

## P R E F A C E

THE bulk of the present work was finished before the war broke out. For various reasons publication was delayed till now. In the meanwhile the manuscript has undergone considerable alterations and additions, and while the annals nominally close with the year 1940, references to still more recent revivals and publications have been included when of sufficient importance.

The book is intended to be a skeleton history of opera, in dates and other facts. It is therefore arranged chronologically, but by means of the copious indexes it can also be used as a dictionary of operas. There are no descriptions of plots, no musical analyses, no personal critical comments. The facts are to speak for themselves, and every care has been taken to verify them so that they may serve as a safe ground on which to build a real history of opera, yet to be written. The selection of some three or four thousand operas out of a total number of—I dare not offer a guess, was also chiefly guided by objective historical principles. Of older operas, preferably such have been chosen as are still extant in one form or another; of more recent works, those have been selected that have obtained success or attracted attention outside their countries of origin. Even so, the number of entries could easily have been doubled; but the book had to be kept within reasonable limits.

The term 'opera' is used here in its widest possible sense, covering both 'grand opera' (as it is sometimes called), that is, opera with recitatives, and opera with spoken dialogue. Confining it to the former would result in omitting works like *The Magic Flute* and *Carmen*. Moreover, there are included examples of offshoots like the Italian intermezzo, the English ballad opera, the French vaudeville, the German 'melodrama'; the pasticcio in its various types; border cases like Dassoucy's *Andromède*, Weber's *Preciosa* and Stravinsky's *Histoire du Soldat*; the modern operetta in different countries. Not included are plays with incidental music even by famous composers (such as *Egmont* or *Peer Gynt*), nor oratorios, cantatas, etc., unless they were at a later date presented in operatic form, such as Liszt's *St. Elizabeth* and Debussy's *L'Enfant Prodigue*.

It is stated on the titlepage that the book was 'compiled from the original sources.' That is to say, I did not rely upon second or third hand information. Whenever possible the dates and other particulars were collected from the original scores and librettos, from play-bills, contemporary newspapers and periodicals; next there came memoirs, letters and diaries, and the various bibliographical works, catalogues, and theatrical chronologies. For the more recent years, and for countries newspapers of which are not easily available, official publications of the opera-houses, and lists provided for the purpose by the authorities proved a great help. Here a certain inequality was unavoidable;

while I received from some towns, as for instance, Zagreb or Helsinki, all the information I required, it was in other cases impossible even to get an answer, as for instance from Bucharest.

A few explanations of the methods employed in the arrangement of the book may find their appropriate place here. The entries are given in the chronological order of their first performances. This implies that only such operas are recorded as were actually produced on the (public or private) stage, a rule which has been broken once or twice in exceptional cases (see for instance col. 297). The year of performance is always repeated at the top of the page, in order to simplify the task of finding a particular opera. Whenever possible, the exact day and month of the first performance are given. Where the day could not be established, the month or the season is indicated. Operas of which only the year of production is known are placed in the middle of that year. Of all the operas mentioned in these annals, John Blow's *Venus and Adonis* appears to be the only one of which even the year is uncertain; it has been tentatively inserted under 1684 for reasons which are explained in the entry. Dates in [ ] brackets are approximate, in most cases taken from dedications or licences in the librettos.

The beginning of opera almost coincides with the introduction of the modern calendar, Gregorian style, in all Roman Catholic countries. The non-Catholic parts of Germany followed suit in 1700, other countries even later. All dates are given here according to one and the same system, viz. the Gregorian style. In this respect a word must be said about England and Russia, disregarding some cases of minor importance.

In England the change of calendar took place in 1752. Wednesday, 2 September of that year was followed by Thursday, 14 September. So the dates given in this book of performances in England before September 1752 will be found to differ from those quoted, for instance, by Burney, by 11 days in the 18th century, by 10 days in the 17th. I should have liked to retain the familiar Burney dates, but in an international chronology they had to be sacrificed for the sake of conformity. Boyce's *The Chaplet* was first produced, according to the original play-bill, on Saturday, 2 December 1749, which was Saturday, 13 December in most of the rest of Europe. Obviously it could not be placed in front of Rameau's *Zoroastre* (see col. 211), which actually was performed eight days before and not three days after *The Chaplet*.

The same applies to Russia, where the Gregorian calendar was not introduced until 1917. All the dates of operatic performances in Russia are here given according to Western style, which is ahead of Russian style by 11 days in the 18th, 12 days in the 19th and 13 days in the 20th century. In some very few cases, where it could not be ascertained whether a date quoted from a review meant Russian or Western style, the figures are given in italics.

