



Distinct/Distinctive:

What Opera Audiences
Take To and From
Cinema Simulcasts

Martin Barker

Simulcasting

Livecasting

Digital relay

Digital broadcast cinema

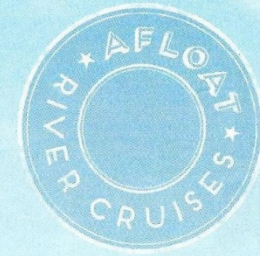
Alternative Content

Live streamed performances

Digital broadcast theatre

Event Cinema

LIVE



STREAMING

From the Mekong to the Amazon,
Bordeaux to Budapest, river cruises are
proving the new "nine-to-five adventure".
Qantas The Australian Way correspondents
report in from the comfort zone.



National Theatre Live, 2010

NT
live

London
Assurance

by Dion Boucicault

[view trailer](#)

[production photos](#)

[find your](#)

[nearest venue](#)



Daily Telegraph

'The funniest and most assured
comedy in all of London.
Not to be missed.'

Sunday Express

Broadcast Live 28 June

22 countries 150,000 viewers

Below-National Theatre / above-film pricing

New York Met Opera 2011



\$1.2 costs per simulcast

\$2.6m in American
cinemas

113,000 US viewers

125,000 in 900 cinemas
in 30 other countries

“For the first time in seven years, the Met balanced its budget, thanks partly to \$11 million in profits last year from its HD movie theater transmissions.” [NY Times, 10/10/11]

Economic forecasts

“Globally, the market for alternative content was worth \$45.7m in 2008, equivalent to 0.4 per cent of gross global box office revenues. This is expected at least to double to hit \$104.0m in 2009. Moreover, the entire alternative content market will be worth \$526.5m by 2014.”

Screen Digest, 2009

Economic forecasts

“While only about \$400m of the \$34bn in global box office revenues last year came from alternative content, cinema groups are rushing to exploit the nascent area, not least because their traditional business of showing films and selling popcorn is coming under pressure.”

1.7% by 2013

Financial Times, 14 June 2013

'Decline' in arts audiences ...

- Shifts in cultural scales of value ...
- Arts' contribution to the economy (tourism, etc) ...
- Patronage and/or state support ...
- Celebrating "intrinsic values" ...
- Debates over cultural 'health' ...

“Last November, London’s *Daily Telegraph* ran a piece about the efforts of a McDonald’s restaurant in Australia to deter rowdy teenagers from gathering there to party late at night. This McDonald’s is using a novel strategy to disperse the unruly crowd: They are playing classical music, especially opera, over their loud speakers, and they are playing it loudly. And it’s working.”

‘McDonald’s, opera, and the decline of western culture’,
Communities Digital News, 16 April 2014

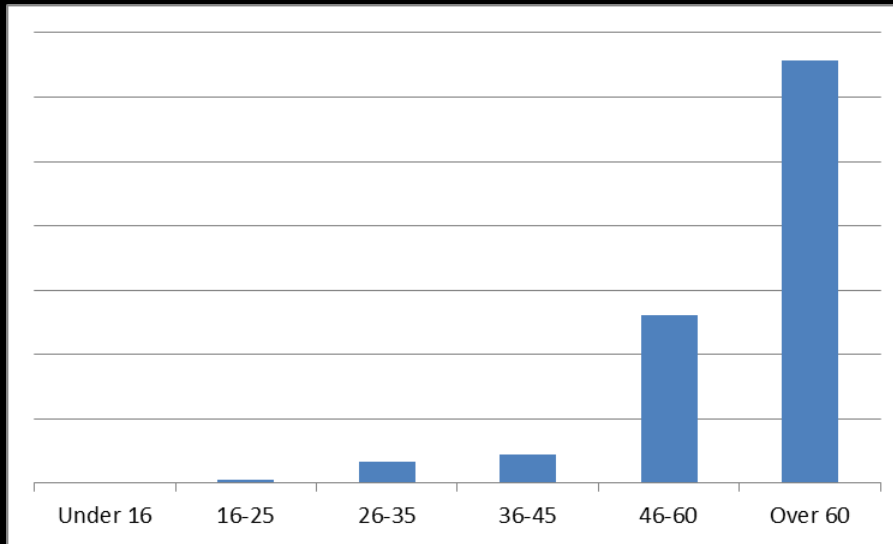
Daniel Wakin, *NY Times* (2005)

