



The Sorcerer of Bayreuth: Richard Wagner, his Work and his World

Barry Millington

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Richard Wagner (1813-1883) is one of the most influential - and also one of the most controversial - composers in the history of music. Over the course of his long career, he produced a stream of spellbinding works that challenged musical convention through their richness and tonal experimentation, ultimately paving the way for modernism. This book presents an in-depth but easy-to-read overview of Wagner's life, work and times. It considers a wide range of themes, including the composer's original sources of inspiration; his fetish for exotic silks; his relationship with his wife, Cosima, and with his mistress, Mathilde Wesendonck; the anti-semitism that is undeniably present in the operas; their proto-cinematic nature; and the turbulent legacy both of the Bayreuth Festival and of Wagnerism itself.

Making use of the very latest scholarship - much of it undertaken by the author himself in connection with his editorship of *The Wagner Journal* - Millington reassesses received notions about Wagner and his work, demolishing ill-informed opinion in favour of proper critical understanding. It is a radical - and occasionally controversial - reappraisal of this most perplexing of composers. The volume's arrangement - unique among books on the composer - combines an accessible text, intriguing images and original documents, thus ensuring a consistently fresh approach. Bringing new insights to an endlessly fascinating subject, *The Sorcerer of Bayreuth* will charm anyone interested in music and in the wider cultural life of the 19th century and beyond.

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