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Please join us for our exciting Opera  
 at

Oakhurst, 2024: Rapture & Calamity: Extremes of Passion in Opera. As this is the 28th anniversary of the popular program, and reservations are on a first come, first served basis, we advise early registration.

Please complete the form below and mail or reserve online through our secure server:

<https://eccoyosemite.org/ecco-event-registration>

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**ACCOMMODATION DESIRED:**

\$997.00 Per Person- Double Occupancy

Roommate: \_\_\_\_\_

\$1,157.00 Per Person- Single Occupancy

(limited availability)

\$737.00 Per Person- Commuter

(includes everything but lodging)

A \$100.00 per person non-refundable deposit is required to secure your reservation. Final Payments are due by March 4th.

Credit Card reservations will have a 4% surcharge

Checks are preferred

MC/VISA/Discover Card# \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_ CVV # \_\_\_\_\_



*Revel in ECCO's simplicity and serenity . Located 12 miles from the south entrance to Yosemite National Park and an hour north of Fresno, the Episcopal Conference Center Oakhurst sits at an elevation of 3,100 feet. We're high enough to escape the central valley fog yet low enough to enjoy a dusting of snow in the winter, along with a colorful four-season climate. ECCO's grounds encompass 160 acres forested with oak, incense cedar, manzanita and ponderosa. Our dining room overlooks an inviting pond on which our swan holds court. Our comfortable lodge rooms are all private, each with ground level entry. Every room has at least 2 beds, with a variety of configurations. Handicapped rooms are available upon request. The majority of our discussions take place in Sumner Walters Conference Center, which is not far from our beautiful Lyles Dining hall. Our expert kitchen team lovingly prepares superb meals for you, from our state-of-the-art kitchen. Meals are served buffet style and with a large variety of options. ECCO's staff is committed providing you a home away from home.*

[www. ECCOyosemite.org](http://www.ECCOyosemite.org)

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Opera at Oakhurst Presents:  
**Rapture & Calamity:  
 Extremes of Passion in  
 Opera**  
 April 4th-8th, 2024



*Episcopal Conference Center*

*Oakhurst*

*Presented by*

*Simon Williams*



# RAPTURE & CALAMITY: EXTREMES OF PASSION IN OPERA

**T**here are good grounds to claim that over the centuries the most persistent subject in all of the arts has been love in its infinite expressions. This is especially so with opera, though with a particular emphasis. Opera from its start has been noted for its extravagance; it resides more comfortably at the extremes of experience rather than at the median; and above all, it both exalts and anathematizes passion, often in the same work. In every period attempts have been made on stage to harness passion by subjecting it to rigorous moral discipline, but invariably that rigor fails to control passion and operas end, sometimes in celebrations of sensuality, more frequently, in calamity.

Both the violent self-destructiveness of passion and the redeeming power of love will be the theme of Opera at Oakhurst 2024. It is a capacious subject, and we will devote five days to exploring its treatment on the operatic stage over four centuries. The Baroque opera is marked by the most delightfully bizarre perspectives on sexual love, which offer a rare mix of farce and pathos, especially in the operas of Monteverdi, such as *L'incoronazione di Poppea* (Venice, 1643), and those of his pupil Cavalli, such as *Giasone* (Venice, 1649) and *La Calisto* (Venice, 1651). After considering the Baroque, we examine how this theme was treated by five of the greatest operatic composers. Perhaps there is no opera in which love is treated as ironically as it is in Mozart's *Don Giovanni* (Prague, 1787), where the libertine hero meets his spectacular deaths as the libertine values of the European Enlightenment collide with the eternal forces of divine retribution. We will, for the first time in several years at Oakhurst, return to Wagner's *Ring* which includes, arguably, the most pathos-laden tragedy in operatic literature – *Die Walküre* (Munich, 1869) – one of the supreme expressions of Romantic love and its agonizing destruction by a brutal society. Our survey of the classic repertoire will end with Verdi's *Otello*, the one opera that equals in stature the Shakespearean play on which it was based and which demonstrates in purest form the theme of the self-destructiveness of passion.

This self-destructiveness has perhaps obsessed our own age even more than previous times. Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* (Milan, 1904) offers an intensely tragic though possibly gentler exposé of our theme, while Richard Strauss' eruptive shocker *Salome* (Dresden, 1905) casts a Freudian light upon one of biblical history's most notorious figures. We will end the weekend by considering two of the greatest masterpieces of post-World War I opera, Janáček's deeply moving tragedy, *Kát'a Kabanová* (Brno, 1921), and Shostakovich's boisterously apocalyptic opera, *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* (Leningrad, 1934), which mixes the extremes of harsh satire with the grimmest of tragedies.

The seminar will be composed of talks by Professor Williams, who will also lead discussions on the operas we are studying. Talks will be illustrated by ample musical and video excerpts and three complete operas will be played in evening sessions. As we have done for many years now, there will be a vocal concert by young professional singers on the Saturday evening.

(Program details may be subject to change without notice)



***Our low price covers everything!***  
***In addition to lodging and Professor Williams' wonderful instructional seminars, our pricing includes all regular meals, from Thursday's arrival social and dinner to Monday's departure lunch, with Saturday afternoon tea and the grand finale social and banquet on Sunday.***

***A \$100.00 per person non-refundable deposit is required to secure your reservation with the balance due no later than March 4th.***

***Cancellations between February 14th and March 4th incur a \$275.00 cancellation fee; After March 4th all fees are non-refundable.***

***For more information, please contact***

***ECCO: Phone: (559)683-8162***

***E-mail: ecco@sti.net***

***Mailing Address: 43803 Highway 41,***

***Oakhurst, CA 93644***

As we enter our twenty-eighth year, Opera at Oakhurst is proud to welcome back Simon Williams, Professor Emeritus of the Department of Theater and Dance at the University of California, Santa Barbara. He has taught at universities on four continents, including the Universities of Regina and Alberta in Canada, Cornell University and, since 1984, at UC Santa Barbara. He has published widely in the fields of European continental theatre, the history of acting and Shakespearean performance, and operatic history. His major publications include, *German Actors of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (Greenwood, 1985), *Shakespeare on the German Stage, 1586-1914* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), widely considered to be the definitive volume in its field, *Richard Wagner and Festival Theatre* (Greenwood, 1994) and *Wagner and the Romantic Hero* (Cambridge, 2004); he also coedited *A History of German Theatre* (Cambridge, 2008). He has contributed numerous articles in his fields of specialty in leading learned journals and edited collections, including *The Cambridge Companion to Grand Opera* (Cambridge, 2003), *The Cambridge Companion to Opera Studies* (2013) and *The Opera Handbook* (Oxford University Press, 2014). He recently edited *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Stage Actors and Acting* (2015) and is currently co-editing its sequel, *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Stage Directors and Directing*. He reviews opera in Los Angeles for *Opera News* and *Opernwelt* and has directed opera and spoken theatre at UCSB, including most recently, Mozart's *Così fan tutte*, Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, Pirandello's *Right You Are If You Think So!*, Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*, and Brecht's *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*. An award-winning teacher, he has spoken at opera leagues and guilds in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Honolulu, Chicago, Washington DC, New York, Seattle, Boston, Sydney, and Melbourne, as well as at several cities in Europe, including the Bayreuth Festival.