- Experiments in making classical music more “attractive”:
 - Dating opportunities; adding video; doing half-classical, half-jazz; adding salsa lessons; giving away t-shirts; using pop-famous guides; explaining the music; doing film music/pop classics.
- Aiming for the “neophytes, dabblers, ungray”
- The beginnings of the ‘new research’: Knight Foundation, *The Magic of Music* (2005).

Who's researched the audience?

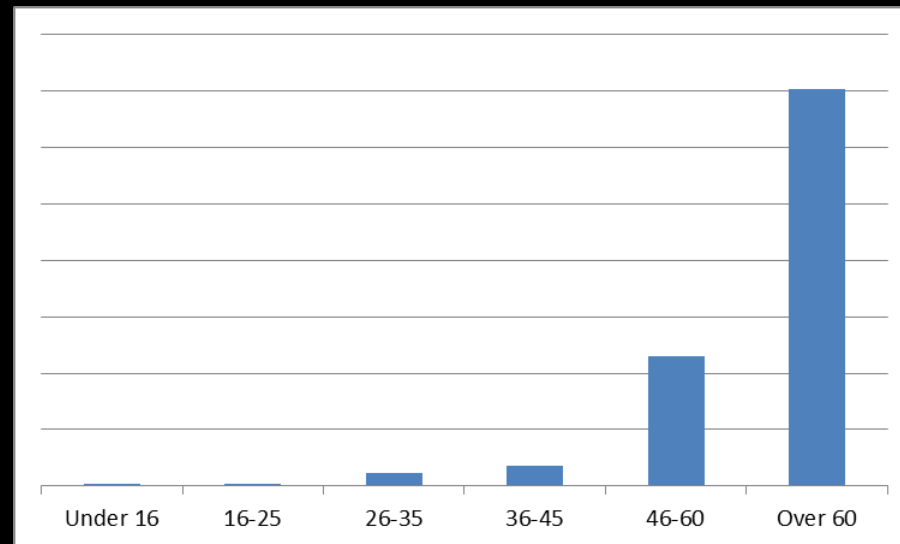
- NESTA/NT Live (2008–14)
- New York Metropolitan Opera
- Picturehouse Cinemas
- Martin Barker (courtesy: Picturehouse)
- Dodona Research
- Dallas Opera/MIT Media Lab
- Amb:IT:ion Scotland
- Karen Wise (Guildhall/English Touring Opera)

