

Time: 10:30-noon

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Topic: **The Lower the Better: Famous Operatic Bassos**

I. Introductions and Announcements

- A. Interest in attending NJ Symphony in New Brunswick, 2023-24: Selection of concert for group attendance
- B. Music Appreciation webpage: <https://williamrfernekes.com/music-appreciation-series>

II. What is a Basso? (Source: <https://theopera101.com/operaabc/voices/>)

- A. Bass-Baritone: The bass-baritone can sing as low as a bass but just as comfortably in higher-lying tessitura close to the baritone range. This voice type was predominantly written for from the mid 19th Century onwards, but several Mozart roles, written in the era before baritone had even become a vocal type, are commonly given to singers in this class.
- B. Buffo Bass: Buffo bass roles are funny, comic relief, roles found most frequently in Bel Canto works. They are very distinct parts with extensive “patter” singing requirements, the text often a tongue-twisting nightmare of alliteration.
- C. The lowest voice type in opera is the basso profundo. These singers produce a wall of rich, unending sound with limited vibrato but enormous power. The parts are mostly limited to older male villains, though not exclusively.

III. J. S. Bach-Solo cantatas for one voice and instrumentalists

- A. BWV 82-Ich Habe Genug (“I am content”) 1727

IV. English Oratorio

- A. Handel-Semele

V. Italian Opera

- A. Rossini-Barber of Seville
- B. Verdi-Falstaff
- C. Verdi-Don Carlos (King Phillip’s Aria)
- D. Boito-Mefistofele

- VI. German Opera
 - A. Mozart—Le Nozze di Figaro
 - B. Mozart—The Magic Flute
 - C. Wagner—Excerpts from the Ring Cycle

- VII. French Opera
 - A. Gounod-Faust
 - B. Massenet-Don Quichotte

- VIII. Russian Opera
 - A. Mussorgsky-Boris Godunov and Songs and Dances of Death
 - B. Borodin-Prince Igor

Supplementary Resources

Boris Godunov at the Metropolitan Opera:

<https://www.metopera.org/discover/archives/notes-from-the-archives/from-the-archives-boris-godunov-at-the-met/>

Understanding Voice Types: Bass: <https://www.operforall.co.uk/understanding-voice-types-bass/>

San Francisco Opera: A Short Guide to Opera Voices:

<https://www.sfopera.com/learn/about-opera/a-short-guide-to-opera-voices/>

YouTube: “The Greatest Operatic Bass on Record” (Jose Mardones)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KN8wxSgaCfw>

YouTube: The Great Bases of Opera-Cesare Siepi:

<https://youtu.be/0GZdPWLI20?feature=shared>

YouTube: “Winterreise” by Franz Schubert with Kurt Moll:

<https://youtu.be/8QM9lq2tIg?feature=shared>

YouTube: Mussorgsky’s Boris Godunov, Death Scene with Boris Christoff:

https://youtu.be/oZrNvc225_0?feature=shared

YouTube: Massenet’s Don Quichotte, Aria from the Death Scene with Nicolai Ghiaurov:

<https://youtu.be/6KlAowuXRJ8?feature=shared>

YouTube: Le Caid: Air du Tambour Major with Pol Plancon:
<https://youtu.be/ysZdyaP62As?feature=shared>

YouTube: Excerpts from Wagner's Die Meistersinger and The Ring Cycle with Jose Van
Dam: <https://youtu.be/umVum2C8l3s?feature=shared>