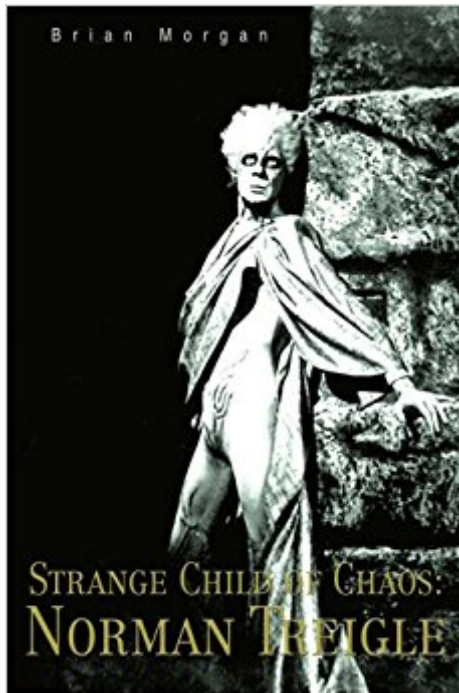




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Strange Child Of Chaos: Norman Treigle



Synopsis

This is the fascinating story of one of America's greatest singers, Norman Treigle (1927-1975). Born in the South's most exotic city, New Orleans, he was acclaimed as one of history's finest singing-actors, specialising in rôles that evoked villainy and terror, and was a resident star at the adventurous New York City Opera. In this, the first biography of the legendary bass-baritone, you will read of his colourful life in New Orleans, his self-destructive life-style, the seeming contradictions in his complex character, his passion for the race-track, his enormous voice and emaciated physique, his electrifying stage-presence and astonishing acting ability, why he never sang at the Metropolitan Opera, and his mysterious, sudden death at the age of forty-seven. Read also of his relationships with his closest colleagues, including Beverly Sills, Phyllis Curtin, Jon Vickers, Plácido Domingo, Michael Devlin, Carlisle Floyd, Julius Rudel, Tito Capobianco and Frank Corsaro. Based on the singer's private files, years of extensive research, and interviews with many of his relatives, friends and colleagues, *Strange Child of Chaos* (a quote from *Mefistofele*, his greatest triumph) is a tale of the troubled life of an incomparable artist of an elemental power, who bestrode the stage for too brief a moment.

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Customer Reviews

Brian Morgan...is an expert on opera and has done a super-human job in researching the singer's life and career. -- "Stepping Out," WYES-TV (Al Shea), May 2006 Let's say, at once, that this book is a winner and a wonderful addition to the library of operatic biographies. From the first moment of reading, one realises the author has undertaken the necessary pains to get the story right.... The

287 pages are extremely well-researched.... Definitive.... -- Opera Nostalgia, September 2006
Opera fans will welcome this definitive biography. -- Acadiana LifeStyle, November 2006
Thank you so much for Norman's book. It brought tears to my eyes. It's a void that will never be filled. -- Beverly Sills, 2006
[This book] is exactly what every operatic biography should be.... I also failed to find a single error of fact anywhere.... -- Vocal Record Collectors' Society (Joe Pearce), December 2007

Brian Morgan is former Artistic Director of Opera Quotannis (New York) and former Programme Annotator of the New Orleans Opera. His writings on Aesthetics have appeared in various publications, including Opera News.

. . . and Brian Morgan's book lays it out in an orderly fashion. I thoroughly enjoyed it because I am a resident of New Orleans and found it enlightening to learn how active the classical and church music scenes were in New Orleans when Treigle's career was in its infancy. This book offers the fruits of a lot of research into Treigle's performances, casts, and reviews thereof, and includes many interesting excerpts from interviews with Treigle's contemporaries. In that regard it is a fascinating, valuable tool for anyone interested in Norman Treigle. In terms of delving into the subject's psyche, it falls rather short, probably because the author was obviously acquainted with ex-wife Loraine Treigle and the singer's grandson, who were still alive when he wrote this book (but both have died within the past year or so). I get the impression that Morgan didn't want to upset them by focusing on the singer's failings, such as drinking, gambling, and womanizing. I recommend this book to anyone interested in Norman Treigle and also anyone interested in opera and church music in New Orleans during the two decades of Treigle's career. (As a matter of fact, I was watching a retrospective program on the New Orleans public TV channel the other night, and to my surprise there was a tiny clip of Norman Treigle as Escamillo, one of his signature roles, in a NORD [New Orleans Recreation Department] production of "Carmen.")

