

Richard Fawkes

The History of Opera

Read by **Robert Powell**

Opera, said Molière, is the most expensive noise known to man. From its beginnings in the 16th century, through to today when there are as many musical styles as there are composers, opera has fascinated, infuriated, delighted, been censored, been banned, excited riots, even won a nation its freedom. Here is the colourful story of sometimes temperamental composers and even more temperamental singers working in an art form which has produced some of man's noblest artistic creations.

This absorbing history is illustrated by over 100 musical examples by Naxos artistes as well as some of the greatest singers of the 20th century including Enrico Caruso and Fyodor Chaliapin.



Robert Powell's portrayal of Jesus in Franco Zeffirelli's *Jesus of Nazareth* won him four major international awards and a BAFTA nomination. His other film credits include the vivid characterisation of *Mahler* in Ken Russell's film of the composer, *Harlequin, Imperative, Tommy*, and *The Thirty-Nine Steps*. His TV credits include the comedy series *The Detectives* and his extensive theatre credits include *Hamlet*, *Travesties* and *Sherlock Holmes – The Musical*. He also reads *The History of Classical Music* for Naxos AudioBooks.

"Everyone, except season ticket holders at the Royal Opera House, will find unexpected notes here."

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