

Mark Schubin's Opera & Movie Notes

Stage equipment and scenic projection:

- 1726 - Hamburg Opera uses motion-image projection (magic lantern) for scenic backdrop (possibly as early as 1678)
- 1849 - Paris Opera uses projected electric arc-light sunrise effect in 1849 production of Meyerbeer's *Le Prophete* (30 years before Edison's light bulb), later electrically projected moving fountain effects
- 1886 - Louis Le Prince applies for a patent for "Method and Apparatus for the projection of Animated Pictures in view of the adaptation to Operatic Scenes," according to the secretary of the Paris Opera
- 1896 - *Carmen* by Rosabel Morrison company at Lyceum Theater in Elizabeth, NJ uses projected movie (Eidoloscope) of a bullfight shot in Mexico as a scenic backdrop
- 1998 - Glass's *Monsters of Grace* premieres at Wolf Trap with stereoscopic 3-D visuals; audience wears glasses
- 2008 - *La damnation de Faust* at the Metropolitan Opera uses multiple HDTV projectors, infra-red cameras to detect motion, and computer-generated background interactivity

Early Edison movie-development quotes:

- *Photographic News*, May 22, 1891, "My intention is to have such a happy combination of photography and electricity that a man can sit down in his parlor and see depicted upon a curtain the forms of the players in opera upon a distant stage, and, as he sees their movements, he will hear the sound of their voices as they talk or sing or laugh."
- *English Mechanic and World of Science*, June 19, 1891, "Yes, it's true. You can sit in your parlor and see Chauncey Depew come out just as if he was introducing Stanley at the Metropolitan Opera House." "Just the same way with an opera. You watch the screen, and see a picture of the stage, full size. Marie Jansen comes out and sings."
"If it is desired to reproduce an opera or a play, I will get the company to give a dress rehearsal for me. I place back of the orchestra on a table a compound machine consisting of a phonograph and a kinetograph, with a capacity of thirty minutes continuous work. The orchestra plays, the curtain rises, and the opera begins. Both machines work simultaneously, one recording sound and the other taking photographs, recording motion at the rate of forty-six photographs per second. Afterwards, the photographic strip is developed and replaced in the machine, a projecting lens is substituted for the photographic lens, and the reproducing part of the phonograph is adjusted."
- *Century* magazine, June 1894, "I believe that in coming years... grand opera can be given at the Metropolitan Opera House at New York... with artists and musicians long since dead."

"Silent" movie era:

- 1852 - Paris Opera special-effects master Jules Duboscq patents 1st photographic motion-picture projection system (in 3D!)
- 1894 - Edison releases *Carmencita* Spanish dancer film (name used in *Carmen* just before the Habanera)
- 1896 - Operetta films by Max Sklandowsky (either *Der Vogelhändler* or *Der Betelstudent*)
- 1897 - Georges Hatot's *Faust*, released by the Lumiere brothers, based on Gounod's opera
- 1898 - *The Daughter of the Regiment* is the first filmed opera (two minutes)
- 1898 - The complete opera *Martha* is shot, and, then, in
- 1899 - *Martha* is shown at the Eden Musée with live performers singing behind the screen; technique popular though 1922's *Jenseits des Stromes* (with projected score at bottom of screen; other systems for cueing musicians in opera movies included a small image of the conductor at screen bottom and signal lights in the set)
- 1899 - Georges Méliès's *Cendrillon* movie based on the same year's Massenet opera of the same name
- 1902 - *Faust et Méphisto* by Alice Guy, first female film director, for Gaumont (not her first movie)
- 1915 - Geraldine Farrar becomes a silent-movie star based on her success onstage as Carmen.
- 1919 - Hugo Gernsback proposes live sound distributed by radio to cinemas simultaneously projecting opera movies

"Sound" movie era:

