

# Course Schedule & Assignments

## Week 1: Introduction and 19th Century Legacy



- **Tuesday, August 28:** Introduction, Course Basics, 19th century Legacy

**Readings:** Parker, Roger. "Opera: The 19<sup>th</sup> Century." *New Grove Dictionary of Opera*

As you read this broad overview, I'd like you to come to class with informal notes on the following questions:

- 1) The author (Roger Parker) devotes headings to "institutions," "repertory," "genres," "plots," and "stylistic changes"? Why are these issues important? What specific information does he investigate under each of these headings?
- 2) Under the heading "National traditions:" why are national differences important for opera in the 19th century? On the other hand, what might we miss or misunderstand by ONLY thinking about opera along national lines or national schools?
- 3) How does the information under the heading "singers and performers" and "staging" help us think about opera in broader ways than just composers/scores?

From this reading, I'd also like you to come to class prepared to make one comment regarding something you noticed that changed about opera during the course of the 19th century. You may also feel free to comment on things that surprised you or anything you found confusing about issues raised in the reading.

**Listening:**

We'll be focusing on some questions about 19th century French opera today—a bit of the listening may be review for some of you from Music History II, but we'll get

into deeper questions and analysis about these excerpts (and broader questions about each opera) in class.

1) Meyerbeer, *Les Huguenots* (1859). PDFs of translation, commentary, and score attached on Moodle.

As you listen, imagine what kind of staging (visual effects) would accompany this scene; compare how this scene contrasts with a solo aria; consider how Meyerbeer differentiates certain characters through their vocal lines.

For the audio recording of this section, please use these three links: (note that the sheet music starts at about 1:26 in the first link)

<http://potsdam.naxosmusiclibrary.com.webproxy.potsdam.edu:2048/stream.asp?s=79844%2Fsunypotsdam11%2Fpy8224%5F021>

<http://potsdam.naxosmusiclibrary.com.webproxy.potsdam.edu:2048/stream.asp?s=79844%2Fsunypotsdam11%2Fpy8224%5F022>

<http://potsdam.naxosmusiclibrary.com.webproxy.potsdam.edu:2048/stream.asp?s=79844%2Fsunypotsdam11%2Fpy8224%5F023>

2) Bizet, *Carmen* (1875), Excerpt from Act I, “Seguidilla and Duet.” PDF of score attached (Moodle).

As you listen, consider how Bizet uses rhythm, language, and meaning to depict Carmen's character. Also think about what we learn about Don José from this scene--in what ways is this section NOT typical of an operatic love duet?

<http://potsdam.naxosmusiclibrary.com.webproxy.potsdam.edu:2048/stream.asp?s=79844%2Fsunypotsdam11%2Frp9326%5F015>

## • **Thursday, August 30: What is Opera Today?**

**Readings:** André, Naomi. “Introduction: Engaged Opera.” *Black Opera: History, Power, Engagement*, 1-26. (Champaign-Urbana: University of Illinois, 2018) (reading attached as PDF)

As you read this introduction, please focus on pages 1-20 (the last few pages are more on the chapters which follow in the book, so you can skim that section).

Please come to class ready to discuss the reading by jotting down notes on 3-4 things that surprised, interested, or confused you from the article. What

thorny issues about opera in the 21st century (broadly speaking) do you start to think about as you read? (Note that André brings up not only many questions about race and opera, but also lots of other issues.....)

I've numbered the paragraphs so that you can refer to them easily when talking to your classmates.

## **Week 2: Early 20th Century Ventures**



- **Tuesday, September 4: Debussy, *Pelléas et Mélisande* (1902)**

**Reading:** Goehr, Lydia. "Radical Modernism and the Failure of Style: Philosophical Reflections on Maeterlinck-Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*." *Representations* 74, no. 1 (2001): 55–82.

**Listening:** In-class, Debussy, *Pelléas et Mélisande* (1902), excerpts

- **Thursday, September 6: Screenings (*Pelléas, Rusalka*)**

**In-Class Viewing:** Debussy, *Pelléas et Mélisande* (f.p. 1902), excerpts

## Week 3: Psychology & Sexuality I

- **Tuesday, September 11: Richard Strauss & *Elektra* (1909)**

**Readings:** Gilliam, Bryan. "The Strauss-Hofmannsthal Operas." In *The Cambridge Companion to Richard Strauss*, ed. Charles Youmans, 119-135. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. Very straightforward quick read about the collaboration of composer and librettist.

