

THE ARTS SOCIETY OF CHICHESTER LAVANT VALLEY
In association with the Arts Societies of Chichester, City of Chichester
and Chichester Evening
Study Day at The Assembly Room, Chichester 25 March, 2025

Sarah Lenton

Opera, Its History and Improbable Success Story

Sarah Lenton has been working in this glorious but disconcerting art form for her entire professional life. Here, she unpacks some of its idiosyncrasies – the huge voices, big gestures, and bizarre plots – and covers practically everything and everyone involved in putting on a show. She charts opera from its classic 17th-century beginnings to its evolution in the 18th, (brocade, high voices, happy endings), and on through war and revolution to the 19th, (nationalism, grand opera, and dead sopranos). As we hit the troubled 20th-century, the genre begins to spin out of control but, to everyone's surprise, it's landed in the 21st in good shape, with more festivals and opera houses than ever. On the way we discover how closely connected opera is with the politics and tastes of the people who pay for it.

We also look at the ultimate theatre man, Puccini, whose six shows continue to keep most opera houses afloat and we'll go backstage to see how on earth - and against all odds - it all comes together.

10:45 Lecture 1 Opera, the Melting Pot of Culture

11:45 Tea/coffee break (please bring your own flask or takeaway)

12:00 Lecture 2 The Life and Times of Puccini

1:00-2:00 Lunch Interval

2:00-3:00 Lecture 3 Backstage at the Opera

Bring your own lunch and we will provide a glass of wine or soft drinks.

Cost for the day: Members £35; guests, who must be accompanied by a member, £40 if places are available. Please give the name and address of guests and you will be notified of availability with an accompanying request for payment.