



# Opera and Modern Spectatorship in Late Nineteenth-Century Italy (Cambridge Studies in Opera)

*Alessandra Campana*

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## **Opera and Modern Spectatorship in Late Nineteenth-Century Italy (Cambridge Studies in Opera)**

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At the turn of the twentieth century Italian opera participated to the making of a modern spectator. The Ricordi stage manuals testify to the need to harness the effects of operatic performance, activating opera's capacity to cultivate a public. This book considers how four operas and one film deal with their public: one that in Boito's *Mefistofele* is entertained by special effects, or that in Verdi's *Simon Boccanegra* is called upon as a political body to confront the specters of history. Also a public that in Verdi's *Otello* is subjected to the manipulation of contemporary acting, or one that in Puccini's *Manon Lescaut* is urged to question the mechanism of spectatorship. Lastly, the silent film *Rapsodia satanica*, thanks to the craft and prestige of Pietro Mascagni's score, attempts to transform the new industrial medium into art, addressing its public's search for a bourgeois pan-European cultural identity, right at the outset of WWI.

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