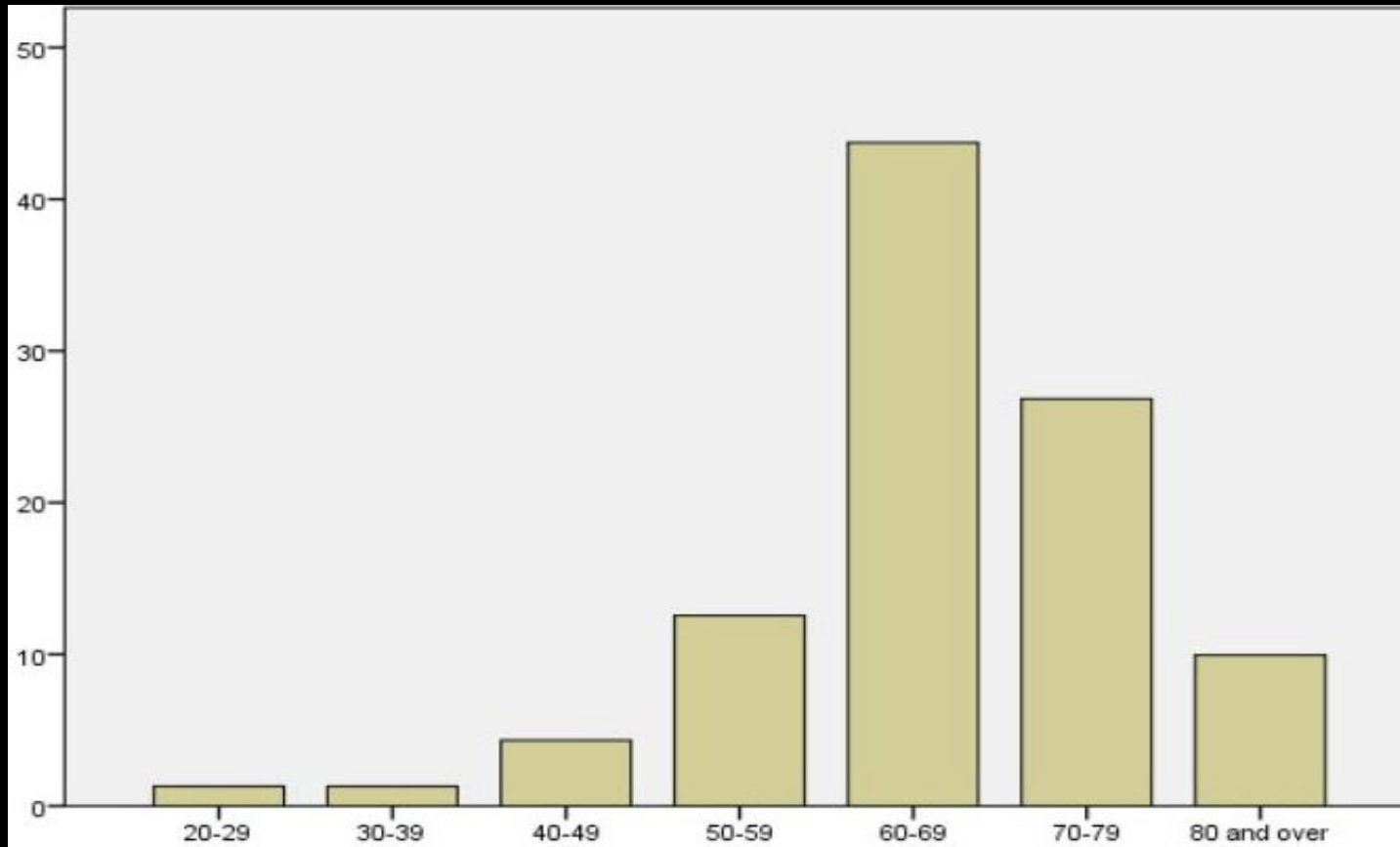
What we know: Age



All AC attendees:
Over 60s =
65.7%

Opera-lovers:
Over 60s =
70.4%





Source: Karen Wise, *Opera in Cinemas* (2014)

What we know: Bookings

Attend As Often As Possible					
	Male	Female		Male	Female
Ballet	4.8%	9.2%	Opera	36.5%	42.2%
Cinema	14.3%	18.9%	Theatre	14.7%	22.5%

“Love opera. My husband is very hard of hearing, this is the only way he can hear opera.”

“My wife and I are opera fans. We go to live opera in London quite often. Always keen to see more/top class performers.”

What we know: Booking patterns

The Metropolitan Opera **HD** 2014/2015 Season bookings

To assist us in making your bookings, please indicate the number of tickets required in the check box at the left of the screening date, ie:

LA DONNA DEL LAGO

Rossini 3hr 30min approx

Sat June 13 1.00pm Cine

MACBETH

Verdi 3hrs 13min approx (2014)

Sat Nov 1 1.00pm Cinema 3
 Sun Nov 2 1.00pm Cinema 3
 Tue Nov 4 6.30pm Cinema 3
 Wed Nov 5 1.00pm Cinema 3
 Thu Nov 6 11.30am Cinema 10
 Fri Nov 7 11.30am Cinema 10
 Sat Nov 8 11.30am Cinema 10
 Sun Nov 9 11.30am Cinema 10

IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA

Rossini 3hr 30 min approx (2015)

Sat Jan 31 1.00pm Cinema 3
 Sun Feb 1 1.00pm Cinema 3
 Tue Feb 3 6.30pm Cinema 3
 Wed Feb 4 1.00pm Cinema 3
 Thu Feb 5 11.30am Cinema 10
 Fri Feb 6 11.30am Cinema 10
 Sat Feb 7 11.30am Cinema 10
 Sun Feb 8 11.30am Cinema 10

DIE MEISTERSINGER VON NURNBERG

Wagner 6 hr approx (2015)

Sat Feb 21 1.00pm Cinema 3
 Sun Feb 22 1.00pm Cinema 3
 Tue Feb 24 6.30pm Cinema 3
 Wed Feb 25 1.00pm Cinema 3
 Thu Feb 26 11.30am Cinema 10
 Fri Feb 27 11.30am Cinema 10
 Sat Feb 28 11.30am Cinema 10
 Sun Mar 1 11.30am Cinema 10

IOLANTA

and **DUKE BLUEBEARD'S CASTLE**

Tchaikovsky and

Bartok 3hr 39min (2015)

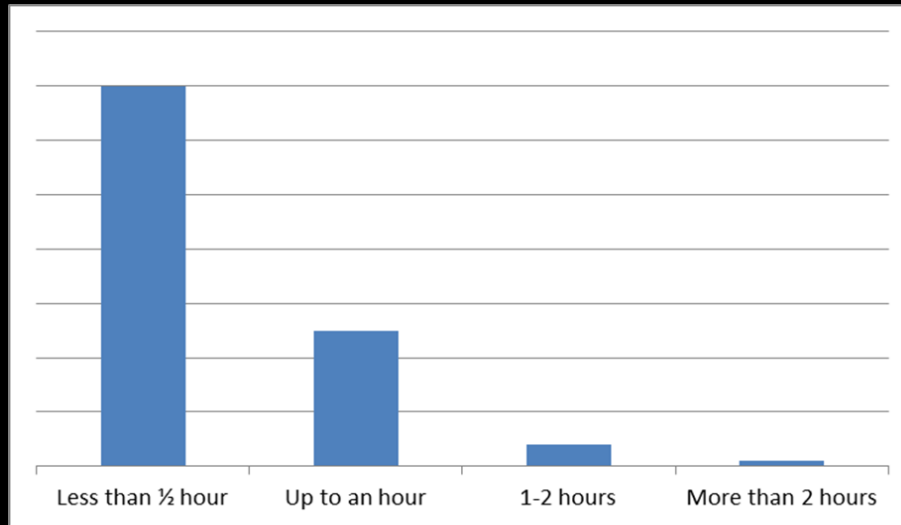
Sat May 2 1.00pm Cinema 3
 Sun May 3 1.00pm Cinema 3
 Tue May 5 6.30pm Cinema 3
 Wed May 6 1.00pm Cinema 3
 Thu May 7 11.30am Cinema 10
 Fri May 8 11.30am Cinema 10
 Sat May 9 11.30am Cinema 10
 Sun May 10 11.30am Cinema 10

LA DONNA DEL LAGO

Rossini 3hr 30min approx (2015)

Sat June 13 1.00pm Cinema 3
 Sun June 14 1.00pm Cinema 3
 Tue June 16 6.30pm Cinema 3
 Wed June 17 1.00pm Cinema 3
 Thu June 18 11.30am Cinema 10
 Fri June 19 11.30am Cinema 10
 Sat June 20 11.30am Cinema 10
 Sun June 21 11.30am Cinema 10

What we know: 'Local' ...



London as the
exception ...

“It was a fantastic performance in excellent quality at a local cinema in great comfort with friends.”

“The Picturehouse is comfortable (luxurious seating), clean and the staff are welcoming. There isn't the snobbery that there is at the Opera House and you can still feel part of the production by dressing up just as you would at the Theatre.”

What we know: Choosing

In my research:

Theatre audiences choose to go to *quality reviewed* performances.

