



Franco Alfano: Transcending Turandot

Konrad Dryden

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Franco Alfano: Transcending Turandot is the first fully documented biography in any language of Italy's last verismo composer, Franco Alfano (1875-1954), the composer chosen to complete Giacomo Puccini's swansong, *Turandot*, in 1924. Alfano remains one of the most undervalued composers, despite arguably representing the best of Puccini's contemporaries. His ability and prowess and his intimate friendship with Puccini, led to his selection for *Turandot's* completion: a daunting, enervating, and ultimately thankless task, which nearly robbed him of sight.

This biography finally sheds light on Alfano's view of the events, as opposed to the all-too customary Toscanini/Puccini perspective, thereby revealing a largely unknown facet of one of the most important operatic works of the 20th-century. Konrad Dryden, a friend of the composer's late daughter, Nina Alfano, sets out to unravel and organize the facts of Alfano's life, offering a chronological presentation of the composer's vita as well as an examination of his major operas and their literary origins, providing the most complete portrait of the composer to date. Based on unpublished correspondence from international archives freshly translated by Dryden, the book also sheds light on such colleagues and contemporaries as Puccini, Toscanini, Mary Garden, Edward Johnson, Giordano, Rostand, Mascagni, and Mussolini. A selection of previously unpublished photographs is included, as well as plot synopses of Alfano's operatic works. A foreword by the legendary soprano Magda Olivero-his preferred interpreter and Liù in the world premiere recording of *Turandot*-and an appendix listing the composer's opus round out this important reference.

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