

Spring 2009: Wednesdays 6:45–9:00 pm in PV150J (in the SPEA Library)

8 January 2009 version 2a

SP09 BL SPEA A450 C10059 [combining SP09 BL SPEA A450 #29565 and SP09 BL AADM Y412 #29563]

subject to amendment before the first class

PRODUCING OPERA (*koa* Opera Management)

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COURSE DESCRIPTION: Producing opera

This is a course designed to illuminate the process of managing and producing opera. The course content is outlined in the timetable on page 4. If you complete the course in all its aspects you may expect to have a fair understanding of how opera works, founded on contact with its day-to-day workings as well as its background.

We shall be looking at the theory of opera, its place in modern cultural life, and the management skills involved in its presentation; but this is also a practical course, given in collaboration with IU Bloomington's remarkable opera program at the Musical Arts Center of the Jacobs School of Music: you are expected to attend rehearsals and performances at the MAC, watching the processes of opera-production, as a practical supplement to the more theoretical work of the classroom.

Classroom activities trace a pattern through the processes of production, from administrative structures through the stages of repertoire selection, casting, and rehearsing, to eventual performance on stage.

Attendance is essential at one performance of each opera produced at the MAC this semester; for anyone whose academic schedule does not, however, allow full participation in further MAC-aspects of the course there will be extra theoretical study to compensate; for the remainder, their MAC visits will reduce the amount of writing they might normally have to do: everyone has, however, a number of written assignments to complete, combining lessons learned in class with those stemming from practical experience watching productions in progress.

As far as the dovetailing of MAC-visits and the classroom schedules allows, we shall also look at various opera performances recorded on video both at live performances and in television or film contexts.

This is a wholly re-structured and expanded course; the timetable on page 4 shows the planned content. Changes are, however, to be expected: week-to-week execution will be adjusted to fit evolving production-schedules at the MAC. We shall also make changes to allow visits by distinguished figures from international opera if their professional schedules allow. Such flexibility is intrinsic to the business of producing opera so should not disturb anyone.

If—especially early in the course—you do not fully understand what is being said, or are not familiar with terminology used, please ask at once. This is not a waste of time. The course covers a lot of ground; it assumes a certain familiarity with opera: only your intervention can show where that assumption may have been misplaced.

If you cannot attend class please get any relevant material from fellow-students, not from the instructor.

The Arts Administration program would like to express its special appreciation of the quite exceptional help of Maria Levy, Executive Administrator of the IU Opera & Ballet Theater at the Jacobs School of Music, in making collaboration with her program possible.

Americans with Disabilities Act statement: Accommodations will be made for students registered with the Disability Services for Students office in Franklin Hall (812-855 7578).

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING - Final grading will be on this scale:

Letter-grade	Percentage	Grading will be based on:	
A+	95-100	4 essays	36% (9% each)
A	92-94	Final paper	24%
A-	89-91	Writing & presentation	12%
B+	86-88	Class-participation	12%
B	83-85	Class attendance	8%
B-	80-82	MAC attendance*	8%
C	75-79		
D	70-74		
Fail	below 70		

* *For any who cannot complete all MAC-assignments, additional study and writing for proportionate credit will be set.*

GRADE-ASSESSMENTS**FOUR ESSAYS & A FINAL PAPER:** total 60%

Each student is to write four papers, the first short, the others longer, the final paper being of some length. Increasing length is not an invitation to prolixity, but to increased imagination and depth. Page-lengths noted below are shortest acceptable; longer is OK but not in itself a merit. The final essay must be presented in hard-copy as well as electronically, please. Earlier essays should be submitted ONLY in electronic copy, as email attachments, to huntc@indiana.edu. Missed deadlines: please deliver all papers by the times shown. Sorry, but late papers will be penalized by two percentage points for every 24-hours, or part of 24 hours, that they are late. *PLEASE NOTE: there is another Christopher Hunt on the IUB contacts-index—make sure you send things to the right one.*

Graduates are expected to show in all their writing a fuller understanding of the cultural field, greater range of imagination in analyzing it, and a higher level of literary and presentational skill, than is expected from undergraduates. Papers should be type-written, double-spaced, with **very wide left-hand margins** (not less than two inches), and **numbered** pages. A list of works drawn on should be added at the end. Graphics are welcomed but do not substitute for the required text. Detailed footnotes are not needed but references to books or articles consulted should include enough information for precise identification, which means page numbers. All use of material from sources outside your own head must be attributed, and in the case of direct quotation must be shown as such with due identification.

