



# Opera for Everybody: The Story of English National Opera

*Susie Gilbert*

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# Opera for Everybody: The Story of English National Opera

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## **Opera for Everybody: The Story of English National Opera** Susie Gilbert

Susie Gilbert traces the development of ENO from its earliest origins in the darkest Victorian slums of the Cut, where it was conceived as a vehicle of social reform, through two world wars, and via Sadler's Wells to its great glory days at the Coliseum and beyond. Setting the company's artistic achievements within the wider context of social and political attitudes to the arts and the ever-changing theatrical style, Gilbert provides a vivid cultural history of this unique institution's 150 years. Inspired by the idealism of Lilian Baylis, the company has been based on the belief that opera in the vernacular can not only reach out to even the least privileged members of society but also create a potent and immediate communication with its audience.

With full access to ENO's archive, Gilbert has unearthed a rich range of material and held numerous interviews with a fascinating array of personalities, to weave an absorbing tale of life both in front and behind the scenes of ENO as it developed over the years.

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