

APPRECIATING OPERA

This course is designed for opera newcomers and for those familiar with, and knowledgeable about, opera. There will be time available for questions, comments, and discussion, but each class session will consist primarily of lectures with extensive illustrative videos. The lectures will include background information about opera in general and the specific operas being presented, together with some non-technical musical analysis.

The first session will focus on opera basics such as voice categories, opera vocabulary, vocal techniques, and stage fright. The session also will include a virtual backstage tour of the Metropolitan Opera House. Much of the material presented in the first session was included in last spring's course entitled *Enjoying Opera*. **Each of the remaining seven class sessions will be devoted to entirely new material.** The second session will feature comparisons of performances of the same aria by singers from different generations. In the third session, we will examine two American operas and consider the questions of what makes an opera "American" and what makes an opera an "opera" and not an operetta or musical. The next session will focus on Giuseppe Verdi's comic operas, followed by a session devoted to the very different French comic opera. In the sixth session, we will compare treatments of the Cinderella fairy tale by two composers, one Italian and the other French. The subject of the seventh session will be the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice as presented in the first great opera and in two other works. The course will conclude with a session devoted entirely to an analysis of Beethoven's only opera, *Fidelio*.

At the first session, a syllabus will be provided containing a detailed listing of the performers and arias included in the videos, a brief dictionary of opera terminology, suggested books and periodicals, and internet resources. Short readings will be distributed at each class.

Leader: Harold Kuskin has been an opera lover and Metropolitan Opera subscriber for over 45 years, a backstage tour guide at the Metropolitan Opera House for 15 years, a lecturer on opera for the Princeton Festival, and an instructor on opera at the Evergreen Forum.

Thursdays: 10:00 a.m. to 12 noon, 8 weeks: March 1 through April 19

Location: Presbyterian Church of Lawrenceville