Initial paper (Week 3) 9% *Defining “Opera”*: the first paper (short: 1200 words or less) is to be a definition of what the term “opera” means to you, and to others, and how its meaning has changed since the form emerged at the end of the 16th century. (*Delivery by class on January 27: three pages, double-spaced, please, with wide margins—see notes below*).

Three Critical Essays (Weeks 6, 9, 15) 9% each *Reviewing IU opera performances*: your three critical essays should examine the history and nature of each opera you will have seen in performance at the MAC, together with your critical comments on production and performance. Emphasis is to be much less on judgment of the performers than on the work itself and the degree to which the IU production has realized the opera’s essential character as you see it. A model review of this kind will be provided in class, but the exact form you choose need not follow the template precisely. (*Delivery no later than the class following the last performance of each opera. Three to four pages each, double-spaced, with wide margins*)

Final Paper (Week 17) 24% *Covent Garden and The Met: an examination of the late-20th century evolution of both houses*, based on the books and excerpts we shall have examined throughout the course, and the series of six television documentary-programs on Covent Garden in the '90s that we shall have viewed. (*Delivery no later than Monday May 4 at 6pm, in both hard-copy and electronic form. For undergraduates the final paper should be not less than five pages long, for graduates at least eight.*)

Writing & Presentation 12%

In addition to grade-markings for the substance of each paper, you will be assessed on the quality of presentation, and your literary/grammatical skill. Typographical errors, words omitted, disordered sequences, will lower marking. Attention will be paid to concise literary style; to effectiveness of structure; and to the clarity with which any sequence of thought is displayed. A typographical layout that reflects these qualities will be particularly important for the final paper, but will count in assessing the others as well.

Participation 12%

To get the most from this class you must participate, not just listen. Twelve percent of a final grade will depend on the degree to which you actively engage with the material and contribute constructively to class-discussion.

Attendance 16% (Class 8%, MAC 8%)

Everyone is expected to attend *every* class, having done any assigned reading beforehand. Each missed class will bring a 2% penalty. Attendance at MAC opera-performances and other MAC visits is obligatory (though it is understood that since the dates can only be arranged as the semester progresses it may be impossible for some of you to make all MAC visits). Anyone who misses four classes may expect to fail. Only illness or unavoidable conflict caused by an official university obligation is reason for missing class or an assignment deadline. Please don't be late for class and don't leave early—both are disruptive to other students and to the instructor. Please do not use telephones, pagers, iPods, email, newspapers, or other distractions in class, and no private conversations, please, and no food.

Plagiarism

SPEA faculty do not tolerate cheating, plagiarism, or any other form of academic dishonesty. Please read the IUB *Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct*, which can be accessed at <http://dsa.indiana.edu/Code/>. Academic dishonesty can result in a grade of F (an F for academic dishonesty cannot be removed from the transcript). Plagiarism is using another person's words, ideas, artistic creations, or other intellectual property, without giving proper credit. Keep this in mind whenever you quote or paraphrase someone else's words, oral or written; use another person's ideas, opinions, or theories; use facts, statistics, or other illustrative material, where the information is not common knowledge

Set Books

Volpe, Joseph *The Toughest Show on Earth* 320pp Knopf 2006 ISBN 0-307-26285-5
 Isaacs, Jeremy *Never mind the moon* (New edition 2000 – paper-back) Bantam Books
 ISBN-10 055350696X ISBN-13 978-0553506969

E-reserves: chapters from the following will be on e-reserves

Gossett, Philip *Divas and Scholars: Performing Italian Opera* 676pp
 University of Chicago Press 2006 ISBN 0-226-30482-5
 Williams, Bernard *On Opera* 150pp Yale University Press 2006 ISBN 0-300-08976-7
 Tooley, John *In House: Covent Garden—Fifty years of opera and ballet* 320pp
 Faber, London 1999 ISBN 0-571-19415-X
 Kaiser, Michael M. *The Art of the Turnaround* 186pp Brandeis 2008 ISBN 978-1-58465-735-4

Reference works

Eaton, Quaintance *Opera Production I* – available through Google Books (look up "Eaton opera production")
 ibid *Opera Production II: A Handbook* 347pp Univ. of Minnesota Press 1974 ISBN 0-306-79719-4
 Conte, David M. *Theatre Management* 612pp Entertainmentpro New York 2007 ISBN 0-896-76254-4

