



GUEST LECTURE

“Wagner Goes East: Chinese Interaction with Europe’s Opera”

In drawing on evidence from some 150 years of operatic exchanges between China and Europe, this paper will trace how the performance of European opera has been introduced to China, what its function was and how it was understood over time. I will argue that the performance of European opera in China was never innocent. Political and commercial motivations inevitably played into it. In trying to understand the complexities and many different levels of European opera’s reception in China, i.e. in trying to understand how the “Other” receives European opera, we have to always bear in mind our own reception of that very “Other,” its culture, its politics, and, last but not least, its music. The presentation thus also deliberates the transcultural qualities of music and music-making between China and Europe in the long 20th century.

Prof. Dr. Barbara Mittler
University of Heidelberg (Germany)

Barbara Mittler holds a Chair in Chinese Studies at the University of Heidelberg and is Director of the Research Cluster “Asia and Europe in a Global Context.” She began her academic career at the University of Oxford (MA Oxon 1990). Her PhD (1994) and her habilitation (post-doctoral thesis, 1998) is from Heidelberg. In 2000 she received the Heinz-Maier-Leibnitz-Prize for outstanding scholars by the German Research Foundation and the German Ministry of Culture. Between 2002-2004 she was a recipient of a Heisenberg Fellowship. In 2008 she was elected member of the National Academy of Sciences LEOPOLDINA. In 2009 she won the Henry Allen Moe Prize in the Humanities, American Philosophical Society. Barbara Mittler has published on Chinese avantgarde music (*Dangerous Tunes: The Politics of Chinese Music in Hong Kong, Taiwan and the People's Republic of China since 1949*, Harrassowitz 1997) and the early Chinese press (*A Newspaper for China? Power, Identity and Change in China's News-Media, 1872-1912*, Harvard University Press, Asia Center Series, 2004). Her third book-length study on cultural and artistic production during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), which approaches this complex period making use of methods from Cultural Studies and Oral History (*A Continuous Revolution: Making Sense of Cultural Revolution Culture*) has just come out from Harvard University Press’s Asia Center Series in 2012. She is currently completing a manuscript on gender tropes, and new (wo)men in women’s journals from China’s long 20th century.

Monday Feb. 11 · 4:10-6:00pm
Olson Hall, Room 53A (on the basement level)