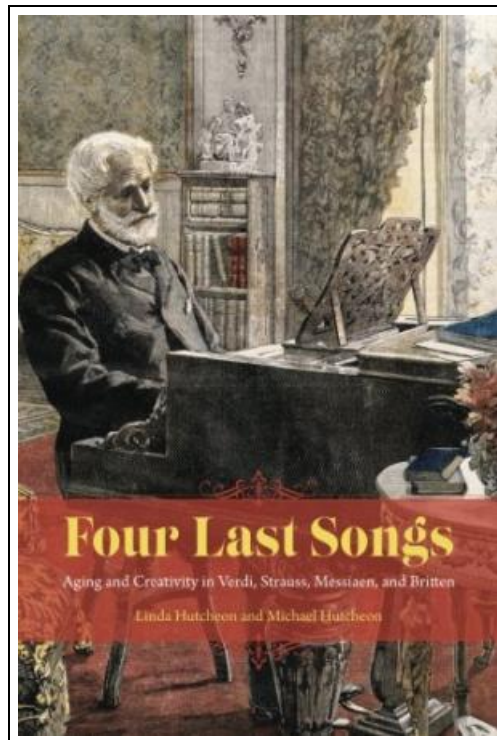


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FOUR LAST SONGS: AGING AND CREATIVITY IN VERDI, STRAUSS, MESSIAEN, AND BRITTEN (PAPERBACK)



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The University of Chicago Press, United States, 2016. Paperback. Condition: New. Reprint. Language: English . Brand New Book. Aging and creativity can seem a particularly fraught relationship for artists, who often face age-related difficulties as their audience's expectations are at a peak. In *Four Last Songs*, Linda and Michael Hutcheon explore this issue via the late works of some of the world's greatest composers. Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901), Richard Strauss (1864-1949), Olivier Messiaen (1908-92), and Benjamin Britten (1913-76) all wrote operas late in life, pieces that reveal unique responses to the challenges of growing older. Verdi's *Falstaff*, his only comedic success, combated Richard Wagner's influence by introducing young Italian composers to a new model of national music. Strauss, on the other hand, struggling with personal and political problems in Nazi Germany, composed the self-reflexive *Capriccio*, a life review of opera and his own legacy. Though it exhausted him physically and emotionally, Messiaen at the age of seventy-five finished his only opera, *Saint François d'Assise*, which marked the pinnacle of his career. Britten, meanwhile, suffering from heart problems, refused surgery until he had completed his masterpiece, *Death in Venice*. For all four composers, age, far from sapping their creative power, provided impetus for some of their best accomplishments. With its deft treatment of these composers' final years and works, *Four Last Songs* provides a valuable look at the challenges and opportunities that present themselves as artists grow older.



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