

Opera for Laughs: Syllabus

Opera for Laughs: Great Comic Moments in the World of Opera

Thursdays, 1:00pm, Lafayette Campus

Kip Cranna, Dramaturg Emeritus, San Francisco Opera

"Make 'em laugh!" Opera is not always about tragic dying divas. Humor is one of the great human emotions, especially needed in these trying times. San Francisco Opera's Dramaturg Emeritus (Scholar in Residence) Kip Cranna looks at what makes comic opera truly funny, exploring the composer's role in giving comedy its spark, using video examples (with subtitles) of operatic humor from the 17th century to the present day. Come prepared to interact, ask questions, and laugh!

Kip Cranna is Dramaturg Emeritus (Scholar in Residence) at San Francisco Opera, where he served on the staff for 40 years. He has a Ph.D. in Musicology from Stanford, and teaches at OLLI Berkeley, Dominican, and San Francisco, and at the Fromm Institute as USF.

Week I (Feb 15): Comedy in the Baroque and Classic Periods.

Figaro! Figaro!

Comic scenes from operas by Monteverdi, Handel, Pergolesi, and others, plus a look at the many operas based on the character of Figaro, the wily Barber of Seville.

Week 2: (Feb. 22): Laughing in the Bel Canto Era: Rossini and Donizetti

We'll explore funny moments in works like Rossini's "La Cenerentola" (Cinderella), and "The Italian Girl in Algiers," plus Donizetti's "The Elixir of Love" and "Don Pasquale."

Week 3: (Feb.29): Betting On Operetta: Spotlight on Light Opera.

We'll look at the world of French comic opera, including operettas by Offenbach, plus English delights by Gilbert and Sullivan.

Week 4 (March 7): Humor in the 19th and 20th Centuries—and Beyond!

From Giuseppe Verdi to Giacomo Puccini to Jake Heggie, composers have turned to comedy as a relief from their heavier labors. We'll sample a wide variety of humorous opera scenes from the Romantic Era through our own day.

No previous opera experience necessary. Just come prepared to watch, listen . . . and laugh.