- 1894 - 1st known sync-sound movie uses music from Planquette's opera *Les cloches de Corneville* (restored in 2000)
- 1900 - At Phono-Cinéma-Théâtre at Paris Exhibition, synchronized-sound arias are screened, including Victor Maurel singing arias from *Don Giovanni* and *Falstaff* and Émile Cossira singing aria from *Roméo et Juliette*
- 1902 - Aria from *Carmen* in an Alber's Electro Talking Bioscope movie in Netherlands
- 1905 - Cinémato-Gramo-Théâtre offers sync-sound opera arias
- 1906 - Cinemafono Pagliej sound-movie system introduced in Rome specifically for opera
- 1907 - "Complete" *Faust* (22 arias), using Chronophone system
- 1908 - Actor lip-syncs to Caruso's "La donna è mobile" in Alfred Duskes sync-sound Cinephon *Ach Wie So Trügerisch*
- 1913 - First complete opera shot in U.S. with synchronized sound, *Pagliacci*
- 1930 - First opera shot as movie (not stage production), Auber's *Fra Diavolo*, released in French, German, and Italian versions
- 1933 - *The Devil's Brother* is a Laurel & Hardy version of *Fra Diavolo*
- 2009 - Opéra de Rennes *Don Giovanni* live 3D to cinemas (before *Avatar*); 2010 Folkoperan *Faust*; 2011 ENO *Lucrezia*
- 2011 - Non-live stereoscopic 3D *Carmen* from London's Royal Opera opens in cinemas worldwide

Scores:

- 1908 - First film score, by opera-composer Camille Saint-Saens, for *L'Assassinat du Duc de Guise*
- 1910 - Music cue sheet for first horror film, Edison's *Frankenstein*, calls for music from operas *Der Freischütz* for monster and *Lohengrin* for wedding
- 1915 - Clune's Auditorium (Los Angeles) screening of *The Clansman (Birth of a Nation)* featured music from multiple operas (Mozart, Offenbach, Rossini, Verdi, etc.)
- 1926 - Richard Strauss writes new music for a silent-movie version of his *Der Rosenkavalier*

Menotti quote (1977):

“To write an opera where the composer can go from the seashore into a room and then up a mountain... should be the challenge. I would love a commission to write an opera for film.”

Operas existing only in other movies (opera star Kiri Te Kanawa recorded an aria from *Salammbô*):

<u>Year</u>	<u>Opera</u>	<u>Movie</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Opera</u>	<u>Movie</u>
1931	<i>Les bohémiens</i>	<i>Le million</i>	1944	<i>The Magic Voice</i>	<i>The Climax</i>
1934	<i>La signora di tutt</i>	<i>La signora di tutti</i>	1945	<i>Columbus</i>	<i>Where Do We Go From Here?</i>
1934	<i>Devil's Island</i>	<i>The Broken Melody</i>	1945	aria "Testimony"	<i>Wonder Man</i>
1936	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	<i>Give Us This Night</i>	1946	<i>My Country</i>	<i>Two Sisters from Boston</i>
1936	<i>Carnival</i>	<i>Charlie Chan at the Opera</i>	1946	<i>Marie Antoinette</i>	<i>Two Sisters from Boston</i>
1936	<i>Isabelle</i>	<i>Fatal Lady</i>	1947	<i>Take My Life</i>	<i>Take My Life</i>
1936	<i>Bal Masqué</i>	<i>Fatal Lady</i>	1949	<i>The Loves of Fatima</i>	<i>Everybody Does It</i>
1937	<i>Regina della Scala</i>	<i>Regina della Scala</i>	1949	<i>The Princess</i>	<i>That Midnight Kiss</i>
1937	<i>Czaritza</i>	<i>Maytime</i>	1949	<i>The Glass Mountain</i>	<i>The Glass Mountain</i>
1937	<i>Broken Melody</i>	<i>Broken Melody</i>	1951	<i>Il Ritorno de Cesare</i>	<i>Strictly Dishonorable</i>
1939	<i>Balalaika</i>	<i>Balalaika</i>	1962	<i>Saint Joan</i>	<i>The Phantom of the Opera</i>
1939	<i>Arlesiana</i>	<i>Wife, Husband and Friend</i>	1976	<i>The Kingdom of Love</i>	<i>Harry and Walter Go to New York</i>
1940	<i>Penelope</i>	<i>Ritorno</i>	1989	<i>Don Juan Triumphant</i>	<i>The Phantom of the Opera</i>
1941	<i>Salammbô</i>	<i>Citizen Kane</i>	1990	<i>Die Schlumpf</i>	<i>Dick Tracy</i>
1943	<i>Amour et Gloire</i>	<i>The Phantom of the Opera</i>	2001	<i>Vide Cor Meum</i>	<i>Hannibal</i>
1943	<i>Le Prince de Caucasia</i>	<i>The Phantom of the Opera</i>			