In each entry the date is followed by the name of the composer and the title of the opera. Fuller details about the composers will be found in index II. The name is printed within round brackets when the performance of the opera took place after the composer's death; within square brackets when he was the compiler or *arrangeur* rather than the real composer (see for instance col. 159).

The titles of the operas are given in the form in which they first appeared on the play-bills or in the librettos, even if this form is unfamiliar (see for instance col. 448). It is also given in the original language, that is, the language in which the opera was first performed. It was thought unnecessary to translate Italian, French and German titles. To all other non-English titles a translation has been added unless the title is a proper name. Russian titles appear in the original characters, in an English transliteration, and in translation. In transliterating Russian names and titles the rules of the British Museum Catalogue have been followed with some slight deviations.

Next comes the name of the town in which the opera was first performed, with the name of the theatre if the town was an important operatic centre (see list of abbreviations, p. xv). Some towns had different names at different periods, and sometimes both names had to be used. Obviously performances in 18th century Russia cannot be stated to have taken place at Leningrad.

The notes appended to the heading begin in each case with the name of the author or librettist, and the literary source, if any, from which the libretto was derived. No effort has been spared to bring some light into this unexplored province of literature, and the authorship of not a few librettos is established here for the first time. Even more obscure is the bibliography of translations and adaptations, and this is the first attempt to collect systematically the widely scattered material. In general the results were rather surprising, although I confined myself to what may be called independent translations, that is, such as were used for performances in a foreign language or were issued as distinct publications. Only in exceptional cases have I mentioned translations which were printed opposite the original text (for use by the audience in the theatre) when the opera was produced in the original language in a foreign country.

Concerning later revivals, the principles I followed were roughly these: the older operas, of the 17th and the greater part of the 18th century, are recorded as fully as possible. In the 19th century this proved to be tiresome and un-instructive. The operas of Donizetti, Bellini and Verdi were performed in hundreds of Italian towns every year throughout the century and there would have been no point in enumerating all those productions. In some cases, such as *Freischütz*, *Tristan*, *Otello* full records are given up to a certain date. Generally only the first performances in other countries are indicated. By 'countries' I mean cultural rather than political units; islands, for instance, are treated as separate countries, and bi-cultural and bilingual towns like Nice, Trieste,

Strasbourg, Prague have received special attention. It goes without saying that the European boundaries referred to in remarks such as 'for the first time in Czechoslovakia' are those which were in force before the second world war.

Thus the notes, which range from a few lines to several pages, will be found to contain much information about the later history of a particular opera. It was manifestly impracticable to give the authority for every single date of the many thousands assembled here. Originally it was intended to add a complete bibliography of the books and other sources consulted. This plan had to be abandoned. Many of the more important sources, however, are quoted in the text.

There remains to me the pleasant duty of gratefully acknowledging the valuable help I received from many quarters. In the first place my thanks are due to Mr. Richard Capell who, in the *Daily Telegraph* of 15 October 1938, took the unusual course of reviewing the manuscript of the present book. I have to thank Mr. Otto Haas, London, for his constant advice and interest, and for putting at my disposal his rich stock of music and books on music. I am very much indebted to the authorities and the staff of the British Museum, especially to Mr. William C. Smith and to Mr. Cecil B. Oldman; to Mr. Rupert Erlebach, librarian of the Royal College of Music; to the librarians of the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal and of the Bibliothèque Musicale de l'Opéra, Paris, of the Bibliothèque du Conservatoire, Brussels, and of the Gemeente Museum (Scheurleer collection), The Hague. For giving me access to books and other sources not elsewhere available I have to thank Mr. Paul Hirsch, Cambridge, and Mr. Michael D. Calvocoressi, London. I am very much obliged to Professor Otto Erich Deutsch, Cambridge, for letting me use his manuscript *Repertory of the Imperial Theatres of Vienna*, and for many valuable suggestions.

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ALFRED LOEWENBERG

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The late Alfred Loewenberg left an interleaved and heavily annotated copy of his *Annals*; this has served as the basis of the present revised edition. Some alterations and fairly numerous corrections have been made, and many new dates and other facts added from the author's notes. Further corrections from other sources have been accepted and incorporated, but essentially the *Annals* remain Loewenberg's work, presented here as far as possible in his own revision. No attempt has been made to carry the records beyond 1940.

Thanks are due to Mr. Theodore Besterman, whose initiative made possible the publication of the second edition, to Mr. Frank Walker, who generously undertook the laborious task of revising and editing the manuscript of the second edition (1955), and to Mr. Harold Rosenthal, for revising and for the additional material he furnished for the present edition.