Opera audiences love the *medium*, make discriminations after.

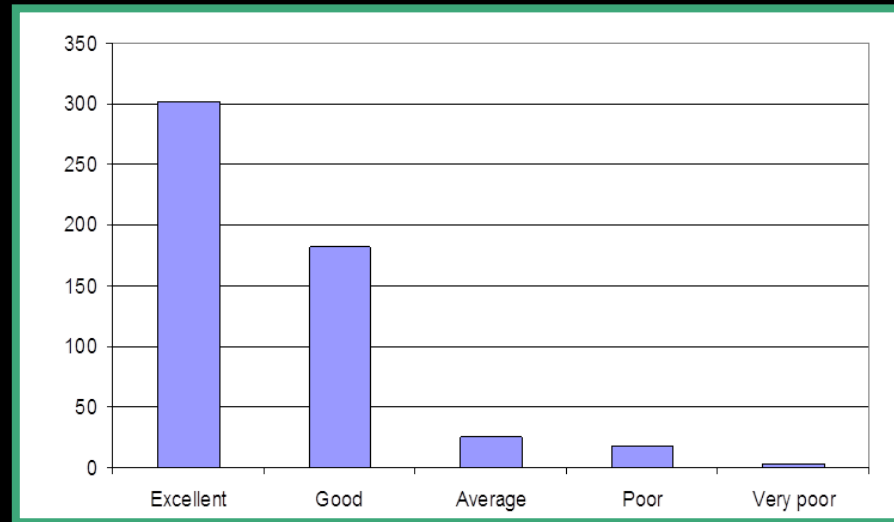
“The reviews said it was a good show.”

“We love National Theatre productions.”

“I am an opera nut.”

“We love opera, full stop.”

What we know: Enthusiasm



“Intriguingly, despite lower expectations, cinema audiences reported higher levels of emotional engagement with the production than those who had experienced the play at the National Theatre.”

NESTA (2010)

Surprisingly ... strangely ...

“Larger than life ... surprisingly intimate, great visibility, and interesting introductions.”

“Strangely more absorbing, because camera operator expertise presents a huge variety of shots and engages the concentration more deeply in the performance.”

“You do miss the immediate excitement of a live performance and being in the presence of great artists, but surprisingly this is no big deal.”

“It’s better than any seat in the house. The only slightly weird thing is that everyone feels they want to applaud the best things but it is silly to applaud a cinema screen.”

What we know: Demands on cinemas

Temperature up in cinema, it was really cold. Reminder of some sort towards end of intervals. ... Before the opera, screen a brief summary with pictures of the main characters. This would help knowing who was which foreigner. ... Somewhere to leave coats would be good. ... Appreciate the synopsis you provide. ... Stop latecomers entering. Stop folk leaving while opera is being shown. ... Ban pop corn! ... Having designated seats is important! ... Encourage clapping? And dressing up???

... No awful canned music in the foyer area. Silence is golden!

... Dedicated space and staff for interval refreshments. At *Macbeth* there was not even milk available for coffee!! Sell wine that is pleasant to drink. The Shiraz we had last time was terrible.

What don't we know?

- How big is the overall market for 'newcomers'?
- How 'settled' is live music?
- Is there a 'canon' of live music? How open are the arts to new forms?
- Where do they fall in the social hierarchy? Categories (or don't)
- The threat of 'cannibalism'

Highly engaged:

Urban arts eclectic
Traditional culture vultures

Some engagement:

Fun, fashion and friends
Mature explorers
Dinner and a show
Family and community focused
Bedroom DJs
Mid-life hobbyists
Retired arts and crafts