Crossed fields:

- 1898 - Leopoldo Fregoli makes first movies about opera composers
- 1912 - Walter Kollo's *Filmzauber* is first opera about cinema, followed by *Die Kinokönigen* (1913), *Der Kinotopponkel* (1913), *La signorina del cinematografo* (1914), *Der Filmstern* (1920), *Les trois souhaits* (1928), and *Il pianista del Globe* (1963)
- 1915 - Mascagni's *Rapsodia Satanica* called first "film opera" (opera written specifically for screen), followed by *Jenseits des Stromes* (1922), *Zwei Kravaten* (1930), *The Robber Symphony* (1936), *La cireuse électrique* (1971), and *The Love of Destiny* (1983)
- 1926 - Vitaphone moves to the Manhattan Opera House; *Don Juan* and *The Jazz Singer* shot there
- 1927 - Term "horse opera" used to describe western movie
- 1938 - Opera-composer Erich Korngold (*Die tote Stadt*) wins best-score Academy Award for *The Adventures of Robin Hood*
- 1949 - Term "space opera" used to describe science-fiction movie
- 1951 - Academy-award winning composer Bernard Herrmann writes opera *Wuthering Heights*
- 1951 - Menotti directs film of his *The Medium* (previously directed for TV in 1948 and stage in 1946)
- 1952 - First live opera transmission to cinemas (Met's *Carmen*, 31 theaters in 27 cities)

Operas based on movies:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Opera</u>	<u>Movie</u>
1922	<i>La forfaiture</i>	<i>The Cheat</i> (1915)
1963	<i>Our Man in Havana</i>	<i>Our Man in Havana</i> (1959) and its source novel
1982	<i>La Strada</i>	<i>La Strada</i> (1954)
1992	<i>McTeague</i>	<i>Greed</i> (1924) and its source novel
1993	<i>Orphée</i>	<i>Orphée</i> (1949), screenplay used as libretto
1994	<i>La Belle et la Bête</i> (Glass)	<i>La Belle et la Bête</i> (1946), screenplay used as libretto
1994	<i>La Belle et la Bête</i> (Ruegg)	<i>La Belle et la Bête</i> (1946)
1994	<i>The Second Mrs. Kong</i>	<i>King Kong</i> (1933)
1996	<i>Bed and Sofa</i>	<i>Bed and Sofa</i> (1926)

Some "silent" movies about opera themes:

- 1909 - *Le ténor fait des conquêtes*
- 1914 - *Grand Opera in Rubeville*
- 1915 - *The Opera Singer's Romance*
- 1915 - *What Happened to Father*
- 1916 - *The Prima Donna's Husband*
- 1916 - *The Yellow Passport*
- 1916 - *Two Seats at the Opera*
- 1917 - *The Master Passion*
- 1917 - *The Snarl*
- 1918 - *Das Leben einer Primadonna*
- 1919 - *Heartsease*
- 1920 - *Greater than Fame*
- 1920 - *Out of the Storm*
- 1920 - *Once to Every Woman*
- 1922 - *How Women Love*
- 1926 - *The Torrent*

Some opera stage-directors who directed movies:

<u>Opera stage director</u>	<u>Movie</u>
Peter Brook	<i>Seven Days/Seven Nights, Lord of the Flies, Tell Me Lies</i>
Jonathan Miller	<i>Take a Girl Like You, Amerika</i>
Otto Schenk	<i>Merry-Go-Round (Reigen), Hin und her</i>
Franco Zeffirelli	<i>Tea with Mussolini, Jane Eyre, Hamlet, Endless Love, The Champ, many more</i>

