



Smithsonian Associates

A CELEBRATION OF FRENCH MUSIC

Dr. Rachel Franklin

Tuesday, March 28, 2023 - 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. ET

WK 2. SYLLABUS & WORKS

March 28: Excess, Outrage & Virtuosity

In the 1800s, it seemed that the horrors of the French Revolution had unleashed a taste for massive scale and spectacle. The startling musical program of Hector Berlioz's brilliant *Symphonie Fantastique* combines sexuality, drugs, and diabolism. The melodramatic grand opera *Les Huguenots* by Giacomo Meyerbeer revolved around murderous sectarian violence, while Charles Gounod's *Faust* continued the addictive occult theme. Meanwhile Georges Bizet's *Carmen* was very different, featuring a revolutionary heroine who defies the social hypocrisies of the time. We also enjoy dazzling instrumental music by César Franck and Charles Valentin Alkan.

Works explored, media used:

Hector Berlioz, 1803-1869: *Symphonie fantastique*, Op. 14, 1830

- Aurora Orchestra, Mathew Baynton, actor, Nicholas Collon, conductor

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PGta6Mtecps&t=13s>

Giacomo Meyerbeer, 1791-1864: *Les Huguenots*, 1836 - Blessing of the Swords

- Laurent Alvaro, Grand Théâtre de Genève

Charles Gounod, 1818-1893: *Faust*, 1859

- "Le veau d'or", Ruggero Raimondi, Wiene Staatsoper

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

- Final Trio/Prison Scene, Marina Poplavskaya, Jonas Kaufmann, René Pape, Metropolitan Opera, 2014

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ISOUjBp0HhM&t=762s>

Georges Bizet, 1838-1875: *Carmen*, 1875

- "Seguedille", Grace Bumbry, Salzburg Festival, 1966, H. von Karajan, Jon Vickers, Mirella Freni, Justino Diaz.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z3RaYSzOQv0>

- "Chanson Bohème", Julia Migenes, Lorin Maazel, Placido Domingo, 1984 film directed Francesco Rosi

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FJJktatuKw0>

Charles-Valentin Alkan, 1813-1888: Grande Sonate, Op. 33, "*Les quatre âges*"

- Ronald Smith

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c1gJti_qqzQ&t=524s

César Franck, 1822-1890: Sonata in A major for Violin and Piano

- Kaja Danczowska (violin), Krystian Zimerman (piano)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YCp5XC2rsEM&t=715s>