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Opera as a Multimedia Document

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Lund: Opera as a Multimedia Document

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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*
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?
World Opera at World Theatre in Tromsø, Norway

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