

The Magazine for People Who Love Audiobooks

# AudioFile®

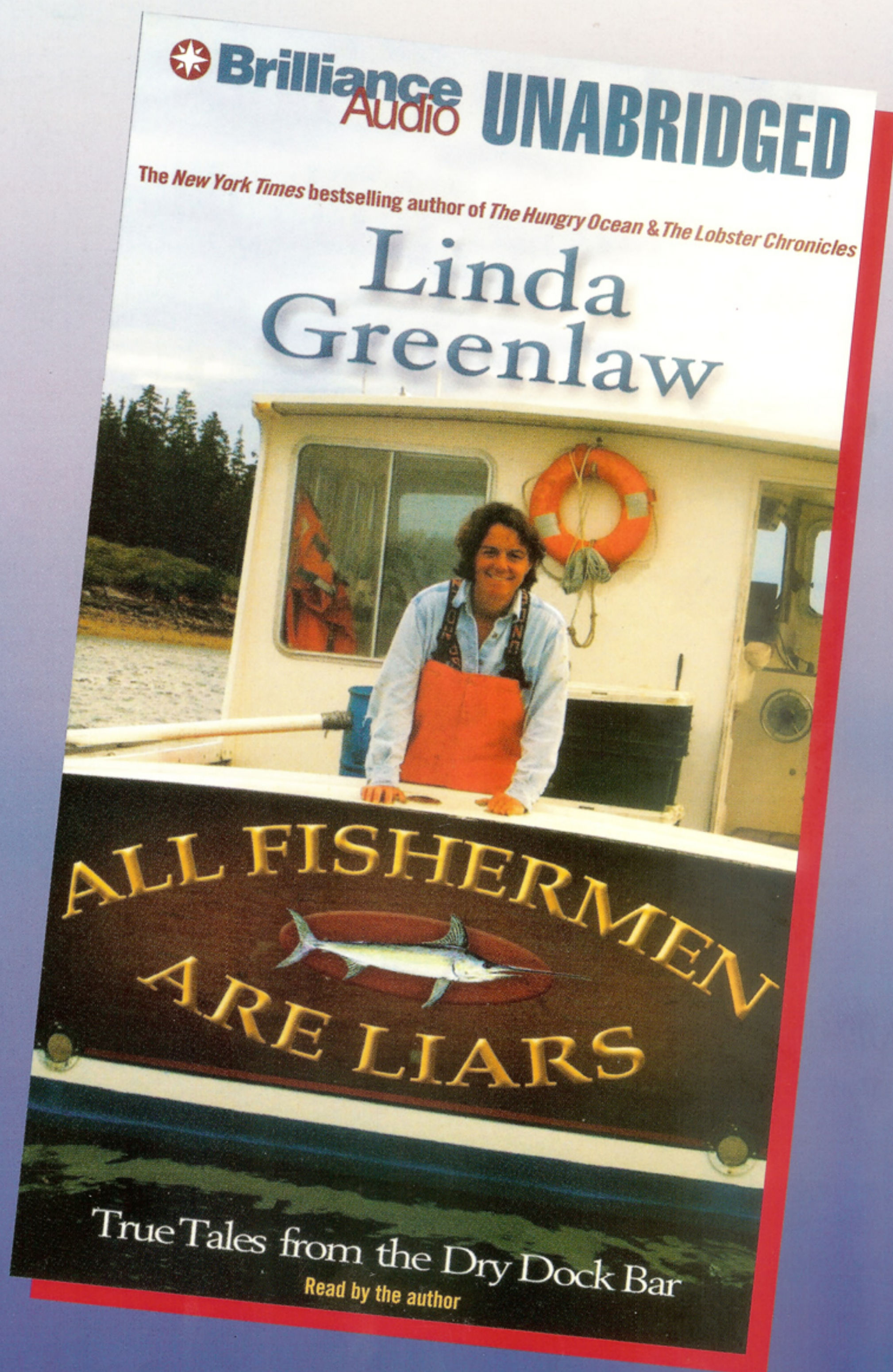


Surviving  
Family Travel

**15** Backseat  
Listening Picks

NPR's  
Broadcaster/  
Narrators

Talking With  
Julia Alvarez  
Barbara Bush  
Michael Connelly  
Robert Greenberg  
Linda Greenlaw



August/September 2004  
USA \$6.00/Canada \$8.00

[www.audiofilemagazine.com](http://www.audiofilemagazine.com)



## Talking With Robert Greenberg

The distinguished composer/educator Robert Greenberg likes to comment that his last name, in Italian, is the same as that of the sixteenth-century composer Claudio Monteverdi, and to confide his (certainly facetious) hope that he and old Claudio are related. For Professor Greenberg is crazy about Monteverdi's music—and about Verdi's music and Mozart's and Beethoven's and . . .

