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Robert Ward's The Crucible: Creating an American Musical Nationalism

By Robert Paul Kolt



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Robert Ward's The Crucible: Creating an American Musical Nationalism

By Robert Paul Kolt

In Robert Ward's *The Crucible: Creating an American Musical Nationalism*, Robert Paul Kolt explores the life of the American composer Robert Ward through an examination of his most popular and enduring work, *The Crucible*. Focusing on the musical-linguistic relationships within the opera, Kolt demonstrates Ward's unique synthesis of text and music, one that lends itself to the perception of American musical nationalism. This book contains the most thorough and in-depth biography of Ward yet in print. Based on interviews with the composer, Kolt presents new information about Ward's life and career, focusing on his opera and examining the formation and construction of *The Crucible*'s libretto and score, in turn offering new insights into the process of composing an opera. Kolt observes how the libretto's linguistic aspects helped Ward formulate the opera's melodic and rhythmic musical material. A detailed and unique analysis of the opera, particularly the musical and linguistic techniques Ward employed, demonstrates how these techniques lend themselves to the opera's reception as a work of American musical nationalism. The book also provides yet unpublished information on Arthur Miller's play, examining how it came to be written and soon after became the basis for Ward's work. Several appendixes provide a fuller picture, including a deleted scene from Miller's play and Ward's version of the scene, a chronological overview of the Salem Witchcraft Trials, and illustrations and photo reproductions from Ward's manuscript.



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Editorial Review

Review

Robert Kolt has faithfully revealed the complicated process of distilling a satisfactory libretto and musical score from a powerful drama in this account and analysis of Bernard Stambler's and my collaboration with Arthur Miller in our opera based on *The Crucible*. (Robert Ward)

About the Author

Robert Paul Kolt is Associate Professor and Head of Musicology at Indiana University South Bend.

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