

List of Important Operas

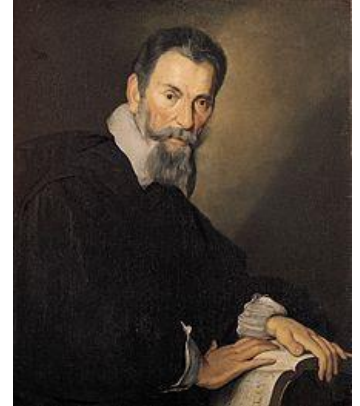
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Criteria for inclusion: This list provides a guide to the most important [operas](#), as determined by their presence on a majority of compiled lists of significant operas: see the [Lists consulted section](#) for full details.

1600–1699

Claudio Monteverdi in 1640 by [Bernardo Strozzi](#)

- 1607 [L'Orfeo](#) ([Claudio Monteverdi](#)). This is widely regarded as the first operatic masterwork.^[1]
- 1640 [Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria](#) (Monteverdi). Monteverdi's first opera for Venice, based on Homer's [Odyssey](#), displays the composer's mastery of portrayal of genuine individuals as opposed to stereotypes.^[2]
- 1642 [L'incoronazione di Poppea](#) (Monteverdi). Monteverdi's last opera, composed for a Venetian audience, is often performed today. Its Venetian context helps to explain the complete absence of the moralizing tone often associated with opera of this time.^[2]
- 1644 [Ormindo](#) ([Francesco Cavalli](#)). One of the first of Cavalli's operas to be revived in the 20th century, *Ormindo* is considered one of his more attractive works.^[2]
- 1649 [Giasone](#) (Cavalli). In *Giasone* Cavalli, for the first time, separated [aria](#) and [recitative](#).^[2] *Giasone* was the most popular opera of the 17th century.^[3]
- 1651 [La Calisto](#) (Cavalli). The ninth of the eleven operas that Cavalli wrote with Faustini is noted for its satire of the deities of classical mythology.^[4]
- 1683 [Dido and Aeneas](#) ([Henry Purcell](#)). Often considered to be the first genuine English-language operatic masterwork. Not first performed in 1689 at a girls' school, as is commonly believed, but at Charles II's court in 1683.^[5]
- 1692 [The Fairy-Queen](#) (Purcell). A [semi-opera](#) rather than a genuine opera, this is often thought to be Purcell's finest dramatic work.^[5]



1700–1749

[George Frideric Handel](#). Painting by Balthasar Denner, 1733.

- 1710 [Agrippina](#) (Handel). Handel's last opera that he composed in Italy was a great success,^[6] and established his reputation as a composer of Italian opera.^[7]
- 1711 [Rinaldo](#) (Handel). Handel's first opera for the London stage was also the first all-Italian opera performed on the London stage.^[7]
- 1724 [Giulio Cesare](#) (Handel). This Handel opera is noted for the richness of its orchestration.^[7]
- 1724 [Tamerlano](#) (Handel). This work is described by [Anthony Hicks](#), writing in [Grove Music Online](#), as possessing a "taut dramatic power".^[7]
- 1725 [Rodelinda](#) (Handel). *Rodelinda* is often praised for the fullness of the melodic writing among Handel's output.^[7]
- 1728 [The Beggar's Opera](#) ([Johann Christoph Pepusch](#)). A satire of Italian [opera seria](#) based on a play by [John Gay](#), the ballad opera format of *The Beggar's Opera* has proved popular even up to the current time.^[8]
- 1731 [Acis and Galatea](#) (Handel). This is Handel's only work for the theatre that is set to an English libretto.^[9]
- 1733 [Orlando](#) (Handel). An opera that is described by Anthony Hicks as "remarkable" ^[7] and by Orrey as one of Handel's "best works".^[9]
- 1733 [La serva padrona](#) ([Giovanni Battista Pergolesi](#)). *La serva padrona* became a model for many of the [opera buffas](#) that followed it, including those of Mozart.^[10]
- 1733 [Hippolyte et Aricie](#) ([Jean-Philippe Rameau](#)). Rameau's first opera caused great controversy at its premiere.^[11]
- 1735 [Ariodante](#) (Handel). Both this opera and *Alcina* enjoy high critical reputations today.^[7]
- 1735 [Alcina](#) (Handel). Both this work and *Ariodante* were part of Handel's first opera season at [Covent Garden](#).^[7]



- 1735 *Les Indes galantes* (Rameau). In this work Rameau added emotional depth and power to the traditionally lighter form of *opera-ballet*.^[11]
- 1737 *Castor et Pollux* (Rameau). Initially only a moderate success, when it was revived in 1754 *Castor et Pollux* was regarded as Rameau's finest achievement.^[11]
- 1738 *Serse* (Handel). A deviation from the usual model of *opera seria*, *Serse* contains many comic elements rare in Handel's other works.^[7]
- 1744 *Semele* (Handel). Originally performed as an *oratorio*, *Semele*'s dramatic qualities have often led to the work being performed on the opera stage in modern times.^[12]
- 1745 *Platée* (Rameau). Rameau's most famous comic opera. Originally a court entertainment, a 1754 revival proved extremely popular with French audiences.^[11]

1750–1799

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart aged 21 in 1777.