Kramer, Lawrence. "Fin-de-siècle fantasies: Elektra, degeneration, and sexual science." *Cambridge Opera Journal* 5, no. 2: 141-152. Please note that this is only an excerpt of this article, not the entire argument. You should be able to get a good idea, however, of Kramer's overall point and approach. Think about what he's arguing this opera has to do with turn-of-the-century ideas about gender and sexuality.

I have also provided a brief synopsis of Elektra (Moodle).



Die innere Welt, bezeugt von der Elektra (des Palastes und niedrigen Gebäudes, in denen die Dämonen wohnen. Hierinnen am Eingang, links vorne, Aufmerksamkeiten nach hinten. (The inner courtyard, bounded by the back of the palace, and the buildings in which the demons live. Maid Servants at the door, left of the front of the stage to the left. The Overture is along them.)

Mäßig langsam. Metr. 4 : 80  
Moderato assai.

Erste Magd. (die Wassergefäß aufhebt)  
First Maid Servant (lifting her pail)

Wo bleibt er? Ist er? Zweite Magd.  
Where stays he? Is he? Second Maid Servant.

Mäßig langsam. Metr. 4 : 80  
Moderato assai.

Wo bleibt er? Ist er? (Werden ruft)  
Where stays he? Is he? (Overtones call)

Piano

die Sun-de, wo sie um den Va-ter heult, daß al-le Wän-de schal-len.  
The sea-son when she for her fa-ther howls, That all the walls re-e-cho?

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- **Thursday, September 13: Listening/Viewing (*Elektra*)**

Before coming to class, please listen to the following three excerpts from Strauss's *Elektra*. I have attached the full score, so that you can follow along (and have indicated page numbers next to each selection). These three excerpts will serve to familiarize you with the three main female characters in the opera, and some of the ways Strauss uses contrasting styles to depict each of these women.

I've provided both streaming audio from the library and (the same recording) via Youtube, in case you're having trouble getting the library audio proxy to work.

I have also attached a document which contains the German text and English translation for all 3 of these segments.

- 1) Elektra's opening monologue, "Allein! Weh, ganz allein" (9:30, pages 25-49 in the full score). [https://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/be|recorded\\_track|umg\\_isrc\\_00028947848875GBF076740102US](https://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/be|recorded_track|umg_isrc_00028947848875GBF076740102US) or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tsNAWbslCGo>
- 2) Chrysothemis (Elektra's sister), "Ich kann nicht sitzen und ins Dunkel starren," (5:52, pages 55-74 in full score). [https://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/be|recorded\\_track|umg\\_isrc\\_00028947848875GBF076740104US](https://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/be|recorded_track|umg_isrc_00028947848875GBF076740104US) or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1CX76SPGAkM>
- 3) Klytämnestra (Elektra's mother), "Ich habe keine guten Nächte," (6:11, pages 117-135 in full score). [https://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/be|recorded\\_track|umg\\_isrc\\_00028947848875GBF076740109US](https://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/be|recorded_track|umg_isrc_00028947848875GBF076740109US) or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yKerxykmwL0>

## **Week 4: Psychology & Sexuality II**

- **Tuesday, September 18: A New Psychology—Expressionism, Alban Berg, and *Wozzeck* (1925)**

**Reading:** Botstein, Leon. “Alban Berg and the Memory of Modernism.” In *Berg and his World*, edited by Christopher Hailey, 299–344. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010.



\* Note: this article is not a close analysis of a single opera (*Wozzeck*) by Berg. Instead, it's a broader-ranging discussion about modernism, musical style, gender, and sexuality and it discusses quite a few ideas related to Berg's later opera *Lulu*. Don't try to focus on *Wozzeck* only, just make sure to pick out some points or ideas from the article for discussion.

Extra resource: Perle, George. “Woyzeck and Wozzeck.” *The Musical Quarterly* Vol. 53, no. 2 (April 1967): 206-219.

- **Thursday, September 20: Screenings (*Wozzeck*)**

Before coming to class, please listen to the following two excerpts from Berg's *Wozzeck*. I have attached the two scores (Moodle), so that you can follow along. In the first excerpt, please look in the score and find as many examples of the note "B" as you can. Circle them or take notes about where they are. For the second excerpt, please read the commentary for the second PDF before listening. (The commentary is at the end of the PDF).

