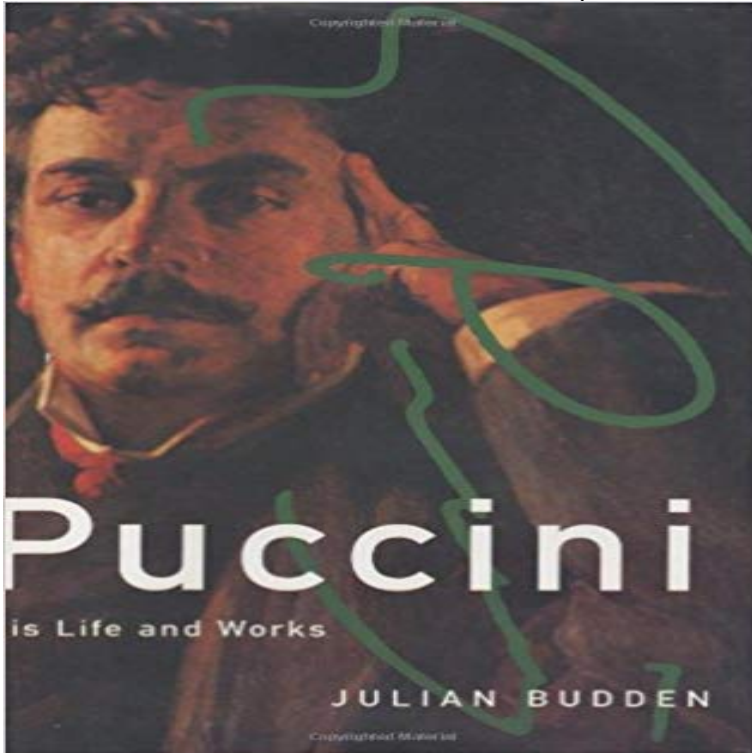


Puccini: His Life and Works (Master Musicians Series)



Julian Budden, one of the worlds foremost scholars of Italian opera and author of a monumental three-volume study of Verdis works, now offers music lovers a major new biography of one of the giants of Italian opera, Giacomo Puccini.

Blending astute musical analysis with a colorful account of Puccinis life, here is an illuminating look at some of the most popular operas in the repertoire, including Manon Lescaut, La Boheme, Tosca, Madama Butterfly, and Turandot. Budden provides an illuminating look at the process of putting an opera together, the cut-and-slash of nineteenth-century Italian opera--the struggle to find the right performers for the debut of La Boheme, Puccinis anxiety about completing Turandot (he in fact died of cancer before he did so), his animosity toward his rival Leoncavallo (whom he called Leonasino or lion-ass). Budden provides an informative analysis of the operas themselves, examining the music act by act. He highlights, among other things, the influence of Wagner on Puccini--alone among his Italian contemporaries, Puccini followed Wagners example in bringing the motif into the forefront of his narrative, sometimes voicing the singers unexpressed thoughts, sometimes sending out a signal to the audience of which the character is unaware. And Budden also paints an intriguing portrait of Puccini the man--talented but modest, a man who had friends from every walk of life: shopkeepers, priests, wealthy landowners, fellow artists. Affable, well mannered, gifted with a broad sense of fun, he rarely failed to charm all who met him. A new volume in the esteemed Master Musicians series, Puccini offers a masterful portrait of this beloved Italian composer.

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