Opera as a Multimedia Document

Niels W. Lund

UiT Arctic University of Norway, niels.windfeld.lund@uit.no

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Opera as a Multimedia Document

Niels Windfeld Lund
Emeritus Professor
The Arctic University of Norway, UiT

Published by IdeaExchange@UAkron, 2017
A multimedia document?

- A multimedia document is a result of a documentation process in which something is demonstrated by using multiple media.
- The media are always being used in a specific way within a specific framework.
- A document can always be identified in time and space.
- An opera is a result of a documentation process in which multiple persons have used media in some way.
Who makes an opera?

- Librettist – libretto – text
- Composer – score – music
- Singers – performance – song
- Musicians – performance – music
- Dancers – performance – dance
- Director – staging – interpretation
- Choreographer – choreography
- Set designer – set design – props
- Technicians – sound, light, logistics
- Opera manager – planning – casting
What media are used?

- Words – voices
- Tones – music instruments
- Dance – movements
- Design – stage design and props
When opera was new

- Florentine Camerata (1570–1600), a humanist group of philosophers, artists and merchants who discussed the art of the stage
- Monody (1600–1640), lyric poetry performed aloud
- Arias, or “recitatives,” were sung expressive melodies that emerged in 1700s and became a defining aspect of opera
- Opus (work): An opera document in multiple parts
C. Monteverdi: Orphee (1607)

- Classical drama, but novel in incorporating both music and dance, making it an opera
- Was forgotten until 1911
- Click the image below to see a video of Orfeo rosa del ciel

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In the meantime – opera in the 17th and 18th centuries

- Opera was composed of dance, drama and music in ways that could be changed from day to day.
- Opera could be a part of one long night together with concerts and ballets.
Pergolesi: La Serva Padrona

- G.B. Pergolesi (1710–1736)
- Introduced intermezzo between acts in opera serie (il prigionier superbo)

View some examples of Pergolesi’s work:
- Sempre in contrasti
- Stizzoso mio
Mozart: The Magic Flute (1791)

- Employing dramatic light and darkness
- Emphasizing magical forces hidden in music
- Flute and bells

Compare these two examples:

- Papageno glockenspiel 1971
- Papageno glockenspiel 2006
G. Verdi was the first composer to be considered as the prime creative force of the opera—musical drama as modern opera.

- Fleming, Villazon, Bruson
- Netrebko, Villazon, Hampson

Directors and stage designers are important today to make opera new, but how will it be in the future?
Questions arise in modern opera:

- Is it directors, cameramen and media producers who define opera today?
- What about networked-based opera?
World Opera: La Serva Padrona

- Opera has always been changing
- A true experimental art form

Click the image to view La Serva Padrona in world opera format