productions, including some staged as late as 2005. Another change is the inclusion of David J. Levin's perceptive introduction, "Issues and Trends in Contemporary Opera Production," which discusses the pros and cons of modern staging, directing/designing innovations, the introduction of technology into the opera world, and "opera at the margins." The essay ends with a list of suggested readings supporting his opinions. An extensive glossary and three large, cross-referenced indexes complete what is, to opera fans, an indispensable companion for consultation before performances (whether live or recorded), or, for novices, a key to a specialized realm. This volume is as informative and demanding as the previous edition.
Patricia Manning, formerly at Eastchester Public Library, NY
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From Booklist
Macy reminds us in the preface that "since the first edition of this book [in 1996], opera has continued to thrive, in defiance of ongoing predictions of its imminent demise," offering a compelling reason for updating the book. Macy, successor to the late Stanley Sadie as editor in chief of Grove Music, does not attempt to include every new opera written in the last 10 years but does feature works that have, in a fairly short period of time, entered into the standard repertoire. Some examples of these new works include The Death of Klinghoffer, by John Adams; Little Women, by Mark Adamo; and Sophie's Choice, by Nicholas Maw. The other major addition is David Levin's introductory essay, "Issues and Trends in Contemporary Opera Production." In it, Levin discusses recent changes in production styles with regard to staging, costumes, sets, and directorial interpretations, with specific examples of opera directors who have pushed the interpretive envelope by presenting operas very strictly as they might have been originally performed or by creating entirely new scenarios in which to place the performers. His thoughtful essay also describes how film directors, choreographers, and visual artists have

gained acceptance as production directors, making the visual aspect of opera equal to the musical and resulting in DVDs overtaking CDs as the primary commercial consumer format. With the exception of the descriptions of recent operas, the text of the entries is lifted largely verbatim from another Grove publication, the four-volume New Grove Dictionary of Opera (1992). Each entry includes the premiere date and original cast (if known), a list of characters and voice types, brief historical information, a complete synopsis, and a few paragraphs discussing the work's reception, influence, and other critical comments. This volume is worth a look from public and academic libraries. Libraries that own the earlier four-volume Grove set already have a very comprehensive opera guide and may not find this new work essential. Steven York Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved "The Grove Book of Operas, Second Edition offers more detail for the seasoned operaphile... A versatile tool for research."--Opera News "The Grove Book of Operas, Second Edition, should be on every opera-lover's short list of indispensable reference books. Highly recommended."--Gary Hoffman, Opera Today. PRAISE FOR FIRST EDITION: "Make no mistake: This will be the definitive reference work in opera for many, many years to come."--The Chicago Tribune. PRAISE FOR FIRST EDITION: "This work will significantly affect not only the way opera is enjoyed in the future, but the way it is made."--The Washington Post. PRAISE FOR FIRST EDITION: "All inquiries into Opera begin there from now on."--The San Francisco Examiner Chronicle. PRAISE FOR FIRST EDITION: "For once the hype is right on the money... This may well be the best English-language opera reference available."--.com