

LP² STUDY GROUP PROPOSAL FOR SPRING 2023

STUNNING 20TH CENTURY OPERAS

Coordinator: James Smith

Opera affords dramatic possibilities available to no other art form, though many of us are not amenable or enlightened to its conventions. And 20th century opera extended those dramatic effects in stunning ways. As we all know, art changed profoundly in the 20th Century. This study group helps us appreciate how this happened in opera. The intersection of new 20th century harmonies, sensibilities, visual alternatives, and sexual enlightenment gave us a new view on reality and the dramas of life. Exploring four of the century's greatest achievements, we gain an appreciation of how art can illuminate the human condition. It will sound different than Mozart (who was a genius in the form), and therefore it will give us a new view. And if it doesn't move you, you may not be capable of being moved. The four operas are listed in the syllabus.

James has coordinated many study groups here, and his background as the director of an adult education center broadened his appreciation of the cultural connections that music exhibits.

Type of Study Group: Listening and discussion

Readings and other Materials/Online Services:

Links to YouTube and emailed articles.

***** SYLLABUS - A WORK IN PROGRESS *****

WEEK 1

TOPIC: *Salome*, by Richard Strauss

READING:

Links to YouTube and emailed articles.

QUESTIONS:

Why is opera so dramatically effective? What changed in opera in the 20th century? Why was *Salome* so historically and musically significant?

WEEK 2

LP² STUDY GROUP PROPOSAL FOR SPRING 2023

TOPIC: *Salome*, continued

READING:

Links to YouTube and emailed articles.

QUESTIONS:

How are the issues of incest, the Male Gaze, and sexual obsession illuminated by the opera? What did Strauss do musically to make it such a musically innovative work?

WEEK 3

TOPIC: *Wozzeck*, by Alban Berg

READING:

Links to YouTube and emailed articles.

QUESTIONS:

How is the 20th century artistic sensibility different from the 19th? How do we hear it in the music? How does it relate to the 20th century's turn towards "modernism"?

WEEKS 4 and 5: *Wozzeck*, continued

WEEKS 6 and 7: *The Rake's Progress*, by Igor Stravinsky and librettists W. H. Auden and Chester Kallman

WEEKS 8 to 11: *Peter Grimes*, by Benjamin Britten

WEEK 12: What have we learned? How do we compare these operas? Where do we go from here?

LP² STUDY GROUP PROPOSAL FOR SPRING 2023

INSTRUCTIONS

Text settings: Begin each response at the left margin below the section title.

Coordinator Names: Listed in alphabetical order. (#Primary contact, *First time coordinator).

Study Group Description: Preferably 150 words or less.

Coordinator Biographies: 30 words or less per coordinator. Coordinators are listed in alphabetical order.

Type of Study Group: List all that apply: •Presentation followed by discussion; •Mostly discussion; •Seminar, Workshop, •Reports by participants, •Other (specify)

Readings and other Materials/Online Services:
Include approximate cost of required materials.

Books: Full title in *italics* followed by author. Add editor/translator/publisher if a specific edition is required.

Coordinator Supplied Materials: e.g., email attachments or study group website, or links to online materials. Provide up to three examples of the sources for articles and excerpts here and/or in the Syllabus.

Films, videos, DVDs: Specify if a video subscription is required.

Syllabus:

Weeks 1-3: Provide Topics, Readings and at least 3 Questions/week
Weeks 4-12: Provide Topics for each week. Readings and Questions may be added but are not required.

NEW: GUEST SPEAKER HONORARIUM POLICY

Each 12-week study group is allowed two (2) paid guest speakers @ \$200. If you plan to have an outside guest speaker who requires an honorarium:

- Discuss with your Curriculum Committee contact

LP² STUDY GROUP PROPOSAL FOR SPRING 2023

- Read the attached [Honorary Policy](#)
- Submit [Honorary Request Form](#) to your contact
- After the guest has finished your session, notify the IER Treasurer

N.B. This does not apply to outside guest speakers who are not paid