Student Study Outline

Chapter 38: Romantic Opera

1. Characteristics of Romantic Opera
   1. What are some characteristics of Romantic opera?
   2. There was a wide range of subject matter for Romantic operas, including:
      1. Librettos based on ancient legends
      2. Composers who created their own libretti
      3. Romantic novels, plays, poetry used for inspiration. Examples include:
         1. *Der Freischütz* (*The Freeshooter*) 1821
         2. *La Muette de Protici* (*The Deaf Woman of Portici*) 1832
2. Italian Romantic Opera
   1. Italy remained the center of opera during the Romantic era.
   2. What is the *bel canto* style?
   3. What is a double aria, and how does it relate to a cavatina?
      1. *Scena e cavatina* refers to\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
   4. Famous Italian opera composers include:
      1. Gioachino Rossini (1792-1868), who wrote *Il Barbiere di Siviglia (The Barber of Seville)* (1816)
      2. Gaetano Donizetti (1797-1848), who wrote *Lucia di Lammermoor* (1835)
      3. Vincenzo Bellini (1801-1835), who wrote *Norma* (1831)
3. Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901)
   1. Born near Busetto (Northern Italy)
   2. Which three of Verdi’s operas are among the most commonly performed today?
   3. What was Verdi’s connection with the *Risorgimento*?
   4. *Rigoletto* (1851)
      1. What was the source material for the libretto of this opera?
      2. What is the basic plot?
      3. Listening Map: “La donna è mobile,” from Rigoletto, Act III by Verdi
         1. What is a canzone?
4. French Romantic Opera
   1. How were French “rescue” operas different from Italian operas?
   2. How did French opera change after Napoleon?
      1. What is a grand opera?
      2. Giacomo Meyerbeer (1791-1864), who wrote *Les Hugenots* (1836)
5. German Romantic Opera
   1. Before the Romantic era, Germany did not have a well-established operatic tradition.
   2. Written by Carl Maria von Weber, what was one of the most important early German Romantic operas?
6. Richard Wagner (1813-1883)
   1. How were Wagner’s operas revolutionary?
   2. In addition to writing the music, Wagner often also wrote his own \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
   3. What were Wagner’s essays about?
   4. Why did Wagner believe that opera had deviated from its role as high art, and what did he intend to do to fix this deviation?
      1. What is a music drama?
      2. Explain the concept of Gesamtkunstwerk.
   5. Other major works:
      1. Some of Wagner’s most experimental music comes in his opera based on medieval romance called \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
      2. Wagner’s sole comic opera was \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
   6. Wagner’s dramas
      1. The libretto and music combine in a continuous melodic flow
      2. The orchestra should be used to achieve dramatic power
   7. What is a leitmotif, and how does it function in Wagner’s operas?
7. Making Connections: Musical Cues in Wagner and Beyond
   1. Wagner was the first to develop motives into a complex, sophisticated network. How is this technique still used by composers today?
8. Wagner’s *Der Ring des Nibelungen (The Ring of the Nibelung)*
   1. Who was “Mad King Ludwig,” and how did he support Wagner?
   2. *The Ring* consists of four separate operas. What are they?
   3. Listening Map: *Das Rhinegold*, “The God’s Entrance into Valhalla” by Wagner
      1. Approximately how many motives are in *Das Rheingold*?
      2. Which motives are heard in this excerpt, and how are they musically distinct?
   4. What influence did Wagner have on music, drama, and culture?