

Reclaiming Calliope: Freeing the Female Voice through Undomesticated Singing

Fides Krucker

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Opera singer Fides Krucker's book is both a moving artistic memoir and a radical self-help work, presenting a method of freeing one's authentic voice to reclaim power, agency, and self-worth.

A feminist call to action, the book reveals how fear of displeasing men has kept women imprisoned in body, mind, and spirit, aware of the consequences of not being submissive enough, pleasing enough, useful enough. "What kind of living is this?" Krucker asks, giving hard-hitting examples from art and life of the toll such repression takes on women. In opera, and in society, women's stories have been crafted mostly by men; in opera, and all too often in life, the fate of a woman who's subject to a man involves sacrifice and violence.

The first half of the book traces Krucker's singing and teaching career. Behind-the-scenes glimpses at the world of opera, both historical and contemporary, expose centuries of men's control over the stories being told. Women, and women's voices, were required to tell those stories in performances that demanded that they look and sound beautiful, even while their roles, in truth, demanded hot tears and screams. When Krucker discovered her own natural soundscape—one that came from her body's own need to express, uninhibited, the full range of human emotion in a natural way—her career, her singing, and her life took on a whole new dimension and focus.

Krucker writes that her techniques can help anyone find, develop, and use the full range of their unique voice. The book's second part includes demonstrations of how, along with new breathing and voice production methods, students are rediscovering connections between their bodies, minds, hearts, and emotions.

Reclaiming Calliope seeks to help singers and non-singers alike free their natural, uninhibited voices and reclaim their strength, courage, and power.

KRISTINE MORRIS (July / August 2022)

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