

# German Opera, German Identity



Every year, more operas are performed in Germany than any other country. In the past decade, no city has staged more operas than Vienna. In Switzerland, more than 800 opera performances take place annually. Why is opera so important in German-speaking Europe? How did this art form help forge a distinctive German identity? To answer these questions, we will study works by Mozart, Beethoven, Wagner, Strauss, and Berg, among others.

“Identity” here will be broadly construed to include race, gender, class, and nationality. In addition to examining the persistent fascination with strong women, we’ll investigate the role of exoticism and colonialism, nation-building, mythology, and more. We’ll study cutting-edge stagings and current controversies while situating works in their historical and theoretical contexts.

No knowledge of music or German required.

Autumn 2019

Wednesdays 4:00-6:30pm

Professor Birkhold