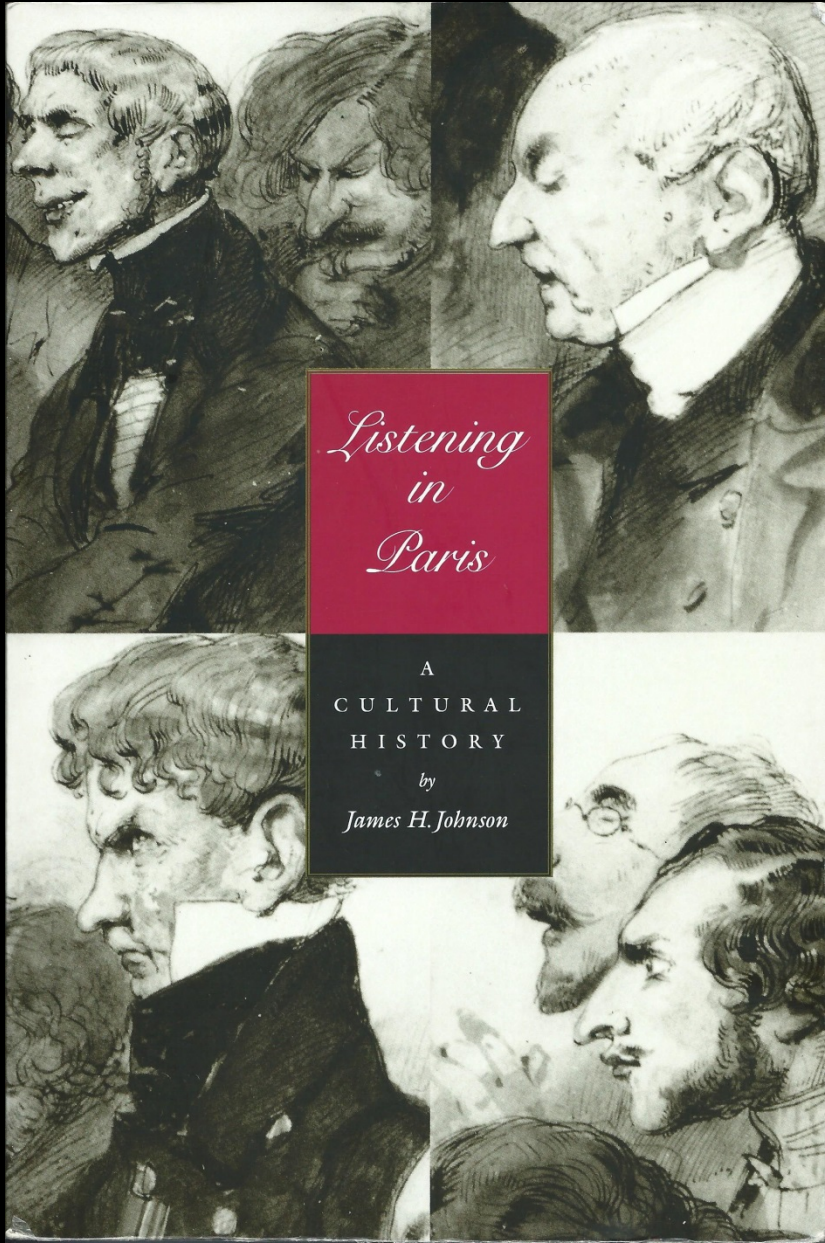
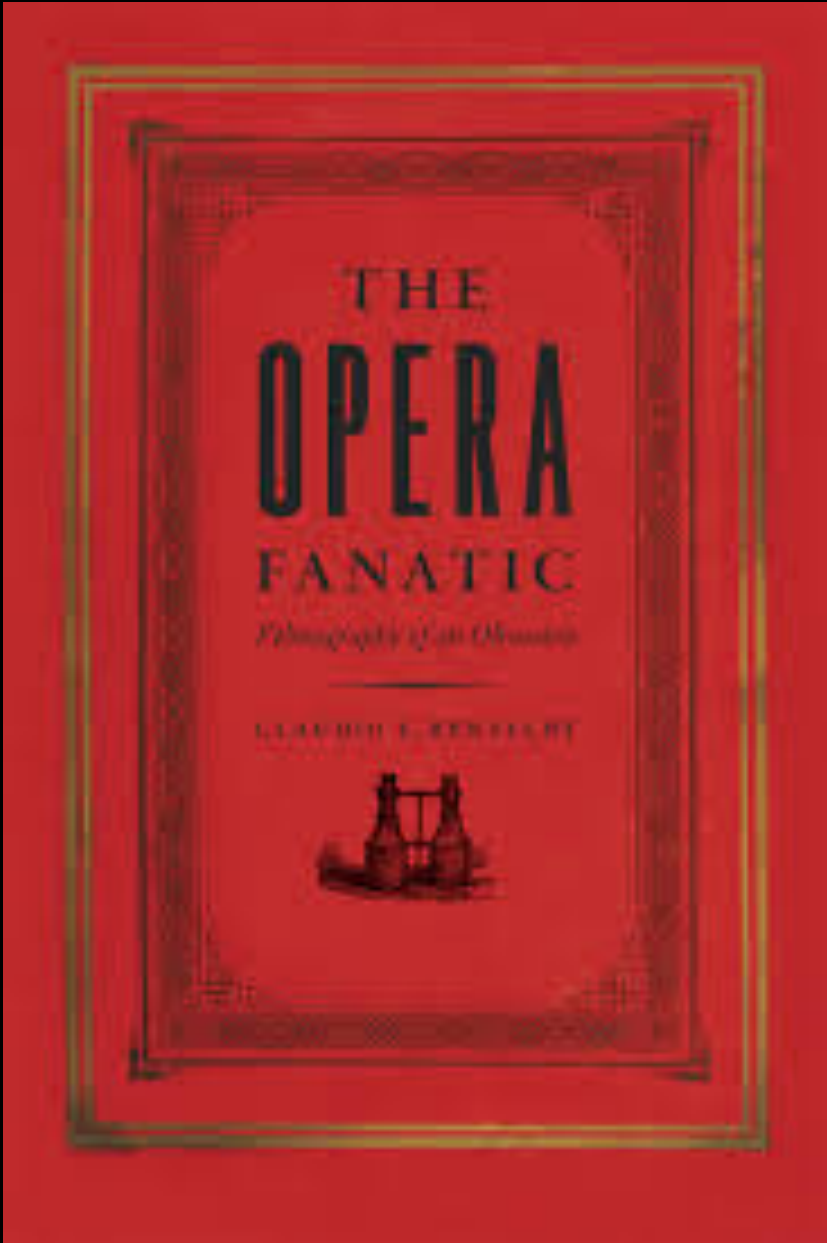
Peter Gelb, seeing New York Met house takings fall by 3%, expresses concern that the Met may be “cannibalising” its own audience. [July 2013]