There are thousands of books on opera, tens of thousands of articles in innumerable journals. A comprehensive encyclopedic treatment is the four-volume *New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, edited by Stanley Sadie; for a single volume with analytical description of opera-plots and background *The New Kobbe's Opera Book*, edited by Lord Harewood and Anthony Peattie, is authoritative, a *vade mecum* for many opera professionals; there are other valuable reference books whose usefulness is determined by their approaches, in particular whether they are organized opera-by-opera, or by more diffuse aspects of the subject. *Opera Production I* and *II* are both out of print; Volume I is available on Google Books; hard-copies are difficult to come by, since they are invariably still in daily use by opera administrators around the world. The two volumes contain short synopses of over 400 operas with cast lists and essential practical information on each opera's production needs.

Divas & Scholars is also out of print, though copies are still in shops; it is primarily an examination of performing practices in Italy in the 19th century; it is also a trenchant commentary on the practical business of staging opera of any sort. The late Bernard Williams, philosopher by profession and a perceptive, knowledgeable enthusiast for opera, brings extraordinary humanity and perception to the subject in a series of essays centered on operas from Mozart to Michael Tippett.

Joseph Volpe's autobiographical account of his time as head of the Metropolitan Opera, and how he got there, gives a recent picture of what it is like to work in and to run one of the world's great opera houses. Three books by three successive General-Directors of Covent Garden, John Tooley, Jeremy Isaacs, Michael Kaiser, (you should read all of Isaacs's book, relevant chapters from the other two) provide a detailed picture of the triumphs and vicissitudes of managing Britain's primary opera company from the second World War to very recently. Taken together with our viewing of the notorious series of documentary television programs made at the Royal Opera House during the '90s, which we will be viewing, these books give an unequalled insight into the problems and rewards of managing professional opera.

Finally, a manual on practical arts administration in general: David Conte's wholesale revision of Stephen Langley's classic book on theatre management now covers the organization of all forms of the performing arts, with absolutely up-to-date information, and a specially useful and extensive coda with sample contracts, union-agreements, etc in current use in the US today.

COURSE SCHEDULE Y412/A450 **OPERA MANAGEMENT**: Spring 2009
 Wednesdays 6:45 – 9pm in SPEA PV150J

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1	Jan 13	Introduction to the course	
2	20	Repertoire overview	
3	27	Context & Theory [deadline essay: Defining “opera”]	
4	Feb 4	Management & Funding	Feb 6,7,13,14 <i>Cendrillon</i>
		Video: <i>The House</i> Pt I	
5	11	Venues & tech	
		Video: <i>The House</i> Pt II	
6	18	Rehearsals & Staging [deadline critique <i>Cendrillon</i>]	
		Video: <i>The House</i> Pt III	
7	25	Production styles	Feb 27,28 Mar 6,7 <i>Giulio Cesare</i>
		Video: <i>The House</i> Pt IV	
8	Mar 4	Casting & singers	
		Video: <i>The House</i> Pt V	
9	11	Producing [deadline critique <i>Giulio Cesare</i>]	
		Video: <i>The House</i> Pt VI	
10	18	<i>Mar 14-22 Spring Recess</i>	
11	25	Presenting	
12	April 1	Education & advocacy	
13	8	Marketing & promotion	Apr 10,11,17,17 <i>Most Happy Fella</i>
14	15	At the performance	
15	22	Summing up & recap [deadline critique <i>Most Happy Fella</i>]	
		Video: <i>Meeting Venus</i>	
16	29	<i>Apr 21-27 Free week – preparation</i>	
17	May 4	[deadline: final paper]	

MAC operas Spring 2009

Massenet *Cendrillon* Feb 6,7,13,14
 Handel *Giulio Cesare in Egitto* Feb 27,28 Mar 6,7
 Loesser *Most Happy Fella* April 10,11,17,18

We shall visit the MAC, as far as their and our schedules allow, to encounter some of opera's actual production processes; these may be summarized in (variable and flexible) chronological order as auditions/ coaching / props, costumes, paint, wigs & make-up / facilities: stage, auditorium, rehearsal rooms, pit, shops / music rehearsals (chorus, orchestra, soloists) / staging-rehearsals I : pre-stage(chorus, orchestra, singers, supers) / staging-rehearsals II : on stage / tech 1 – sets / stage & piano / sitzprobe / stage & orchestra / tech 2 – lights / dress-rehearsal / performance

Some of the aspects of opera-management that will be discussed (see the outline schedule above)

CONTEXT & THEORY

What is “opera”?

