



# THE CREATIVE ARTIST IN OPERA

Presented by: Simon Williams

**Tues. Jan. 17, Tues. Jan. 24, Mon. Jan. 30, and Tues. Feb. 7**  
**9:30 a.m. – 12 noon**

*Music Academy of the West, 1070 Fairway Road, Santa Barbara*

805-967-6030  
vistas@vistaslifelonglearning.org

During the 19th century, creative artists and the impulses that drove them became one of the most striking themes of European opera and theatre. This arose in large part from the Romantic movement (1770–1850), when the creative imagination came to be regarded as the most important—sometimes the sole—source of artistic production. Consequently artists, in whatever medium they worked, could lay claim to having a vital function in a society that was modernizing fast. Although such modernization brought the “Western” world vast wealth and power, such forces were also understood to have a dehumanizing impact. While both opera and theatre in many ways reflected and celebrated their society’s prosperity and dominance, they could also resist it. One of the ways in which that resistance manifested itself was in displaying the imagination of creative artists as having transformative influences on their audiences, spectators, and readers.



In this seminar we will explore this theme through operas in which creative artists are the central figures. All have potential to change society, but in some cases that potential is never reached due either to the failings of the artist whose imagination can inspire those who admire their work and but also destroy the artist her/himself. We will begin by exploring how the Orpheus myth introduced this theme into opera, its adoption by the Romantic movement, and then how it was adapted by Wagner in *Tannhäuser* (1845) and in his great comic opera, *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (1868), in which his idealistic

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**PLEASE REVIEW THE STATEMENT ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THIS FLYER REGARDING VACCINATION REQUIREMENTS.**

**Preferred registration deadline\* : January 10, 2023**

\*Early enrollment helps us with our planning; also, those who register by the preferred deadline will be given priority in case of over-enrollment.

## Enrollment form: **The Creative Artist in Opera**

**Tues.** Jan. 17, **Tues.** Jan. 24, **Mon.** Jan. 30, and **Tues.** Feb. 7, 2023

**VISTAS members \$50; non-members \$75**

Please note special dates

➤ **EITHER pay online** on our website by secure credit card through PayPal:  
<https://www.vistaslifelonglearning.org/current-courses>

➤ **OR mail this form** and your check to: VISTAS Lifelong Learning, Inc.  
P.O. Box 23228, Santa Barbara CA 93121

Number of persons \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Check # \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

*It is understood that attendance is limited to those who are fully vaccinated against Covid-19.*

depiction of an artistic utopia is among the most extended operatic explorations of the social power of art. This will be followed by a consideration of Offenbach's *Les contes d'Hoffmann* (1870), one of the most penetrating depictions of a Romantic poet whose visions dissolve before he can realize them. Moving into modern times, we will consider how Puccini's *Tosca* (1900) revolves around the conflict between the artist and society. Finally we will look at Richard Strauss's final masterpiece, *Capriccio* (1942), an extraordinarily attractive work, in which the entire action is taken up by determining what opera is from multiple viewpoints.



Richard Strauss



**Simon Williams**, now retired, was a Professor in the Department of Theater and Dance at UCSB for over 30 years. He has published widely in the fields of European continental theatre, the history of acting, Shakespearean performance, and operatic history. In addition, he has contributed numerous articles in his fields of specialty and is also an active reviewer for opera publications. Professor Williams is on the boards of Opera Santa Barbara and The Ensemble Theatre. In recent years he has presented a number of remarkable and memorable VISTAS courses.

### IMPORTANT COVID-19 POLICY

The health and safety of our attendees and their families are of utmost importance to us. **Accordingly, we are limiting attendance to those who are fully vaccinated.** Proof of vaccinations and boosters (digital Covid-19 Vaccination Card or a photo of your printed card) must be sent to our business manager via email ([vistas@vistaslifelonglearning.org](mailto:vistas@vistaslifelonglearning.org)) or text (805-967-6030). Participants may also be asked to show vaccination status on the first day of each course in case our records are incomplete. This needs to be done only once—your proof of vaccination will remain valid for all VISTAS events. Face masks are recommended, though not currently required, at VISTAS in-person, indoor gatherings.

## VISTAS Winter/Spring 2023 Calendar

**SUBJECT TO CHANGE; for up-to-date information, visit our website ([VistasLifelongLearning.org](http://VistasLifelongLearning.org)) frequently!**

Course / Event	Date(s)	Time	Venue
VISTAS Winter Social	Sunday, February 5	1:30 pm	Music Academy of the West
Monday Nonfiction Book Club / Dawn McGrew	4th Monday monthly	1:30 pm	Via Zoom
Four Great Ages of Western Civiliz. / Jim Hemmer	Wed. Jan. 11, 18, 25, Feb. 1	9:30 am	Bethany Congreg. Church
<b>The Creative Artist in Opera / Simon Williams</b>	<b>Jan. 17, Jan. 24, Jan. 30, Feb. 7</b>	<b>9:30 am</b>	<b>Music Academy of the West</b>
Sleep, Consciousness, and Non-Ordinary States	Thurs. Jan. 26	9:30 am	Bethany Congreg. Church
Criminal Law and Procedure / Patrick McKinley	Mon. Feb. 6, 13, 20, 27	9:30 am	Bethany Congreg. Church
"Sounds Good! Does It Really Work?" / P. Sokolove	Wed. Feb. 8, 15, 22	9:30 am	Bethany Congreg. Church
Rodgers and Hammerstein / Bob Weinman	"Tues. Feb. 14, 21, and 28	9:30 am	Music Academy of the West
Short Story Discussion Group Sect. 1 / Denny Klos	Wed. March 1, 8, 15, 22	1:00 pm	Bethany Congreg. Church
Short Story Discussion Group Sect. 2 / Denny Klos	Thurs. March 2, 9, 16, 23	1:00 pm	Valle Verde Social Room
Sending Smallpox into History / Bee Bloeser	Mon. March 6	9:30 am	Bethany Congreg. Church
Shakespearean History Plays / Mark Rose	Tues. March 7, 14, 21, 28	9:30 am	Montecito Covenant Church
The Allure of Fascism Here and Abroad / D. Bisno	Thurs. Mar. 23, 30, Apr. 6, 13	9:30 am	Music Academy of the West
Humans That Drove Computer Revol. / J. Ingraham	Mon. April 3, 10	9:30 am	Bethany Congreg. Church
Heroes and Rogues, Fifth Series / Gerry Corrigan	Weds. April 5, 12, 19	9:30 am	Bethany Congreg. Church
Joseph Haydn: From Court to City / Derek Katz	Weds. May 10, 17, 24	9:30 am	Music Academy of the West
The U.S. and China: AI Superpowers / Jim Hemmer	Thurs. May 11	9:30 am	Bethany Congreg. Church