

1. Record Nr.	UNISA996247977203316
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Titolo	Vincenzo Bellini, Norma // David Kimbell [[electronic resource]]
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Cambridge : , : Cambridge University Press, , 1998
ISBN	0-511-09279-2 0-511-61214-1 0-511-00695-0
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (xiii, 141 pages) : digital, PDF file(s)
Collana	Cambridge opera handbooks
Disciplina	782.1
Soggetti	Opera - Italy - 19th century
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Title from publisher's bibliographic system (viewed on 05 Oct 2015).
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references (pages 135-138) and index.
Sommario/riassunto	Norma is by common consent the finest of the ten operas composed during Vincenzo Bellini's short career, representing his genius more comprehensively than is usually the case with any single work by an operatic composer. This 1998 handbook provides the biographical and cultural context of the opera. It gives a full synopsis and an examination of the music and poetry, which is rooted in the aesthetics of early nineteenth-century Italian opera. Professor Kimbell suggests something of the impression Norma has made on our imaginations and sensibilities in the 165 years since it was first produced in Milan in December 1831. He considers the great interpretations of the eponymous leading role. His discussion also embraces Bellini's work more generally by presenting some of the critical reactions to his music.