Prima la musica, poi le parole

Opera as part of the arts spectrum

Atmosphere around performances of opera

Clichés about opera

Glamour & grandeur

Reality/Realism in opera

Critics and criticism

Reviewing / Writing reviews

Television opera (+ film)

Met outreach (cinema showings etc)

Languages

Opera terminology

New forms

MANAGEMENT, ORGANIZATION & FUNDING

Organization structures

Labor regulations

Unions

Business aspects

Company size

Governance (Board involvement)

Leadership

Staff feedback

Budgeting

Corporate involvement

Special funding for opera

Sponsorship

Galas

Attendance at rehearsals & performances

INFORMATION-SOURCES /NETWORKS

Professional networks

Opera America & other professional organizations

Gossip

Professional journals etc

Recordings

Books on opera

MARKETING & PROMOTION

Advertising: Accuracy of taste
 Audience surveys (feedback+)
 Brochure design
 Opera company's public identity
 Public Relations & Promotion

Seat-pricing strategies
 Subscriptions
 Websites & e-marketing
 Guests & VIPs

EDUCATION & ADVOCACY

Forming & articulating opinions
 Education: Adult learning
 Pre-performance talks etc

Schools opera-education
 Advocacy
 Commentaries during opera-performances

PRESENTING & PRODUCING

Audience tastes (who is opera for?)
 Foretelling trends
 Introductions (spoken etc)
 Dress-codes
 Surtitles
 Relationship to community
 Young(er) audiences
 Repertoire selection (vis à vis public)
 archive recordings
 Gauging stage-directors' plans
 Commissioning
 Co-productions
 Performing edition

Overall length / cuts
 Allowing for applause
 Planning rehearsals (how many etc)
 Performance language (Eng or?)
 Rentals: productions, sets, costumes
 Publishers
 Auditions
 Casting
 Agents & managers
 Visas
 Festival opera
 International opera(v local?)
 Orchestras for opera

REPERTOIRE & PRODUCTION STYLES

History of opera
 Repertoire from programming viewpoint
 Changing repertoire over the years
 Chamber opera/Grand opera
 Operetta & Musicals
 One-acters
 New operas (cf Met new works?)
 Handel revival
 Kids opera (Family?)
 New forms (?no longer opera?)
 Genres/nationalism
 "The most popular operas"
 American opera

Orchestration (re-orchestrating)
 Librettists & libretti
 Language/Translations
 Semi-staged eg GFest at Proms
 Tech Theatre
 Hi-tech
 Multimedia & performance art
 Cross-cultural prods
 Regietheater
 Projections
 Set-design
 Reconstructions

HOUSE (VENUE) TECH

House lights (up?)
 Buildings: size, shape etc
 Wardrobe(Costumes)
 Wigs & make-up
 Props Crafts (props etc)
 Quick-change dressing room
 Curtain – main
 Scenery & costumes: Design & execution
 Scene shop (paint)

Stage Mgt
 Rehearsal Mgt
 Dressing rooms (nb orch)
 Lighting
 Flying
 Rigging
 Prosthesis (eg Rigoletto)
 Safety, Disabilities & access ADA/ASHA

CASTING (PLANNING)

Local/national/international
 Conductors & stage-directors
 Stars & other singers
 Chorus
 Orchestra

Banda
 Ballet/dance
 Supers (spear carriers)
 Children, animals
 Student casts

REHEARSALS

Music: singers [+wardrobe etc]
 Staging: singers
 Tech (Stage/Light)
 stage & piano

Sitzproben
 Stage & orchestra
 Dress rehearsals

*SINGERS**Casting: help for singers**Singer-management relations**Diction, articulation, elocution (intelligibility)**Singer training**Understanding the voice**Voice size**Voice classifications**Coaching**Cancellations**Voice-problems**Voice-doctors**Physical fitness**Physical suitability**STAGING**Directing opera**Fight management**Rehearsing qv**Swordsmanship**Nudity on stage**Quick-change**AT THE PERFORMANCE**Performer sickness**Accidents**Announcements from stage etc**Prompt-book & SM's log**Prompter**Signing & audio-description*
