

LA OPERA

La Belle et la Bête

Saturday, October 28, 2017
Theatre at Ace Hotel, Los Angeles

ABOUT LA BELLE ET LA BÊTE

- *La Belle et la Bête* (*Beauty and the Beast*) is a 1946 film by Jean Cocteau. It is widely regarded as a classic of French cinema.
- Philip Glass wrote an opera based on it in 1994.
- This LA Opera production is a screening of Cocteau's film, with a live soundtrack by Glass, performed by vocalists from LA Opera and musicians of the Philip Glass Ensemble.

JEAN COCTEAU

Jean Cocteau (1889–1963) was a French poet, librettist, novelist, actor, painter, and film director. He is best known for his play *Orphée*, his novel *Les Enfants terribles*, and the surrealistic films *Le Sang d'un poète* and *La Belle et la Bête*. Considered to be a product of the era that preceded World War I—years of relatively little political turmoil and great artistic output—Cocteau moved in European art circles from the pre-war era to the mid-twentieth-century, counting among his friends, influences, and collaborators Marcel Proust, Sergei Diaghilev, Pablo Picasso, Igor Stravinsky, and Edith Piaf. As his biographer Claude Arnaud notes, “there is not a book devoted to the literature, cinema, ballet, theater, or music of the twentieth century in which his name doesn't figure frequently.” Cocteau's politics are the subject of debate (was he a Nazi collaborator or just a successful artist from a social milieu with no tradition of resistance?). His films are said to invoke both personal and collective mythologies.

PHILIP GLASS

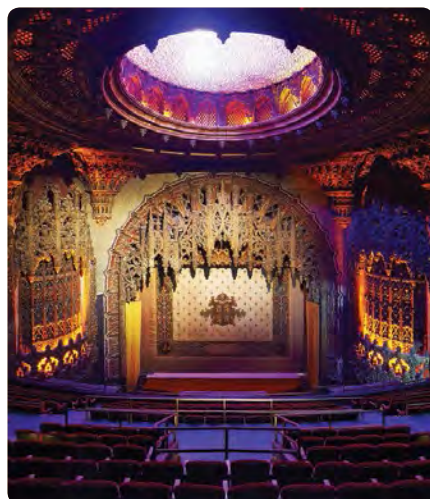
Philip Glass (1937–) is widely regarded as one of the most influential composers of the twentieth century. An American composer of innovative vocal, opera, and instrumental music, he is known for minimalist compositions characterized by repetition—or, as his website puts it, “the extended reiteration of brief, elegant melodic fragments that [weave] in and out of an aural tapestry . . . a sort of sonic weather that twists, turns, surrounds, develops.”

Glass is an active collaborator who has worked with artists ranging from Twyla Tharp to Allen Ginsberg, Woody Allen to David Bowie. He has also written music for films such as *The Hours* and Scorsese's *Kundun*.





Philip Glass



The Theatre at the Ace Hotel, Los Angeles



THE PHILIP GLASS ENSEMBLE

Philip Glass founded the Philip Glass ensemble in 1968; while it has changed over the years, it generally consists of amplified woodwinds, keyboard synthesizers, and sometimes a vocalist. In its early years, the ensemble often performed in art galleries, artist lofts, and museums; over the decades, their concerts have often been visual as well as musical events.

LA OPERA

LA Opera is the fourth-largest opera company in the United States. The company was founded in 1986 and has been under the leadership of Plácido Domingo since 2003. LA Opera is based out of the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion at the Music Center, and offers standard operatic repertory as well as new and rarely staged operas.

THE THEATRE AT THE ACE HOTEL

The Theatre at the Ace Hotel is a restored movie palace from the 1920s, a golden age of spectacular cinemas in downtown L.A. Retrofitted with a state-of-the-art AV system and elaborate contemporary stage lighting, it is now a venue for new art and entertainment events.

The theatre is housed in the Ace Hotel, which opened in 2014 in a building that was the historic home of United Artists and later Texaco. When the building opened in 1927, it was the tallest building in L.A. Its Spanish Gothic style was modeled after the Segovia Cathedral in Spain.

