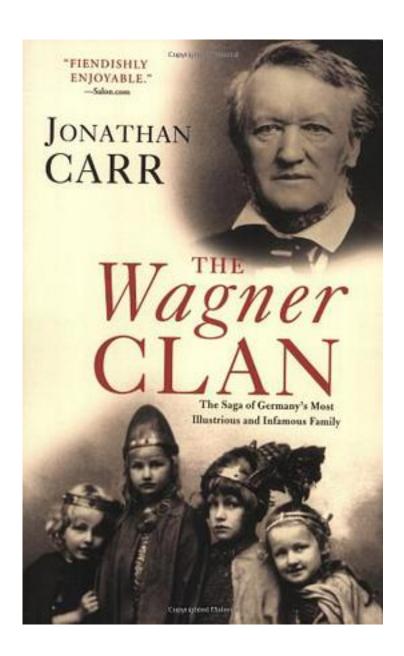
The Wagner Clan



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An Economist Best Book of 2007, Jonathan Carr's The Wagner Clan proves, with the sweeping scope of a Wagnerian opera, that the history of Europe and that of the infamous composer's family are inextricably intertwined. Carr presents not only Richard Wagner himself—musician, philosopher, philanderer, failed revolutionary, and virulent anti-Semite—but also a colorful cast of historical figures who feature in Wagner's story: Franz Liszt (whose illegitimate daughter Cosima married Wagner); Friedrich Nietzsche; Arthur Schopenhauer; Richard Strauss; Gustav Mahler; Arturo Toscanini; Joseph Goebbels; Hermann Göring; and the "Wolf" himself, Adolf Hitler, a passionate fan of the Master's music and an adopted uncle to Wagner's grandchildren. Wagner's British-born daughter-in-law, Winifred, was a close friend of Hitler's and seemed momentarily positioned to marry him after the death of her husband. All through the war the Bayreuth Festival, begun by the Master himself, was supported by Hitler, who had to fill the audience with fighting men and SS officers. After the war's devastation, the festival was dark for a decade until Wagner's offspring—with characteristic ambition and cunning—revived it. The Wagner Clan is a riveting chronicle of the ascent, decline, and rehabilitation of the German nation and its most infamous family.

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