

PERSPECTIVES ON OPERA

This course is designed to be informative, stimulating, and enjoyable for those with a new interest in or curiosity about opera, for those with some opera knowledge, and for those who already are opera enthusiasts. Seven of the eight class sessions will consist of lectures with extensive use of illustrative videos. There will be opportunities for limited discussion during a few, but not all, of these sessions. Session 8 will be devoted to questions, comments and discussion relating to the previous seven classes.

The initial class session, entitled “Singing”, will focus on the techniques and history of opera singing. The remaining six lecture sessions will cover the following topics:

Session 2—we will consider the customs and conventions of Baroque opera as reflected in Handel’s opera *Giulio Cesare*;

Session 3—we will explore two works of vocal music that are operatic but not opera. The first is the delightful, ebullient and cheerful oratorio *The Creation* by Haydn, and the second is the exciting, exultant *Ode to Joy* from Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9;

Session 4—we will compare Herman Melville’s novella Billy Budd with the opera of the same name composed by Benjamin Britten;

Session 5—we will consider the relationship between Shakespeare’s play *Othello* and two operas based on the play, one by Rossini and the other by Verdi;

Session 6—we will examine the history of the exclusion of Black artists (singers and composers) from, and their participation in, the American opera world;

Session 7—we conclude our lecture sessions on a lighter note with an exploration of the use of opera in films and why particular opera selections were chosen for inclusion in a variety of movies starting with *The Birth of a Nation*;

Session 8—as described above, this session will be devoted to questions, comments and discussion relating to the previous seven sessions, as well as participants’ thoughts and suggestions about future classes.

A Syllabus containing a detailed listing of the performers and performances included in each session, opera vocabulary, suggested readings and internet resources will be provided, as will reading materials.

LEADER: Harold Kuskin has been an opera lover and Metropolitan Opera subscriber for over 45 years. He served as a Backstage Tour Guide at the Metropolitan Opera House for 15 years and has studied opera at the Julliard School Evening Division. Harold has lectured on opera for the Princeton Festival, and has taught opera at the Princeton Adult School. This will be his sixth year of teaching courses on opera at the Evergreen Forum.

LOCATION: Zoom

MONDAYS: 1:00 to 3:00 p.m., 8 weeks beginning February 28 through April 18

MAXIMUM: Unlimited