- 1) Act III, scene 2—8:42 to 13:13 in this video clip: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=viXMstoz5\\_Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=viXMstoz5_Q)
- 2) Act III, scene 3—13:13 to 16:45 in this video clip: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=viXMstoz5\\_Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=viXMstoz5_Q)

**In-Class Screening:** Berg, *Wozzeck* (1925), excerpts

**Due Date: Opera Choice (Friday, September 21, 5:00 pm) by email**

## **Week 5: Postwar Ventures I**

- **Tuesday, September 25:**  
**French Opera in the 1920s—**  
**Childhood Fantasies and**  
**Modernist Dreams in Ravel's**  
***L'Enfant et les sortilèges***  
**(1925)**

**Readings:** Synopsis of *L'Enfant et les sortilèges* (1925).

Kaminsky, Peter. Excerpts from “The Child on the Couch; or, Toward a (Psycho) Analysis of Ravel’s *L’enfant et les sortilèges*.” In *Unmasking Ravel:*

*New Perspectives on the Music*, ed. Peter Kaminsky, 306-330. Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2011.

As you read, I'd take Kaminsky seriously in terms of how he organizes his article (he lays it out pretty clearly for you in terms of how the article is organized—try to take notes based on the big sections he provides for you).

### **Listening/Viewing:**

Please listen to the scene/duet between the Princess and the Child (this is the scene discussed by Kaminsky in his article). I've attached the vocal score below so you can follow along.

Here's a recording of this portion, please start at about 6:07 (the scene should automatically continue onto the next section): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mX0WKrrMkDE>

- **Thursday, September 27: Screenings, *L'Enfant et les sortilèges***

**In-Class Viewing:** Ravel, *L'Enfant et les sortilèges* (f.p. 1925), excerpts

**Due Date: Opera Bibliography (Friday, September 28, 5:00pm)**



## Week 6: Politics & Sexuality

ONLY NEW YORK PERFORMANCE  
**LADY MACBETH OF MZENSK**  
by DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH



**ARTUR RODZINSKI** CONDUCTOR

with Anna Leskaya • Ivan Ivanzoff • Yasha Davidoff  
and The Principals and Chorus of  
**THE ART OF MUSICAL RUSSIA, Inc.**  
METROPOLITAN OPERA HOUSE  
Tuesday Evening, February 5, 1935, at 8:15 P. M.  
For the Benefit of the Composers' Fund of America  
Under the auspices of  
**THE LEAGUE OF COMPOSERS**

Tickets now on sale at Sweeney Hall Box Office, 113 West 57th Street (Ct. 7-5531), at \$7.00, \$5.00, \$4.00, \$3.00, \$2.50, \$2.00, \$1.50, and \$1.00. Boxes at \$75.00 and \$50.00. Metropolitan Opera House sale opens January 15.

**THE CLEVELAND ORCHESTRA**  
ARTUR RODZINSKI, CONDUCTOR  
assisted by  
**THE ART OF MUSICAL RUSSIA, INC.**  
FOURTH OPERA  
Thursday evening, January 31 at eight      Saturday evening, February 2 at eight

**LADY MACBETH OF MZENSK**  
(KATERINA IZMAILOVA)  
OPERA IN FOUR ACTS, NINE SCENES  
(In Russian)  
Based on a novel by N. Leskov  
Music by DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH  
FIRST PERFORMANCES OUTSIDE OF RUSSIA

|                       |                      |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| KATERINA              | Anna Leskaya         |
| BORIS                 | Yasha Davidoff       |
| ZINOV                 | Ivan Ivanzoff        |
| SERGEI                | Ivan Ivanzoff        |
| A PRIEST              | Michael Sivova       |
| AKSINIA               | Dora Babcock         |
| SONETKA               | Elina Silverova      |
| OVERSEER              | Nicholas Karlovich   |
| HOUSEMAN              | Alexis Tcherkassky   |
| PEASANT               | Dimiter Chirva       |
| WORKMAN FROM THE MILL | Gregory Praydick     |
| FIRST WORKMAN         | Helen Werns          |
| SECOND WORKMAN        | Constantine Dudenkin |
| THIRD WORKMAN         | Vsevolod Andronov    |
| WATCHMAN              | Vasilii Satteroff    |
| COACHMAN              | Vasilii Romakoff     |
| POLICE LIEUTENANT     | Gunn Greenwell       |
| POLICEMAN             | Josef Kachul         |
| TEACHER               | Sofia Sposobkin      |
| OLD CONVICT           | Milo Mikhalevich     |
| WOMAN CONVICT         | Alexis Tcherkassky   |
| SERGEANT              | Simeon Appolonsoff   |
| DRUNKEN GUEST         |                      |

Workmen, working women of hamlet household, guests at the wedding, policemen at the station, convicts.