“Hopes that screening operas in cinemas would send audiences to opera houses to experience the real thing are wide of the mark, according to a new survey.” (*Guardian* report on Karen Wise’s research [30/5/14])

“New York’s Met opera house on edge of precipice, says Peter Gelb: Threat of bankruptcy at world’s biggest and richest opera house contrasts strongly with ‘cracking season’ in UK.” (*Guardian* 10 June 2014)

What would I like to know?

“The camera work has been very poor on occasions. In *Aida* it drove me up the wall - there were so many occasions when we needed to see the set or the action straight on (grand march etc) but instead we got a diagonal shot. If you're used to seeing Egyptian imagery, seeing lots of diagonals just feels wrong. In *Tristan und Isolde* they used a split-screen effect which destroyed the point of the opera. You're supposed to drift trance-like into their world, not have it jazzed up! In the enthusiasm of giving us close-ups, sometimes we're not given enough control over our own eyes. For example we don't have enough shots of the complete stage often just at the beginning or end of the scene, so you lose the sense of the complete spectacle.”



Dream events ...

“A whole new art form ...”

“The best thing that’s happened in the culture world. Better than religion - so uplifting to see what a human is capable of.”

Wanted – three things in combination:

1. All the classics: Wagner’s *Ring* (live from Bayreuth); *Aida*; *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Carmen*, etc, etc.
2. Wanting more companies to join in: Royal Opera; La Scala; Glyndebourne. The world at their doorstep.
3. ‘Modern’ spectacles – *The Lion King*; *Mamma Mia*; the opening of the Olympics; the Oberammagau Passion Play ...

