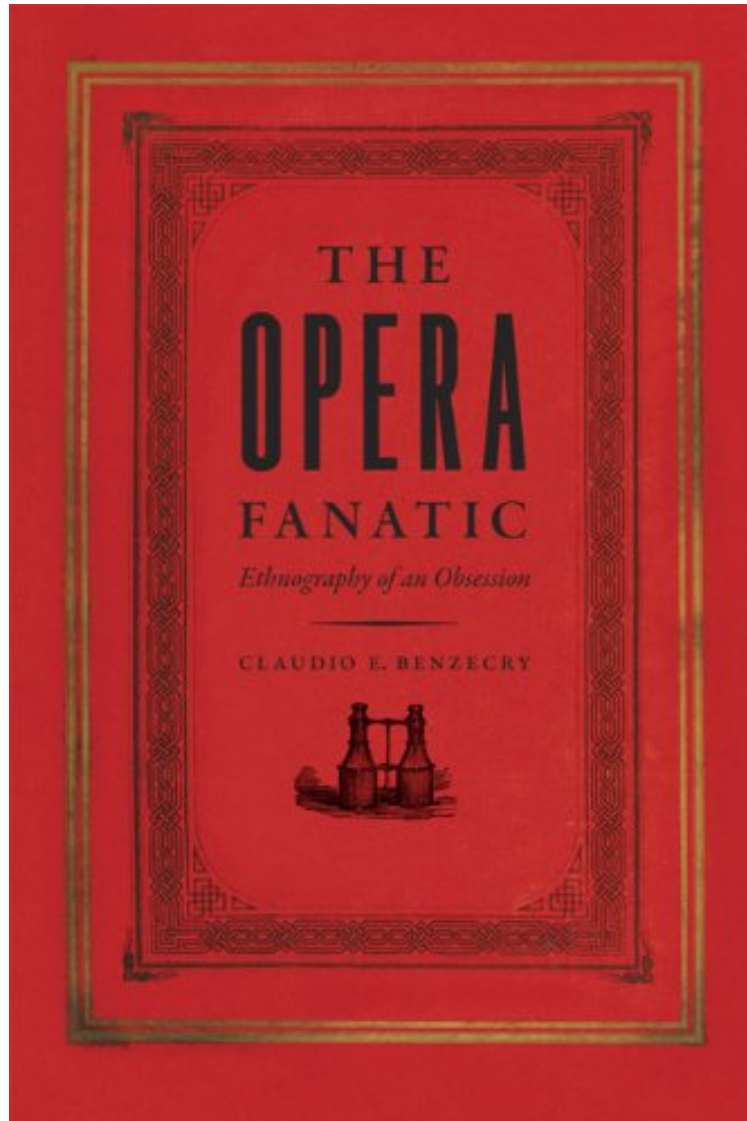


(Download) The Opera Fanatic: Ethnography of an Obsession

## The Opera Fanatic: Ethnography of an Obsession

*Claudio E. Benzecry*

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**Claudio E. Benzecry : The Opera Fanatic: Ethnography of an Obsession** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Opera Fanatic: Ethnography of an Obsession:

15 of 15 people found the following review helpful. Excellent Ethnography of FandomBy DunamisThe point of Benzecry's book is not to simply talk about opera fanatics or give examples of them. Instead, Benzecry explains opera fandom. His astute ethnography, which emerges from years of field work in the Colon Opera House, explains to the reader how and why opera, slated as a 'dying' art, has continued to generate a fan base. He does this not by cataloging 'great operas', but rather, for example, by showing 1) how the social disposition of fandom is cultivated and supported, particularly as "passion" in the upper decks of the opera house and 2) the relationship of the social history of opera in

Buenos Aires to the cultivation of this disposition. In this sense, there is not a more thorough EXPLANATION and INTERPRETATION of opera fandom. Anyone interested in any form of fandom would benefit from Benzecry's perceptive and intellectually rigorous analysis.<sup>7</sup> of 7 people found the following review helpful. Bravo!By Amy G DalaDr. Benzecry's thoughtful ethnography of opera fans in Buenos Aires is detailed, rich, and thought provoking. As I read about entranced listeners who cast aside other sources of self-worth and personal values to rush headlong into the arias and wonder of the opera, I felt that I was right there, along with them at the Colon, witnessing Rigoletto. We learn about everything from the seating arrangements to the political strikes that swirl around the field. Reading this book brings you closer to understanding opera, yes, but it also brings you to the heart of seemingly irrational love to get a sense for other forms of fandom as well. The book mentions the big stars and figures, but Benzecry speaks of the people in the upper decks as well: Luis, Irma, and Franco. Maria Callas and the big names are there, but it's the experiences and feelings of Luis, Irma, and Franco that gives *The Opera Fanatic* its heft. Bravo.<sup>13</sup> of 13 people found the following review helpful. BrilliantBy O'SheerA unique dissection of the love, the passion, fans feel for opera. Carefully researched, superbly argued, beautifully written ... who could ask for more?

Though some dismiss opera as old-fashioned, it shows no sign of disappearing from the world's stage. So why do audiences continue to flock to it? Given its association with wealth, one might imagine that opera tickets function as a status symbol. But while a desire to hobnob with the upper crust might motivate the occasional operagoer, for hardcore fans the real answer, according to *The Opera Fanatic*, is passion—they do it for love. Opera lovers are an intense lot, Claudio E. Benzecry discovers in his look at the fanatics who haunt the legendary Colón Opera House in Buenos Aires, a key site for opera's globalization. Listening to the fans and their stories, Benzecry hears of two-hundred-mile trips for performances and nightlong camp-outs for tickets, while others testify to a particular opera's power to move them—whether to song or to tears—no matter how many times they have seen it before. Drawing on his insightful analysis of these acts of love, Benzecry proposes new ways of thinking about people's relationship to art and shows how, far from merely enhancing aspects of everyday life, art allows us to transcend it.

Winner of the Mary Douglas Prize for Best Book in the Sociology of Culture, given by ASA, 2012.