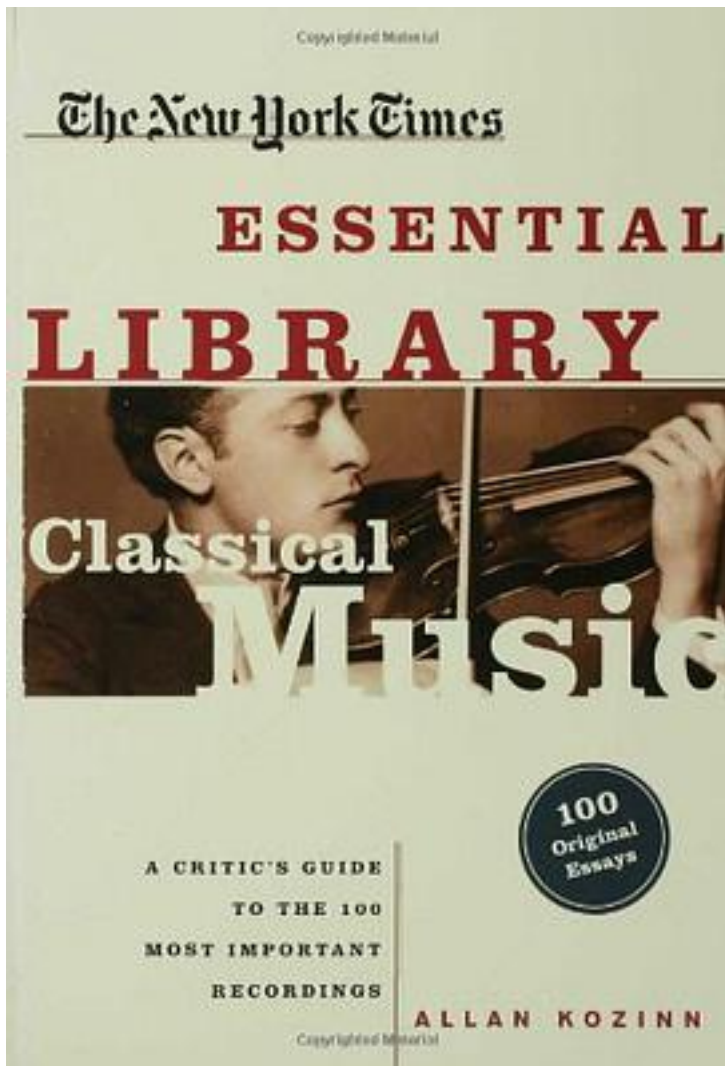


The New York Times Essential Library



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Opera intertwines the drama of the theater with the powerful emotionality of music. In this magical and illuminating guide to the best opera recordings, Anthony Tommasini delves into the ways story and music interweave to create the subtle but telling moments that move us. Tommasini brings to life the rich history of opera performance and the singers and conductors who, over the past century, have come to own the music. He chooses masterworks, such as Arturo Toscanini's *La Bohème*, captured for posterity fifty years after he conducted the opera's 1896 premiere for Puccini, and Leontyne Price's *Leonora* in *Il Trovatore*, an encapsulation of the ideal Verdi soprano. For aficionados and newcomers alike, Tommasini is the perfect guide to the passions and playfulness of the opera.

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