Narrator      RICHARD HALE

Stage Director      \*WILHELM VON WYMETAL

Scene Architect      RICHARD KYCHTARIN      Associate Conductor      RUDOLPH KINGWALL

Stage Manager      WILLIAM ABLES

Costumes by Van Horn & Son, Inc., Philadelphia, Pa.  
Properties through the courtesy of Kerner & Wood Co., Kerner Costumes, Inc.,  
and Theatrical Equipment Rental Co.

\*Courtesy, The Metropolitan Opera Association, New York City

The Sweeney is the official piano of The Cleveland Orchestra  
The Lyon and Healy is the official harp of The Cleveland Orchestra

- Tuesday, October 2: Politics, Sex, and Censorship—Shostakovich and *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* (1934)

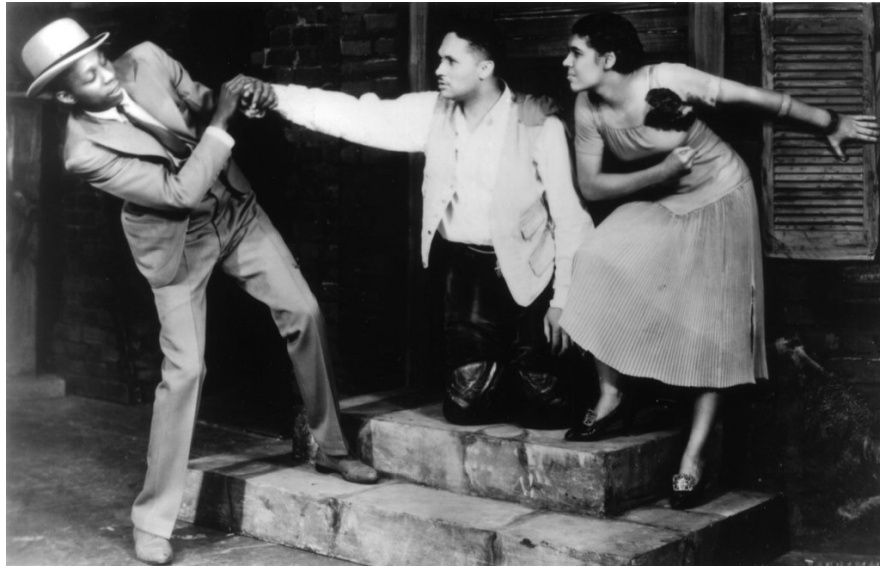
**Reading:** Wells, Elizabeth A. "The New Woman: Lady Macbeth and Sexual Politics in the Stalinist Era." *Cambridge Opera Journal* 13, no. 2 (July 2001): 163-189.

- Thursday, October 4: Screening (*Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*)

**In-Class Viewing:** Shostakovich, *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* (1934), excerpts

## Week 7: American Operatic Contributions I

- Thursday, October 11: *Four Saints in Three Acts* (1934) and *Porgy and Bess* (1935)



**Reading:** Crawford, Richard. "Where Did Porgy and Bess Come From?" *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 4 (Spring 2006): 697-734

**In-Class Viewing:** Gershwin, *Porgy and Bess* (1935), excerpts. Reference link to full *Porgy and Bess* production: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fO2114PmTl4>

**Due Date: Project Short Writing #1, Musical Style (Sunday, October 14, 11:59pm)**

## **Week 8: Postwar Ventures II**



- **Tuesday, October 16: Continue viewing and discussion of *Porgy and Bess* (please bring your notes to class)**
- **Thursday, October 18: Opera in English—Stravinsky, *The Rake's Progress* (1951)**

**Reading:** Wiebe, Heather. "The Rake's Progress as Opera Museum." *The Opera Quarterly* 25, no. 1-2 (Winter-Spring 2009): 6-27.

