



Composers in the Movies: Studies in Musical Biography

Professor John C. Tibbetts

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Amadeus . . . Yankee Doodle Dandy . . . Swanee River . . . Rhapsody in Blue. Even before movies had sound, filmmakers dramatized the lives of composers. Movie biographies—or biopics—have depicted composers as diverse as Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, George M. Cohan, Stephen Foster, and George Gershwin. In this enticing book, the first devoted entirely to such films, John C. Tibbetts surveys different styles and periods from the Hollywood of the 1920s and 1930s to the international cinema of today, exploring the role that film biographies play in our understanding of history and culture.

Tibbetts delves into such questions as: How historically accurate are composer biopics? How and why have inaccuracies and distortions been perpetrated? What strategies have been used to represent visually the creative process? The book examines the films in several contexts and considers their role in commodifying and popularizing music. Extensive archival research, dozens of illustrations, and numerous interviews make this an appealing book for film and music enthusiasts at all levels.

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