Ace Hotels is a luxury boutique hotel chain with locations in Portland, Oregon; New York; Chicago; Palm Springs; Panama City; London; Seattle; Pittsburgh; and New Orleans.

LIVE SCORES

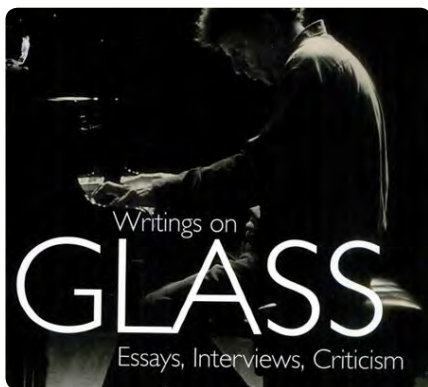
Live music was common at movie screenings in the silent-film era. Scores were sometimes compilations of existing classical or theatrical music, and sometimes improvised live. In small towns, the score was often performed by a single piano player. Larger cities and cinemas frequently had organs that could produce elaborate sound effects or even live orchestras.

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

- ⦿ Does Cocteau's *La Belle et la Bête* make you think about the classic tale of Beauty and the Beast in new ways?
- ⦿ Do you think the live score affected your experience or interpretation of the film? How?
- ⦿ Did Philip Glass's score fit into, or challenge, your ideas about opera? How so?

IF YOU ENJOYED THIS EVENT, CHECK OUT:

- ⦿ The book *Jean Cocteau: A Life* by Claude Arnaud
- ⦿ The documentary *Glass: A Portrait of Philip in Twelve Parts*
- ⦿ NPR's Philip Glass page
npr.org/artists/15680178/philip-glass
- ⦿ Classic films available for free streaming with your L.A. Public Library card
lapl.org/kanopy
- ⦿ LA Opera on YouTube
youtube.com/user/losangelesopera



DISCOVER MORE AT THE USC LIBRARIES

ROSS SCIMECA and MELISSA MILLER of the USC Libraries selected the following resources to help you learn more about tonight's performance.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY ON THE ORIGINAL FILM WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY JEAN COCTEAU:

The original film is available in **Kanopy Streaming Service**, which you can find by following the Databases link on the USC Libraries homepage at libraries.usc.edu.

- Cocteau, Jean. *Beauty and the Beast; diary of a film*. New York: Dover Publications, 1972.
CINEMATIC ARTS LIBRARY: PN1993.5.F7 C63 1972
- Knapp, Bettina Liebowitz. *Jean Cocteau*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1989.
DOHENY MEMORIAL LIBRARY: PQ2605.O15 Z689 1989
- Peters, Arthur King. *Jean Cocteau and his world; an illustrated biography*. New York: Vendôme Press : Distributed in the U.S. by Rizzoli, 1986.
CINEMATIC ARTS LIBRARY: PQ2605.O15 Z774 1986
DOHENY MEMORIAL LIBRARY: PQ2605.O15 Z774 1986
- Williams, James S. *Jean Cocteau*. London: Reaktion, 2008.
CINEMATIC ARTS LIBRARY: PQ2605.O15 Z925 2008

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY ON COMPOSER PHILIP GLASS AND HIS MUSIC:

NOTE: The Nonesuch recording of *Beauty and the Beast* by Philip Glass is available in **Naxos Music Online**, which you can find by following the Databases link on the USC Libraries homepage at libraries.usc.edu.

- Evans, Tristian. *Shared meanings in the film music of Philip Glass: music, multimedia and postminimalism*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015.
MUSIC LIBRARY | BOOKSTACKS: ML410.G398 E93 2015
- Kostelanetz, Richard. *Writings on Glass: essays, interviews, criticism*. New York: Schirmer Books, 1997.
MUSIC LIBRARY | BOOKSTACKS: ML410.G398 W75 1997
- Maycock, Richard. *Glass: a portrait*. London: Sanctuary, 2002.
MUSIC LIBRARY | BOOKSTACKS: ML410.G398 M39 2002X