A Magisterial Genre: French Grand Opera and its Message

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Start date</th>
<th>Friday 18 January 2019</th>
<th>End date</th>
<th>Sunday 20 January 2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Venue</td>
<td>Madingley Hall</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Madingley</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cambridge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutor</td>
<td>Dr Robert Letelier</td>
<td></td>
<td>Course code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1819NRX012</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Director ISP and Lifelong Learning
Sarah Ormrod

For further information on this course, please contact
HoACA, Lifelong Learning, Zara Kuckelhaus
shortcourses@ice.cam.ac.uk or 01223 746204

To book
See: www.ice.cam.ac.uk or telephone 01223 746262

Tutor biography

Robert Ignatius Letellier is a lecturer and author and has presented some 30 courses in music, literature and cultural history at ICE since 2002. Educated in Grahamstown, Salzburg, Rome and Jerusalem, he is a member of Trinity College (Cambridge), the Meyerbeer Institute Schloss Thurnau (University of Bayreuth), the Salzburg Centre for Research in the Early English Novel (University of Salzburg) and the Maryvale Institute (Birmingham) as well as a panel tutor at ICE.

Robert's publications number over 100 items, including books and articles on the late-seventeenth-, eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century novel (particularly the Gothic Novel and Sir Walter Scott), the Bible, and European culture. He has specialized in the Romantic opera, especially the work of Giacomo Meyerbeer (a four-volume English edition of his diaries, critical studies, and two analyses of the operas), the opera-comique and Daniel-François-Esprit Auber, Operetta, the Romantic Ballet and Ludwig Minkus. He has also worked with the BBC, the Royal Opera House, Naxos International and Marston Records, in the researching and preparation of productions.
Course programme

Friday
Please plan to arrive between 16:30 and 18:30. You can meet other course members in the bar which opens at 18:15. Tea and coffee making facilities are available in the study bedrooms.

19:00 Dinner
20:30 – 22:00 Session 1 A venerable tradition: the tragédie lyrique (Lully, Rameau, Gluck)
22:00 Terrace bar open for informal discussion

Saturday
07:30 Breakfast
09:00 – 10:30 Session 2 The Empire and Restoration: reinvention and innovation (Spontini, Rossini)
10:30 Coffee
11:00 – 12:30 Session 3 Revolution and Patriotism: a new genre (Auber, Rossini)
13:00 Lunch
14:00 – 16:00 Free
16:00 Tea
16:30 – 18:00 Session 4 Faith and Freedom: aspirations to liberty (Meyerbeer, Halévy)
18:00 – 18:30 Free
18:30 Dinner
20:00 – 21:30 Session 5 Faith and Freedom: a plea for tolerance (Meyerbeer, Halévy)
21:30 Terrace bar open for informal discussion

Sunday
07:30 Breakfast
09:00 – 10:30 Session 6 Exploration and Empire: finding new worlds (Meyerbeer, Berlioz, Verdi)
10:30 Coffee
11:00 – 12:30 Session 7 Conclusion: wider influences in the world of opera
12:45 Lunch

The course will disperse after lunch
This course examines the musical content, intellectual content and structural underpinning of sumptuous French Grand Opera which flourished in Paris from 1828-1870. The genre renewed by Auber and Rossini, considered the revolutionary struggle for national identity that was a growing issue of the age. Meyerbeer, Halévy and Verdi examined religious freedom in the spread of political ideals, the place of poor people, and faith as an ideology of social change.

Aims:

1) to consider the role of French Grand Opera in the history of opera
2) to explore something of the thematic contrast and implications of this Romantic subject matter and changing musical styles
3) to examine this operatic repertoire in terms of the intellectual and cultural history of the 19th century, and the nature of the heritage of Grand Opera and the Paris Opéra

Content:

This course examines the intellectual content and structural underpinning of French Grand Opera which flourished in Paris from 1828-1870. The genre of tragédie lyrique was renewed and relaunched by Auber with La Muette de Portici (1828) and Rossini with Guillaume Tell (1829). These operas considered the revolutionary struggle for national identity that was a growing issue of the age. The great operas that followed by Meyerbeer and Halévy considered the political situation in terms of religious freedom, the rise of Jewish emancipation and religious tolerance in the spread of revolutionary ideals in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars. Robert le Diable (1831), with a mythological theme conjured up the Catholic unity of the Middle Ages, Les Huguenots (1836), conversely, the bloody strife of the Reformation. La Juive (1835) considered the nature of religious freedom in terms of the Jews in Christian society, and Le Prophète (1849) the place of poor people, and religion as an ideology of social change—also in terms of Reformation scenario. Later Verdi’s Don Carlos (1867) would present the very issue of personal freedom and its relation to state religion. The decisive influence of Grand Opera on the development of the history of the operatic genre will also be assessed.

Presentation of the course:

The course will be based on lectures illustrated by the music of Grand Opera. There will opportunity for class discussion. A visual dimension will also play its part.

As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to:

1) to demonstrate a deeper knowledge and understanding of the nature of opera as a musical form, and its historical unfolding over the 19th century;

2) to have fuller idea of the nature of French Grand Opera, its characteristics, its affinities with the operatic traditions of Romanticism, with their special recurrent motifs, themes and features

3) to see traditional Grand Opera and its literary recreations as a dynamic aspect of the operatic scenario, and to have some appreciation of the appropriate skill of the librettist(s)
4) to see how opera and its special themes have been used by the Grand Opera composers as symbolic and metaphorical commentary on issues pertinent to their contemporary history and society.

5) to appreciate the differing ways in which musical genre treats literature and drama as a reflection of changing aesthetic fashions, and itself becomes an agent for change in cultural history.
# Reading and resources list

Listed below are texts that might be of interest should you wish to supplement your learning on the course. Any essential reading is marked with an asterisk *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Publisher and date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Budden, Julian</td>
<td><em>The Operas of Verdi</em>, 3 vols.</td>
<td>OUP 1972, 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osborne, Charles</td>
<td><em>The Complete Operas of Verdi</em></td>
<td>London 1969</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Website addresses

Note Students of the Institute of Continuing Education are entitled to 20% discount on books published by Cambridge University Press (CUP) which are purchased at the Press bookshop, 1 Trinity Street, Cambridge (Mon-Sat 9am – 5:30pm, Sun 11am – 5pm). A letter or email confirming acceptance on to a current Institute course should be taken as evidence of enrolment.

Information correct as of: 03 January 2019