Some movie directors who directed stage operas (not even counting famous directors of opera movies, such as Luis Buñuel, Abel Gance, Joseph Losey, Max Ophüls, Michael Powell, and Otto Preminger):

<u>Film Director</u>	<u>Opera on Stage</u>
Woody Allen	<i>Gianni Schichi</i>
Robert Altman	<i>A Wedding, McTeague</i>
Anthony Asquith	<i>Carmen</i>
Bruce Beresford	<i>A Streetcar Named Desire, Rigoletto, La fanciulla del West</i>
Ingmar Bergman	<i>The Threepenny Opera, The Merry Widow, The Rake's Progress</i>
Liliana Cavani	<i>La traviata, La vestale</i>
Francis Ford Coppola	<i>The Visit of the Old Lady</i>
David Cronenberg	<i>The Fly</i>
Doris Dörrie	<i>Così fan tutte, Turandot, Rigoletto</i>
Sergei Eisenstein	<i>Die Walküre</i>
William Friedkin	<i>Wozzek, Il tabarro, Suor Angelica, Ariadne auf Naxos, many others</i>
Peter Greenaway	<i>Christopher Columbus, many others</i>
Peter Hall	<i>Die Zauberflöte, many others</i>
Michael Haneke	<i>Don Giovanni, Così fan tutte</i>
Werner Herzog	<i>Doktor Faustus, Lohengrin, Giovanna d'Arco, La Donna del lago, Parsifal, many others</i>
John Huston	<i>The Mines of Sulphur</i>
Abbas Kiarostami	<i>Così fan tutte</i>
Baz Luhrman	<i>La bohème</i>
Rouben Mamoulian	<i>Porgy and Bess (premiere)</i>
Garry Marshall	<i>La Grande Duchesse de Gérolstein</i>
Anthony Minghella	<i>Madama Butterfly</i>
Roman Polanski	<i>Lulu, Rigoletto, Les contes d'Hoffmann</i>
Sally Potter	<i>Carmen</i>
Max Reinhardt	<i>The Eternal Road (cast included Sam Jaffe, Sidney Lumet, & Dick Van Patten)</i>
Herbert Ross	<i>La bohème</i>
Ken Russell	<i>The Rake's Progress, Mefistofele, Princess Ida, many more</i>
Maximillian Schell	<i>Lohengrin</i>
John Schlesinger	<i>Der Rosenkavalier, Les contes d'Hoffmann, Un ballo in maschera</i>
Christoph Schlingensief	<i>Parsifal</i>
Volker Schlöndorff	<i>Katja Kabanova</i>
István Szabó	<i>Tannhäuser</i>
Andrei Tarkovsky	<i>Boris Godunov</i>
Julie Taymor	<i>Die Zauberflöte</i>
Luchino Visconti	<i>La vestale, La sonnambula, La traviata, Anna Bolena, Iphigénie en Tauride, many others</i>
Zhang Yimou	<i>The First Emperor, Turandot</i>

Some movies based on the stories of the operas in them:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Movie</u>	<u>Opera</u>
1937	<i>Zauber de Bohème</i>	<i>La bohème</i>
1939	<i>Il Sogno di Butterfly</i>	<i>Madama Butterfly</i>
1940	<i>Amami, Alfredo!</i>	<i>La traviata</i>
1942	<i>Vertigine</i>	<i>Adriana Lecouvreur</i>
1946	<i>Davanti a lui tremava tutta Roma</i>	<i>Tosca</i>
1947	<i>Her Wonderful Lie</i>	<i>La bohème</i>
1980	<i>Don Juan, Karl-Liebkecht-strasse 78</i>	<i>Don Giovanni</i>
1985	<i>Babel Opera</i>	<i>Don Giovanni</i>
1993	<i>M. Butterfly</i>	<i>Madama Butterfly (via the play)</i>