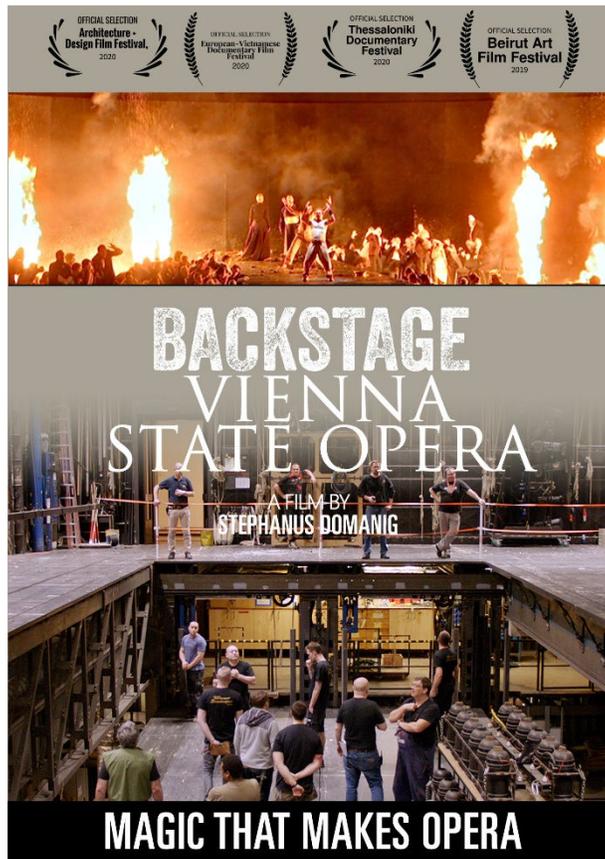




BACKSTAGE VIENNA STATE OPERA THE MAGIC THAT MAKES OPERA



STUDY GUIDE

To order this and other programs call:
(888) 570-5400; (323) 301-3663

www.epfmedia.com

Backstage Vienna Opera

In 7:00 am – 11:00 pm shifts that last for months, the men and women of the Vienna State Opera work tirelessly to prepare the performances that amaze and inspire the audience. Hundreds of craftspeople, musicians, directors, actors, designers, producers and more all work together to produce spectacular performances at one of the largest opera houses in the world. Backstage Vienna State Opera gives a behind-the-scenes view of the energy, talent and commitment found at the opera house.

About Vienna

Vienna is a city in northeastern Austria. Austria has a population of about 8.8 million people. Its official language is German. Vienna is the capital and largest city in Austria, with a population of about 2 million people. It is a popular tourist destination, known for its history and culture. Opera, theater performances and concerts have been a part of life for the people of Vienna for hundreds of years. Throughout history, the city has been home to numerous famous composers, including Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Mozart was a child prodigy, who started writing music when he was just four years old. His operas remain popular today.

About Opera

Opera is drama performed on a stage and set to music. It combines vocal and orchestral music. Singers do not use microphones, and the music is played by a live orchestra. There are many different types of operas; some are serious, and others comic. Opera can be written in any language, but the majority are in French, German, or Italian.

Operas are typically performed in an opera house. An opera house usually has a stage, a pit for the orchestra, seating for the audience, and backstage areas. The first public opera house was built in Venice, and it opened in 1637.

The concept of opera goes back to ancient Greece, however many people believe that the first true opera was *Daphne*, based on a Greek myth, and composed in Italy in 1597 by Jacopo Peri.

The Vienna State Opera

The Vienna State Opera (*Wiener Staatsoper*) is one of the most famous and busiest opera houses in the world. Vienna also has two other opera houses: *Volksooper*, which opened 1898, and *Theater an der Wien*, which was built in 1801, but has only been an opera house since 2006.

The Vienna State Opera is located on the *Ringstrasse*—or, “Ring Road,” which is a circular boulevard that circles Vienna’s historic district. Construction of the road began in 1857

under Emperor Franz Joseph, who decided to tear down the city walls, and build the road in its place, as a way to unify the city. There are numerous other historic buildings, monuments, and parks along the road in addition to the opera house.

The opera house has 1,709 seats, plus standing room for 567 people. Every seat has a display on which an audience member can turn on subtitles in German, English, French, Spanish, Russian, Chinese, or Japanese.

Every year, approximately 50 to 60 operas and 10 ballets are performed at the Vienna State Opera, with performances running every day, except in July and August. Guided tours are also available during the day. The opera employs more than a thousand people.

The members of its orchestra also make up the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, which is one of the best orchestras in the world. The Vienna State Opera receives a state subsidy, which helps cover the cost of operations.

History of the Opera House

Building of the opera house began in 1861 and was finished in 1869. The opera house opened that year with a premiere of *Don Giovanni*, by Mozart. The opera house was originally known as the Vienna Court Opera but was renamed as the Vienna State Opera in 1920.

When the opera house was first built, it received widespread public criticism. Some people didn't think it was "grand" enough. It was also criticized because of the fact that after construction started, the *Ringstrasse* road that it is located on was raised up by a meter. This meant that people entering the opera house now had to step down, rather than up.

In 1945—during World War II—much of the opera house was destroyed by bombing. Bombs caused a fire that burned for two days. Only the front stairways and the front section remained. The opera's props and costumes were also destroyed. For the next ten years, the opera operated in two other venues in Vienna. Shortly after the destruction of the original opera house, reconstruction began. Rebuilding was completed in 1955 and included more modern technology. Beethoven's *Fidelio* was the first opera to be performed after reopening.

Additional Resources

Britannica, “Vienna State Opera.”

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Vienna-State-Opera-house-Vienna-Austria>

Central Intelligence Agency (March 23, 2022), “Austria,” *The World Factbook*.

<https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/austria/>

City of Vienna, “History of Vienna—The Making of a Capital.”

<https://www.wien.gv.at/english/history/overview/>

Mahler Foundation, “Vienna State Opera.”

<https://mahlerfoundation.org/mahler/locations/austria/vienna/court-opera-hofoper/>

San Francisco Opera, “A Brief History of Opera.”

<https://www.sfopera.com/discover-opera/intro-to-opera/a-brief-history-of-opera/>

Vienna State Opera.

<https://www.wiener-staatsoper.at/en/>

Contact

For inquiries, please contact:

EPF Media

(888) 570-5400; (323) 301-3663

info@epfmedia.com

Copyright. The Study Guide is owned by EPF Media. You may use the Study Guide solely for personal or educational, non-commercial use, and you may download or print any portion of the Study Guide solely for personal or educational, non-commercial use, provided you do not remove the copyright or other notice from such Content. No other use is permitted without prior written permission of EPF Media.