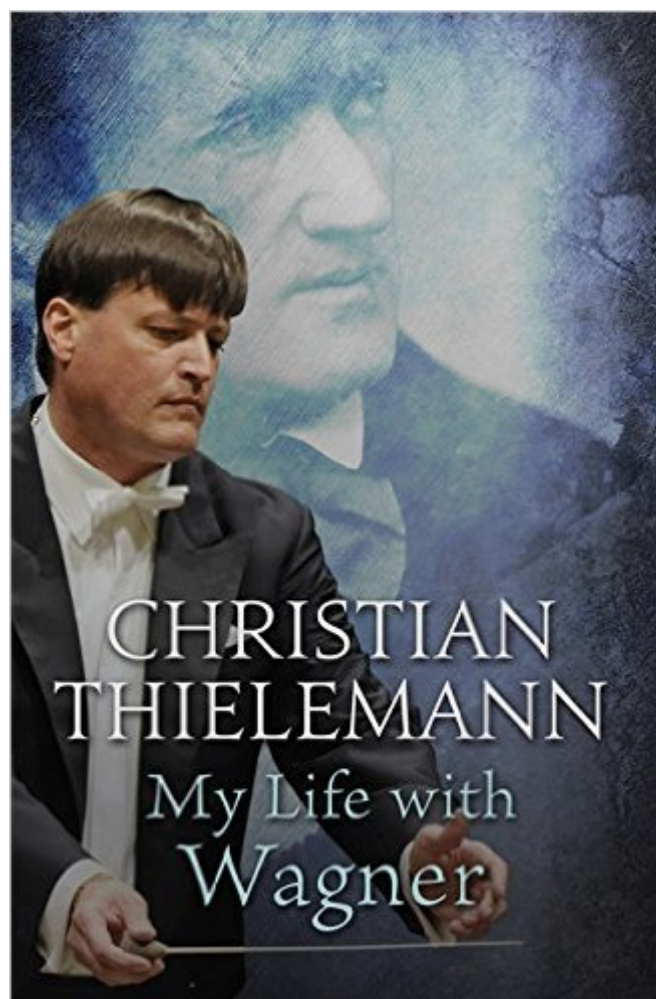


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# My Life With Wagner



## Synopsis

Over a distinguished career conducting some of the world's finest orchestras, Christian Thielemann has earned a reputation as the leading modern interpreter of Richard Wagner. *My Life with Wagner* chronicles his ardent personal and professional engagement with the composer whose work has shaped his thinking and feeling from early childhood. Thielemann retraces his journey with Wagner - from Berlin to Bayreuth via Venice, Hamburg and Chicago. The book combines reminiscence and analysis with revealing insights drawn from Thielemann's many years of experience as a Wagner conductor. Taking each opera in turn, his appraisal is illuminated by a deep affinity for the music, an intimate knowledge of the scores and the inside perspective of an outstanding practitioner. And yet for all the adulation Wagner's art inspires in him, Thielemann does not shy away from unpalatable truths about the man himself, explaining why today he is venerated and reviled in equal measure. *My Life with Wagner* is a richly rewarding read for admirers of a composer who continues to fascinate long after his death.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This is a must read for anyone interested in Wagner, Bayreuth, and Thielemann. The first half of the book seems like it was drawn from conversations with Thielemann and is quite illuminating. The second half is largely plot synopses and, while useful and pleasant enough to read, seems like it was written largely by Thielemann's co-author, having less of a unique perspective. Anyone who likes to gobble up Wagneriana in its written form will be sure to read this book. My respect for Thielemann went up after reading this book.

This an absolute must read for wagnerians. He is gentle but firm in his criticisms of how classical music is dying and how the pit at Bayreuth has a muting effect on the orchestra. I read this book while attending Bayreuth and could hear what he was talking about. It is also a superb cultural history and very detailed in its descriptions of the wagner experience. Also excellent recommended recordings.

Chri tian Thielemann is a first class conductor, whom we have seen at the Met and who is director of the Dresden Staatskapelle and frequent conductor at Bayreuth. He confesses in this book his love for Wagner, and I mean Wagner, not just Wagner music. Wagner music is extraordinary, unusual for its time and simply wonderful (act 2 of Tristan und Isolde, Die Walkure, etc.etc.). Thielemann talks a little bit about Wagner the man, who was as sordid as his music is splendid. His anti-Semitism is published (by Wagner), but Wagner t he man is left gone, and no mention is made except in passing that he stole the wives of the people; who helped him, had to change addresses every time he was full of debts, and he was often, too often. Yes, the music is wonderful, but the man is awful, and Thielemann loves him too much to treat him fairly. If you like his music ( I do), this book is for you. If you want to know how bad Wagner the man was. this is not it.

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