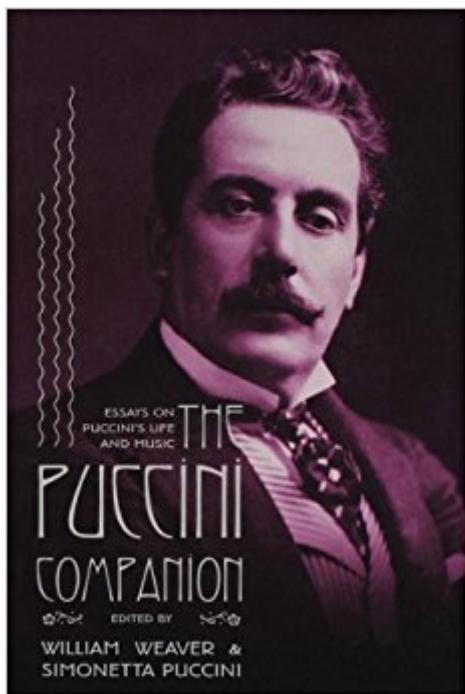


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# The Puccini Companion



## Synopsis

This informative volume offers 27 photographs and drawings, select bibliographies, a chronology of Puccini's life and works, a *dramatis personae* of the countless individuals who played a role in Puccini's career, a list of first performances, and plot summaries of all the operas. What forces helped shape the output of this high-living, often arrogant, but immensely talented composer? This fascinating collection includes Simonetta Puccini's essay full of intimate details about her family, as well as writings by experts on the racist politics behind the creation of *Madama Butterfly*; Puccini's fascination with American culture as exemplified in *Fanciulla del West*; his grappling with twentieth-century musical practices in *Trittico* and *Turandot*; and the changes that early recording technology sparked in turn-of-the-century operatic performance style.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Weaver, noted translator and music writer, and Puccini, granddaughter of Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924) and editor of two volumes of his letters, here present a wide-ranging collection of essays by music historians, critics and scholars who delve into various aspects of the composer's life and work. The high level of scholarship and readability of these pieces distinguish this volume, replete with insights into Puccini's musical development, his working methods, the evolution of his operatic characters and his relationships with his collaborators. Among the contributors are Harvey Sachs, who describes the composer's long friendship with the conductor Arturo Toscanini; Arthur Groos, who examines the genesis of *Madame Butterfly* and shows how Puccini and his librettists

differed over the complex character of Pinkerton; and Mary Jane Phillips-Matz, who explores Puccini's representation of American frontier life in *La fanciulla del West*. Annotated bibliographies, a chronology of Puccini's life, a *dramatis personae* of the people who were important throughout his career, and an appendix with plot summaries enhance the book. Photos not seen by PW. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Puccini's operas are staples of the repertoire, regularly performed to an addicted public that, even after nearly 100 years, still clamors for *La Bohème*, *Tosca*, *Turandot*, and *Madama Butterfly*. To that audience, this companion will be most welcome. It's a lively collection of articles by an assortment of top musicologists, music critics, and opera lovers whose coverage ranges from Puccini's early efforts at a symphonic style to the modernist implications of his final opus, the aforementioned *Turandot*. All the essays are thoroughgoing yet unpedantic, and together they manage to cover some aspect of each of his operas as well as several other topics, including his family background and general biography, his musical education, and the early manners of performing of his works. The editors conclude the volume with useful bibliographies, chronologies, plot summaries of individual works, and a directory of people involved with Puccini. Since many first come to classical music through a performance of a Puccini opera, this book might be of value to almost any library. John Shreffler --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

The Companion is a collection of generally fascinating and tremendously informative essays about various aspects of the development of each of Puccini's operas by scholars who write in an accessible manner. The composer's granddaughter is one of the editors. No effort is spared to shed clear light on the often confusing genesis of a beloved body of work often subjected by its composer to endless revisions. Puccini was a complex, sometimes deeply conflicted man and this book helps unravel the confusing but always interesting story of how his operas came to be.

Excellent and informative. I am interested in Toscanini's relationship with Puccini. I found this book most revealing and helpful. I was fascinated by their character opposites.

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