This love pervades his more than 400 recorded lectures on the great composers and their works for The Teaching Company, including the monumental 32-CD set *How to Listen to and Understand Opera*. Also evident are his sense of humor and his clear, accessible teaching style, honed in 25 years at the podium.

Comparing recording lectures to delivering them live, he says, "It's a totally different process. When you're in front of students, the first things you get are questions and answers. On tape there's no opportunity for questions. So I have to anticipate what people would be wondering about at any given moment. That's the hardest thing.

"The second thing, of course, is that you can't pause, and say 'um,' or 'uh,' or indulge in any of those time-filling methods that allow you to gather your thoughts. The Teaching Company will do some minimal editing, but for the most part, these are live takes. And if you blow it, it's on someone's shelf that way for who knows how long. So the incentive is not to make a mistake, and that puts a lot of performance pressure on these lectures."

Still, now at the age of 50, Greenberg prefers recording for The Teaching Company and has given up the classroom. "I've come to that time in my life that we all get to when we realize that our energy is not unlimited, our time, sadly, is not unlimited. And I decided that the best way to spend my time is in creating these courses and then putting them on a medium that allows them to be heard and seen by infinitely more people than I could possibly reach in the classroom.

"I'm going to sound like a shill now, but I don't care," he tells *AudioFile*. "Tom [Thomas M.] Rollins, the guy who founded The Teaching Company on a wing and a prayer 15 years ago, was a high-level D.C. attorney who had this vision to create a college curriculum available to anyone anywhere by getting the best teachers to do what they do best. He said to me, 'Use whatever language you want to use, teach what you want to teach, and we'll put it in front of the public.' He gave me carte blanche to suggest courses and to do them. This has never happened to me before. It's a fabulous opportunity.

"And . . . I don't have to grade papers!"—Yuri Rasovsky



### HOW TO LISTEN TO AND UNDERSTAND OPERA

Robert Greenberg

Read by Robert Greenberg

The title of this massive lecture suggests that some expert will come to the mike to order us to like this and dislike that. Be that as it may, what we have here is an engrossing and thorough analytic history of opera from its fifteenth-century beginnings to the mid-1920s. Even though those lukewarm or indifferent to the genre may find themselves feeding the CDs into the player. Kudos to musicologist and composer Robert Greenberg. He speaks with authority, humor,

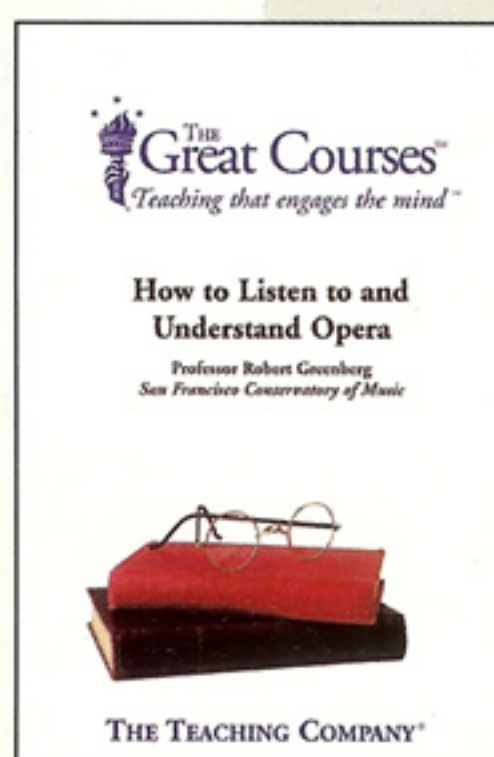
clarity, and enthusiasm, illustrating his points with liberal helpings of excerpts from excellent recorded performances. (Unfortunately, the snippets are corrupted—though not destroyed—by mediocre sound quality.) While not dogmatically instructing on how to listen, he points out features well worth listening for. Will Greenberg entice you into sitting through the entire Ring Cycle? Probably not. But he will excite you about it, and about Gluck, Mozart, Rossini, Bizet, et al., plus introduce you to more obscure works of considerable charm and power. Y.R.

The Teaching Company 24 hrs.

Audio Program

CS ISBN 1-56585-214-1 \$64.95

CD ISBN 1-56585-375-X \$89.95



### Robert Greenberg Bookshelf

Lecture programs available from The Teaching Company:

Bach and the High Baroque	Life and Operas of Verdi
Concert Masterworks	Operas of Mozart
Great Masters: Their Lives and Music	Symphonies of Beethoven
How to Listen to and Understand Great Music	The Symphony