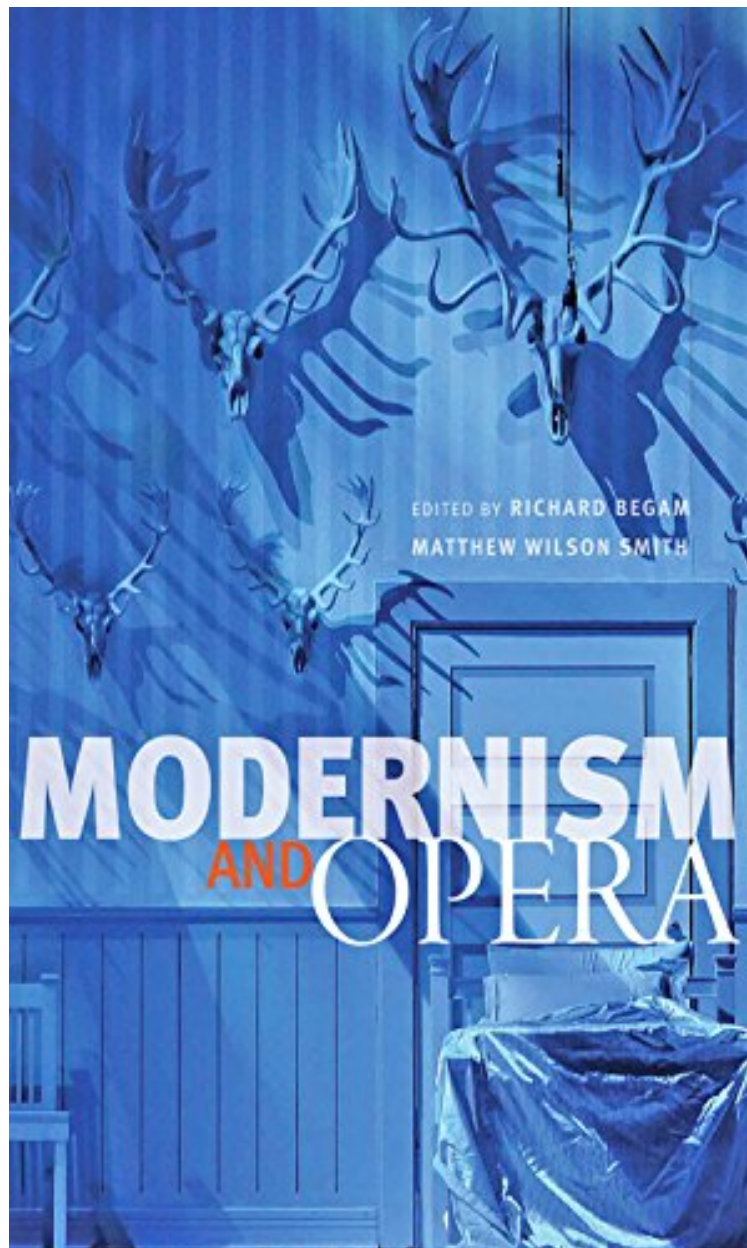


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## Modernism and Opera (Hopkins Studies in Modernism)

*Richard Begam, Matthew Wilson Smith*

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**Richard Begam, Matthew Wilson Smith : Modernism and Opera (Hopkins Studies in Modernism)** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Modernism and Opera (Hopkins Studies in Modernism):

At first glance, modernism and opera may seem like strange bedfellows—the former hostile to sentiment, the latter wearing its heart on its sleeve. And yet these apparent opposites attract: many operas are aesthetically avant-garde, politically subversive, and socially transgressive. From the proto-modernist strains of Richard Wagner's Parsifal through the twenty-first-century modernism of Kaija Saariaho's *L'amour de loin*, the duet between modernism and opera, at turns harmonious and dissonant, has been one of the central artistic events of modernity. Despite this centrality, scholars of modernist literature only rarely venture into opera, and music scholars generally return the favor by leaving literature to one side. But opera, that grand cauldron of the arts, demands that scholars, too, share the stage with one another. In *Modernism and Opera*, Richard Begam and Matthew Wilson Smith bring together musicologists, literary critics, and theater scholars for the first time in a mutual endeavor to trace certain key moments in the history of modernism and opera. This innovative volume includes essays from some of the most notable scholars in their fields and covers works as diverse as Debussy's *Pelleas et Melisande*, Bartók's *Bluebeard's Castle*, Berg's *Wozzeck*, Janáček's *Makropulos Case*, Thomson's *Four Saints in Three Acts*, Strauss's *Arabella*, Schoenberg's *Moses und Aron*, Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress*, Britten's *Gloriana*, and Messiaen's *Saint Francis in Assisi*. A collaborative study of the ultimate collaborative art form, *Modernism and Opera* reveals how modernism and opera illuminate each other and, more generally, the culture of the twentieth century. It also addresses a number of issues crucial for understanding the relation between modernism and opera, focusing in particular on intermediality (how modernism integrates music, literature, and drama into opera) and anti-theatricality (how opera responds to modernism's apparent antipathy to theatricality). This captivating book—the first of its kind—will appeal to scholars of literature, music, theater, and modernity as well as to sophisticated opera lovers everywhere.

"A monumental undertaking that has been assembled with exquisite care. This collection coheres beautifully and reveals new aspects of the connection between opera and modernism. Utterly stimulating." (Adrian Daub, Stanford University, author of *Tristan's Shadow: Sexuality and the Total Work of Art after Wagner*) "Opera—the endlessly "dying" form—and modernism—the endlessly emerging shape of things to come: Richard Begam and Matthew Wilson Smith bring us up to date with rich and ambitious readings of works from Wagner to Saariaho, demonstrating that if modernism is a storm, opera may be its ear." (William Germano, Cooper Union, author of *The Tales of Hoffmann*) "Modernism and Opera is a book that had to be written. Its brilliant chapters about music-theater works from Wagner to Saariaho illuminate how opera's extravagance, theatricality, and intermediality are the often overlooked foundations and companions to our received ideas about Modernist art, collaboration, and style." (Scott W. Klein, Wake Forest University) "This is a fantastic volume, brimming with nuanced reformulations of operatic modernisms. The quality of the essays never wavers. A must-read for those interested not only in the links between modernism and music but also in the very notion of interdisciplinarity, which here is given a new lease of life." (Nathan Waddell, University of Nottingham) "The often-vexed societal reception of modernism and opera is foreboding testimony to the necessity for this book, which is the first collection of its kind... Essential." (Choice) About the Author Richard Begam is a professor of English at the University of Wisconsin—Madison. He is the author of *Samuel Beckett and the End of Modernity* and the coeditor of *Modernism and Colonialism: British and Irish Literature, 1899–1939*. Matthew Wilson Smith is an associate professor of German studies and theater and performance studies at Stanford University. He is the author of *The Total Work of Art: From Bayreuth to Cyberspace* and the editor of *Georg Büchner: The Major Works*.