



Haydn's Jews: Representation and Reception on the Operatic Stage

Caryl Clark

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This fascinating study of ethnic theatrical representation provides original perspectives on the cultural milieu, compositional strategies and operatic legacy of Joseph Haydn. The portrayal of Jews changed markedly during the composer's lifetime. Before the Enlightenment, when Jews were treated as a people apart, physical infirmities and other markers of 'difference' were frequently caricatured on the comedic stage. However, when society began to debate the 'Jewish Question' - understood in the later eighteenth century as how best to integrate Jews into society as productive citizens - theatrical representations became more sympathetic. As Caryl Clark describes, Haydn had many opportunities to observe Jews in his working environments in Vienna and Eisenstadt, and incorporated Jewish stereotypes in two early works. An understanding of Haydn's evolving approach to ethnic representation on the stage provides deeper insight into the composer's iconic wit and humanity, and to the development of opera as a cultural art form across the centuries.



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