Libretto to *The Rake's Progress* (Moodle)

**In-class listening/viewing:** Stravinsky, *The Rake's Progress* (1951), excerpts

- **Screening (*The Rake's Progress*)**

**In-Class Viewing:** Stravinsky, *The Rake's Progress* (1951), excerpts

**Due Date: Take Home Midterm this week**

## **Week 9: Psychology and Sexuality III**



- **Tuesday, October 23: English Opera—Benjamin Britten's *The Turn of the Screw* (1954)**

**Reading:** As a quick introduction to the opera's construction and history, please read the 3 page entry from *Oxford Music Online* (Moodle). Pay special attention to the source text, the story of the opera, and how Britten organizes the opera.

**Listening:** Excerpts from *The Turn of the Screw*: please listen, following along with the score (Moodle), to both excerpts within this recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y47AhE-xN80>

- 1) The Prologue and Theme (p. 1-7 in score, 0:00--3:52 in the audio)
- 2) Variation 3: The Tower Scene & Variation 4: The Window (pp. 48-95 in the score, 16:02--30:01 in the audio)

• **Thursday, October 25: Screening (*The Turn of the Screw*)**

**Reading:** Brett, Philip. "Britten's Bad Boys: Male Relations in *The Turn of the Screw*." *Repercussions* 1, no. 2 (Fall 1992): 5-25.

I have also attached, just as an additional resource, one of the articles Brett mentions in his Britten article: this is purely for reference. Hindley, Clifford. "Why Does Miles Die? A Study of Britten's 'The Turn of the Screw.'" *The Musical Quarterly* Vol. 74, no. 1 (1990): 1-17.

**In-class viewing:** Britten, *The Turn of the Screw* (1954), excerpts

## Week 10: Interpreting Opera



- **Tuesday, October 30: Staging & Directing**

**Optional resources:** Excerpts from “Stage Design,” *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*.

Excerpts from article on "Stage Design," *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*. (note that I've excerpted this longer article—if you want to see any of the info on the earlier centuries of see the bibliography, just visit the Oxford Music Online through the reference links on the Music Library page).

This reading is a little different than most of the ones we have used in class—it doesn't have an argument, more of a list of important developments (typical of encyclopedia entries).

You don't need to internalize the massive amounts of information from this article.

What I *would* like you to bring to Tuesday's class (as notes) is:

Under the headings 6 (1900-1945), 7 (After World War II), and 8 (The late 20th century), please make note of two important developments/changes/trends in stage design mentioned under that heading. Please come to class ready to discuss these.

- **Thursday, November 1 : No in-class meeting, Online Discussion on *Don Giovanni***

**Reading:** Opera Today, or—What do we do with Don Giovanni?

Hi all! Can you please read the post here on Don Giovanni?

<http://musicologynow.ams-net.org/2017/12/holding-don-giovanni-accountable.html>

After reading, please make at least post on the discussion forum (you can do more if you'd like). While Dr. Brown-Montesano's discussion of political events may even seem like a long time ago to us now (! this article was published about a year ago), I'm most interested in you addressing some of the central questions about what we do about artworks from the past that present thorny, difficult ethical questions for the present as we continue to perform them.

You are welcome to bring in other artworks as similar examples.

As always—please be thoughtful when using the forum—others can't see your body language, hear your tone of voice, etc, so sometimes it's harder to get our points across in the precise way you wish. You all are doing a fabulous job of this already, but just something to keep in mind as we work through commentary on this work.

Please make sure your posts are completed by Sunday night, November 4, 11:59 pm.

See you next Tuesday!

## **Week 11: Composing New Opera, Minimalism**

- **Tuesday, November 6: Directing, Staging, *Don Giovanni***

No assigned reading:

We'll finish with the staging discussion, spend some time on the posts on *Don Giovanni* that you wrote online last week, and then conclude with a few comments on directing opera (I will provide in-class materials).

- **Thursday, November 8: Opera Attendance, *Mayo***

## **Week 12: American Contributions II**

- **Tuesday, November 13: Sellars, Staging, and Statecraft—John Adams, *Nixon in China* (1987)**

**Reading:** For discussion on Friday—note that these are interviews, not articles with specific arguments. I'd like you to take notes on the kinds of concerns that minimalist opera composers in the 1980s tend to focus upon—for the first article (on Glass) don't worry too much about the specifics of *Satyagraha*, but think



about how Glass understands the operatic tradition and then compare/contrast that with John Adams.

