MUSIC 3750A – OPERA TO C.1830

26 October to 7 December:
Opera Performance in an Age of Rhetorical Persuasion
(TC 340: Wed 1:30 - 3:30, Fri 1:30 - 2:30)

Instructor:
Robert Toft
(TC 114, ext. 85104)

Description
This part of the course will consider opera as performance from an historical perspective. Fundamental aspects of rhetoric and oration will inform our understanding of text delivery in the operatic realm, and students will learn how singers prepared for theatrical performance. We will examine the acting/singing continuum and explore the close relationship between oratory and both spoken and sung delivery. Knowledge of the primary differences between recitative and aria, the two classes of vocal melody recognised in opera, will inform our work.

Course Outline

Topics (spread across the second half of the term, but with greater emphasis on topics 3-5)

I  Rhetorical and oratorical bases of opera
   Reading: www.belcantohip.com – Under ‘Historical Perspectives’: Contextual Considerations, Rhetoric and Oration, Persuasive Singing

II  The principles of bel canto: foundational elements of opera
   Reading: www.belcantohip.com – Under ‘Historical Perspectives’: Defining bel canto, Primary Components, Reading the Notation
   Toft, Bel Canto – pp. 3-19

III  The acting/singing continuum
   • developing a character and personalising the music
   • preparation of texts for vocal delivery
   Reading: Toft, Bel Canto – pp. 20-32, 45-57, 58-72, 73-84, 106-129, 164-76

IV  Recitative – origins, purpose, performance (based on period treatises)
   Reading: Toft, Bel Canto – pp. 32-38

V  Aria – relation to speaking, types, performance (based on period treatises)
   Reading: Toft, Bel Canto – pp. 38-45
**Required Textbook**

**Assignments**
Students will write two papers (maximum of 1000 words for each paper), the first on how a recitative composed in the 18th or early 19th centuries might be performed from an historical perspective (preparation procedures, as well as performance suggestions), and the second on how an aria composed in the 18th or early 19th centuries might be performed from an historical perspective (preparation procedures, as well as performance suggestions). You may choose a recitative/aria pair if you wish. Please have your selections approved by me on or before 4 November 2016.

**Grading**
This part of the course is completely independent of the first segment. Marks are not cumulative, and the following grading represents 50% of the final mark:

- 10% Participation (may include surprise quizzes)
- 20% An essay on recitative (due in class on 30 November)
- 20% An essay on aria (due on 14 December; turn in to departmental secretary, Linda Kusters)

**Penalty for Late Assignments**
Any assignment submitted after the due date for any reason other than a documented emergency or illness will receive a grade of 0%.

**Attendance/Participation Policy**
This class is conducted as a seminar, and student participation is essential for it to succeed. 10% of the grade in this part of the course will assess how much you have contributed to class discussions.

**Prerequisite**
Music 2710F/G
Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you will be removed from the course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

**Consultation**
I am available for consultation outside class by appointment. Please see me either before or after class to arrange a time. I prefer to conduct business ‘in person’ rather than by e-mail, and I do not answer questions about course content by e-mail. On the rare occasion that a student misses a lecture/seminar for legitimate and medically documented reasons, I will provide assistance with course material, but please be advised that I do not give private summaries of lectures/seminars. Students should rely on their peers to gather, and understand, material from classes they miss. See me only to clarify what you and your peers cannot grasp independently.
**PROTOCOL**
Cell phones are not permitted in class, and the use of personal listening devices (iPod, etc.) is prohibited.

**NON-MEDICAL AND MEDICAL ABSENCES / MENTAL HEALTH**
Non-medical absences from tests and the final exam, as well as non-medical reasons for the late submission of assignments, will result in a mark of zero for that component of the course. For further information, please see the University’s Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness (https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm). Documentation for medical absences must be provided on the Student Medical Certificate and must be submitted by the student directly to the Associate Dean of Music. The Dean’s office will determine if accommodation is warranted (see http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf).

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health @ Western (http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

**SCHOLASTIC OFFENCES**
Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following website: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholoffence.pdf.

**PLAGIARISM**
Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing, such as, footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).