When I was in my early teens about 1960 or 1961, the interim pastor at our church, Temple Baptist of Hattiesburg, Mississippi, would bring Norman Treigle to sing religious music for us periodically. Norman Treigle's voice filled the whole, big, new auditorium - people's jaws dropped. It was announced ahead of time when he would be singing, so it got to the point that it was SRO when he sang - normally the auditorium was only about 1/3-1/2 filled. The calls for him to sing 'Ole Man River' got so strong that he eventually sang it in church - how I wish I had recorded it! I can remember remarking how amazing it was that his voice could fill the entire sanctuary without 'even a

microphone'! :)The fact that I still remember his stunning voice after all these years shows what an impression he made on me and everybody else, but I figured, well, he's an opera singer, so maybe they all sing like that - I had never heard an operatic voice in person. After reading this book, I realize that his voice was as unique as I thought back then!An interesting side note - my grandmother was the church pianist/organist. She was amazingly talented, something of a local, small town star. Mr. Treigle was so impressed with her ability to transpose a song from one key to another on the spot that he asked her to travel with him on the road as his personal accompanist. My grandmother declined, because she didn't want to leave Hattiesburg, which he could understand, not liking travel himself, but it was always her biggest 'claim to fame' that Norman Treigle asked her to be his accompanist! He may not have been serious, but my grandmother thought he was!!I'm sorry this book didn't have any more information about the details of his singing and life in general, but I'm glad there's at least this one book. I'm going to be buying some of the few CDs available with his voice on it - he was a treasure!

i very much enjoyed reading the story of my heros life. mr. morgan thoroughly researched his life and times. i had wished i had this as a guide when i was young. . his writing style is intellectual yet charming enough to keep the reader interested . a vibrant performance to performance account of this tremendous artists career .

interesting perspective of a great voice

Great!

Great book about a New Orleans original and great performer. Really enjoyed the book and insightful research. Thanks. two words added.

I enjoyed this book but as a biography it is more facts / statistics than real depth about the man / artist. Still after reading it you will be seeking out any recordings you can find on Treigle. It whets your appetite to experience him.

Sometimes you don't know how lucky you are. When I started attending opera in New York back in the 1960s, fourth-ring seats at the New York State Theater cost \$2.00 each. You could get a fifth-ring seat for \$1.00, but hey, you only live once, right? At those prices, I was able to go two or

three times a week, and more often than not, what I saw featured a startlingly amazing artist named Norman Treigle. Oh, if I had but known ... that never before, and never since, would anyone like him tread the boards of the operatic stage. What would I have done differently? I don't know. Maybe hooked up with some pirate recording experts and made sure that a lot more of his shockingly under-recorded oeuvre survived. But one thing I can tell you: No one who ever saw this incredible artist has ever been the same since. Which brings me to the hard-working and industrious Mr Morgan: He never saw Treigle on stage. It's hard enough for those of us who did see him to express ourselves adequately on the subject, but for someone who did not and is retailing this experience second and third-hand, it's pretty much impossible. He does his best, and here and there are flickers of fascinating detail and revelation that are good to know. But it isn't the same. Nevertheless, I think every Treigle fan should acquire this book. It's reasonably good, and there is so pitifully little of him for us to hold onto these days -- other than our rapidly aging memories -- so this volume can serve as an aide-memoire. In the meantime, before any of us get too old to do it, it would be great if someone who had actually seen the Amazing One on stage would attempt a biography.

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