

Cover Blurbs for *The Steiny Road to Operadom*

Karren Alenier's peripatetic *The Steiny Road to Operadom* is a must read for any librettist, composer, or opera aficionado in search of an inside look at the creation and performance of a contemporary opera.

Gordon Ostrowski
Director of Opera Studies
Manhattan School of Music

The Steiny Road to Operadom is a fascinating look into the mind of American poet and librettist Karren Alenier. A must-read for anyone aspiring to write for contemporary American Opera. A truly Stein'ian landscape full of reflections, advice, interviews and *objects trouvés* from her creative journey starting in Tangier with Paul Bowles in 1982 until the full production of *Gertrude Stein Invents a Jump Early On* in New York in 2005. Full of surprises and fun to read.

Dr. Frank Hentschker
Director of Programs,
The Martin E. Segal Theatre Center,
The Graduate Center, CUNY

Karren Alenier gives us a fresh view into the world of perhaps the most important writer of our time. She shows the rocky and fruitful collaboration of Gertrude Stein and Virgil Thomson through a wide range of scholarly sources and through her own process with composer William Banfield. The romantic myth of the artist alone crumbles in the glow of a community of artists, as does the myth of the blissful communion of collaborators, whether in 1930's Paris or New York in the twenty first century. We see the awkward beauty of two operas conceived, born, and bred, and through the eyes and ears of the Steiny Poet, we can hear the music of language, and the language of music, all the more clearly.

Juanita Rockwell
librettist for James Sellars' opera, *The World Is Round*

Critical Commentary

“What’s really fun about this book is the structure. Karren’s own opera is a result of many years studying the work of Gertrude Stein, and the book is organized in what might be described as a “cubist” way. In a sense, it’s really two books in one: one is about her own background leading up to the creation of her opera and its production, and the other is a more general look at the world of American opera. But, the two books are presented simultaneously in layers.

“Any composer or writer who is not already intimate with the vagaries of the American opera world would surely learn something from this book, but also the tone of the book is light and sharp, and so I imagine it would be enjoyable for anyone who is peripherally interested in the topic.”

Excerpt from composer Michael Kaulkin’s review
<http://www.aboutthecomposer.com/blog/archives/227>

Comments from Artists Interviewed in *The Steiny Road to Operadom*

Composer Mark Adamo: Thank you for your engaging and engaged work: it's a unique and open-hearted look at a subject (obviously) dear to my heart, and I'm delighted to have been a small aid to its completion.

Composer Deborah Drattell: I was so pleased to be included in this important new work. It was so refreshing to read a very articulate, entertaining and informative book pertaining to the creation of new operas. I cannot recall another work like it on the market today.

I hope it becomes a resource in music libraries throughout the country. What a valuable tool for students to have at universities and conservatories. It appeals to the trained musician as well as the average music appreciation student.

Bravo to you for this endeavor.

Composer Steve Jones: Thanks for sending the book - it looks beautiful! You are really moving forward - it's exciting to see somebody take such bold moves, and making things happen!

Composer Libby Larsen: Many thanks for sending me a copy of *Steiny Opera* and congratulations on its publication. You've made an important contribution to the field of American opera. I'm delighted and honored to be included in your work and send you a big huzzah!

Critic Tim Page: The book arrived and it looks terrific. I'm so glad that I was able to be a part of it. Best of luck with it -- it really fills a niche that hasn't been addressed.

Brenda Wineapple (author of *Sister Brother: Gertrude and Leo Stein*)
Interesting; and well done!