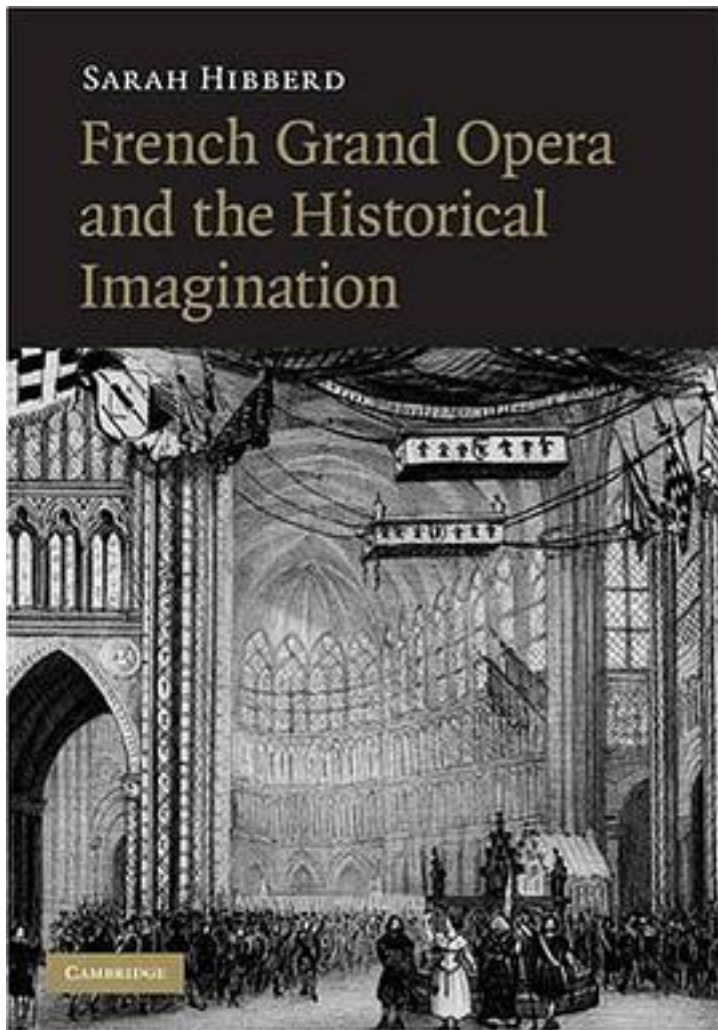


French Grand Opera and the Historical Imagination



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During the July Monarchy, French grand operas, with their plots drawn from historical events, tended to be received as metaphors for current political themes. Previous studies have usually underestimated the role of music and the visual dimensions in articulating an alternative message to that offered by the libretto, and have instead focused on single political interpretations. In this study, five operas - Auber's *La Muette de Portici* and *Gustave III*, Niedermeyer's *Stradella*, Halevy's *Charles VI* and Meyerbeer's *Le Prophete* - illustrate the complex, contested nature of political meaning during this period. By setting these operas in the context of the emerging liberal historiography pioneered by Jules Michelet, and analysing the manner in which audiences and critics constructed 'meanings' with reference to their personal and collective experience and memories, this study reveals the central position that grand opera occupied in the period, bringing the past alive.

作者介绍:

目录:

[French Grand Opera and the Historical Imagination_ 下载链接1](#)

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