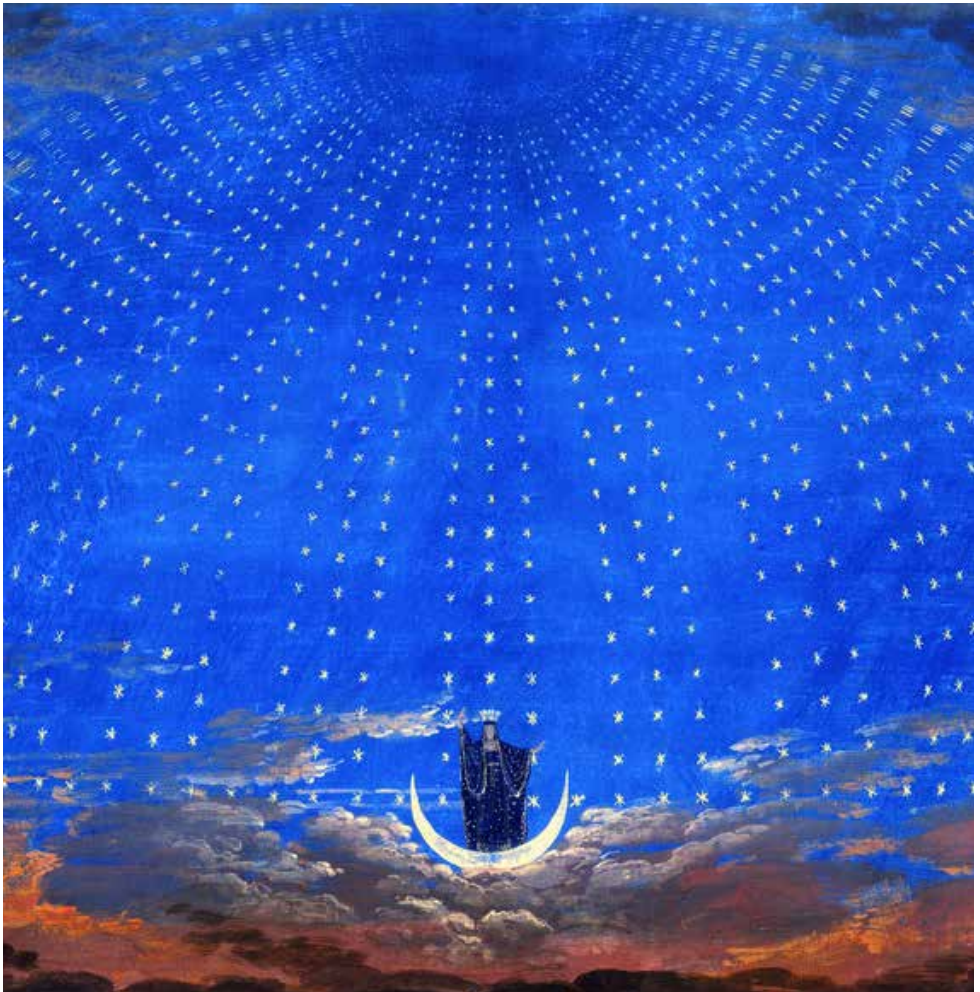


# OBERTO

Oxford Brookes: Exploring Research Trends in Opera



## ABOUT OBERTO

OBERTO (Oxford Brookes: Exploring Research Trends in Opera) is the opera research unit at Oxford Brookes University and provides a forum for the investigation of opera in all of its interdisciplinary richness. We explore the history, performance and reception of opera, opera's political, social and cultural contexts, and critical debates about opera both historical and contemporary. We hold a conference each autumn as well as hosting lectures and seminars by visiting academics and opera industry professionals. OBERTO also acts as a hub for the rich programme of opera-related teaching at Oxford Brookes, from undergraduate to doctoral levels.



## WHO ARE WE?

OBERTO, which was established by Dr Alexandra Wilson and Dr Barbara Eichner in 2011, brings together staff and students at Oxford Brookes working in opera studies. We regularly collaborate with early career researchers and visiting scholars. MA and PhD students are fully integrated into OBERTO's activities and help to organise events, including a student conference.

Alexandra Wilson is a musicologist and cultural historian specialising in late 19th- and 20th-century opera viewed within its critical, cultural and political contexts. A particular focus of her research has been the reception and politicisation of Puccini's works. Alexandra is currently working on a new large-scale project about operatic culture in 1920s Britain and is also interested in the ways in which postmodern culture exploits opera in constructions of the past. She is the author of two books: *The Puccini Problem: Opera, Nationalism, and Modernity* (Cambridge University Press) and *Opera: A Beginner's Guide* (Oneworld).

Barbara Eichner is a music historian who counts, among her many and varied interests, the stage works of Richard Wagner, Richard Strauss and Ethel Smyth in their historical, cultural and aesthetic contexts. Several chapters of her monograph *History in Mighty Sounds: Musical Constructions of German National Identity, 1848-1914* (Boydell) investigate the role of opera in the formation of German national identities in the second half of the 'long' 19th century. She is particularly interested in works that are rooted in national myth and history, and questions of trans-national and cross-cultural transfer and reception.



## STUDY WITH US

At Oxford Brookes University we offer opportunities for the study of opera at all levels, but particularly at master's and doctoral level. Our postgraduate students automatically become members of OBERTO and have the opportunity to attend a wide variety of extra-curricular activities that complement their studies.

## MASTER'S LEVEL STUDY

Two of the pathways on the MA in Music at Oxford Brookes allow students to specialise in opera. Students can either study opera within the context of a broader examination of 19th-century music and its role in society or explore correlations between opera and film music. The course also offers the opportunity to build networks with industry contacts through a professional experience module.



## PHD LEVEL STUDY

OBERTO staff welcome enquiries from applicants interested in studying for a PhD. Doctoral supervision is available in areas including:

- Opera and operatic culture of the 19th and early 20th centuries
- Verdi, Puccini, Wagner, Strauss, *fin-de-siècle* 'redemption operas'
- Music and national identities
- Opera and gender
- Religion and the church on the operatic stage
- Opera and politics
- Opera in popular culture (especially opera in film)
- The staging of opera
- Reception studies, canon formation and opera historiography
- Singers, recordings and constructions of celebrity
- Operatic stereotypes

## EVENTS AND OUTREACH

Recent and forthcoming OBERTO events have included:

- Conferences on: opera reception studies; operatic masculinities; operatic anniversaries; stereotypes surrounding opera
- A conference and network for postgraduate research students in opera studies
- Talks by opera house personnel and opera directors
- Public lectures by visiting academics
- Trips to see live operas



**OBERTO staff also undertake public engagement work, by presenting broadcasts for BBC Radio 3, writing programme essays and giving pre-performance talks for major opera houses, and writing for publications such as *The Guardian* and *Opera*. Staff and students use the OBERTO blog to engage with a wider public interested in opera.**

Opera scholarship has formed a centrepiece of recent Brookes Music RAE/REF submissions. Alexandra Wilson's impact case study for REF 2014 focused upon the ways in which she disseminated her research on the reception of Puccini's operas to a large non-specialist, international audience. She drew upon her research findings in programme essays for the Royal Opera House and opera companies abroad, Radio 3 broadcasts, a Glyndebourne podcast, a pre-performance talk for ENO, and a book about opera for general readers.

## CONTACT

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