Glass, Philip and John Howell. "Interview: Satyagraha and Contemporary Opera." *Performing Arts Journal*, Vol. 6, no. 1 (1981): 68-83.

Daines, Matthew and Peter Sellars. "Nixon in China: An Interview with Peter Sellars." *Tempo*, New Series, no. 197 (July 1996): 12-19.

Porter, Andrew and John Adams. "Nixon in China: John Adams in Conversation." *Tempo*, New Series, no. 167 (December 1988): 25-30.

- **Thursday, November 15: Screening (*Nixon in China*)**

Daines, Matthew. "Nixon's" Women: Gender Politics and Cultural Representation in Act 2 of "Nixon in China." *The Musical Quarterly* Spring 1995: 6-34.

**In-Class Viewing:** Adams, *Nixon in China* (1987), excerpts

## **Week 13: 21st-Century Statements**

- **Tuesday, November 20: Opera on Television, Filmed Opera, Opera in the Digital Age**

**Reading:** Citron, Marcia. Excerpt from *Opera on Screen*, 40-68. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000.

**Viewing in-class:** Excerpts from Menotti, *The Medium* and *Amahl and the Night Visitors* (1946 and 1951)

Francesco Rosi, *Carmen* (1984)

*Tosca* (1992 live from Rome)

Sellars, dir. *Don Giovanni* (1980, filmed 1992)

**Readings:** Steichen, James. “The Metropolitan Opera Goes Public: Peter Gelb and the Institutional Dramaturgy of *The Met: Live in HD*.” In *Music and the Moving Image* 2, no. 2 (Summer 2009): 25-31.

*Operas In/As Movies:*

Neuwirth, *Lost Highway* (2003), excerpts

Wuorinen, *Brokeback Mountain* (2014), excerpts

Higdon, *Cold Mountain* (2015), excerpts

Adès, *The Exterminating Angel* (2017), excerpts

## **Week 14: 21st Century Statements**



- **Tuesday, November 27: The Past and the Future I—Kaija Saariaho's *L'amour de loin* (2000)**

**Reading:** Synopsis of *L'Amour de loin* (2 pages).

Ellison, Cori. "Music, When Lady and Troubadour Become One." *The New York Times* 21 July 2002.

Listen to (and take notes over) 23-minute interview with journalist Naomi Lewin and opera dramaturge Cori Ellison, "Saariaho's opera *L'Amour de loin* at the Met—a landmark achievement by a woman composer." <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2L1M0S30q1w>

**In-class screening:** Saariaho, *L'amour de loin* (2000), excerpts

- **Thursday, November 29: Viewing and Discussion (*L'amour de loin*, *Ainadamar*)**

**In-Class Viewing:** Saariaho, *L'amour de loin* (2000), excerpts

**Due Date: 3 Pieces of Your Final Project—Staging/Visuals in Your Opera, Project Abstract, and Podcast (Sunday, December 2, 11:59pm)**

## **Week 15: 21st Century Statements**

### **• Tuesday, December 4: Rethinking Trauma in Opera**

#### **Reading:**

Instead of articles, I'm attaching some contemporary reviews of these operas from the 1980s-2000s. These five reviews—two on *The Life and Times of Malcolm X*, one on *Amistad*, one on *Ainadamar*, one on *Margaret Garner*—are all quite short and quick reads.

Skim them and take some notes about issues that come to your mind as you read: three of these operas are about slavery, while one deals with a 20th century war. Whatever pops into your head—throw together some quick thoughts on the forum and then we'll work through some of this in class.

See you soon!

#### **Listening:**

Anthony Davis, *The Life and Times of Malcolm X* (1986)

Oswaldo Golijov, *Ainadamar* (2003)

Richard Danielpour, *Margaret Garner* (2005), Excerpts

### **• Thursday, December 6: Reflecting on Contemporary Crises**

#### **Reading:**

<https://nmbx.newmusicusa.org/chaya-czernowin-a-strange-bridge-toward-engagement/>

<https://www.npr.org/sections/deceptivecadence/2017/04/10/523304153/du-yun-wins-music-pulitzer-for-angels-bone>

#### **Listening:**

Chaya Czernowin, *Zaide/Adama*, excerpts

Du Yun, *Angel's Bone* (2017), excerpts

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**Finals Week: Opera and Snacks—Presentations and Reflections  
(with food!)**

**Thursday, December 13—12:30 to 2:30pm**