- 1760 *La buona figliuola* (Niccolò Piccinni). Piccinni's work was initially immensely popular throughout Europe. By 1790 over 70 productions of the opera had been produced and it had been performed in all the major European cities.^[13]
- 1762 *Orfeo ed Euridice* (Christoph Willibald Gluck). Gluck's most popular opera. The first work in which the composer tried to reform the excesses of Italian *opera seria*.^[14]
- 1767 *Alceste* (Gluck). Gluck's second "reform" opera, nowadays usually given in its French revision of 1776.^[15]
- 1768 *Bastien und Bastienne* (Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart). Mozart's one-act *Singspiel* was set to a parody of Rousseau's *Le devin du village*.^[16]
- 1770 *Mitridate, re di Ponto* (Mozart). Composed when Mozart was 14, *Mitridate* was written for a demanding cast of star singers.^[16]
- 1772 *Lucio Silla* (Mozart). This opera from Mozart's teenage years was not revived until 1929 after its initial run of 25 performances.^[16]
- 1774 *Iphigénie en Aulide* (Gluck). Gluck's first opera for Paris.^[17]
- 1775 *La finta giardiniera* (Mozart). This work is generally recognised as Mozart's first *opera buffa* of significance.^[16]
- 1775 *Il re pastore* (Mozart). Mozart's last opera of his adolescence was set to a libretto by Metastasio.^[16]
- 1777 *Il mondo della luna* (Joseph Haydn). This opera was the last of three that Haydn set to libretti by Carlo Goldoni.^[18]
- 1777 *Armide* (Gluck). Gluck used a libretto originally set by Lully for this French work, his favourite among his own operas.^[19]
- 1779 *Iphigénie en Tauride* (Gluck). Gluck's "last and perhaps greatest masterpiece".^[20]
- 1781 *Idomeneo* (Mozart). Usually thought of as Mozart's first mature opera, *Idomeneo* was composed after a lengthy break from the stage.^[21]
- 1782 *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (Mozart). Often thought of as the first of Mozart's comic masterpieces, this work is frequently performed today.^[22]
- 1782 *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (Giovanni Paisiello). Paisiello's most famous comic opera, later eclipsed by Rossini's work of the same name.^[23]
- 1786 *Der Schauspieldirektor* (Mozart). Another *Singspiel* with much spoken dialogue taken from plays of that time, the plot of *Der Schauspieldirektor* features two sopranos vying to become *prima donna* in a newly assembled company. Premiered together with Antonio Salieri's *Prima la musica e poi le parole*.^[16]
- 1786 *Le nozze di Figaro* (Mozart). The first of the famous series of Mozart operas set to libretti by Lorenzo Da Ponte is now Mozart's most popular opera.^[16]
- 1787 *Don Giovanni* (Mozart). The second of the operas that Mozart set to Da Ponte's libretti, *Don Giovanni* has provided a puzzle for writers and philosophers ever since its composition.^[16]
- 1790 *Così fan tutte* (Mozart). The third and last of the operas that Mozart set to libretti by Da Ponte, *Così fan tutte* was scarcely performed throughout the 19th century, as the plot was considered to be immoral.^[24]
- 1791 *La clemenza di Tito* (Mozart). Mozart's last opera before his early death was extremely popular until 1830, after which the work's popularity and critical reputation began to decline; they did not return to their former levels until after the Second World War.^[16]
- 1791 *Die Zauberflöte* (Mozart). A work that has been described as "the apotheosis of the *Singspiel*", *Die Zauberflöte* was denigrated during the 19th century as confused and lacking in definition.^[25]

- 1792 *Il matrimonio segreto* ([Domenico Cimarosa](#)). Usually regarded as Cimarosa's best opera,^[26] [Leopold II](#) enjoyed the three-hour-long premiere so much that, after dinner, he compelled the singers to repeat the opera later during that same day.^[27]
- 1797 *Médée* ([Luigi Cherubini](#)). The only French opera of the [Revolutionary](#) period to be regularly performed today. A famous showcase for [sopranos](#) such as [Maria Callas](#).^[28]

1800–1832

Gioachino Rossini, 1820 (International Museum and Library of Music, Bologna)



- 1805 *Fidelio* ([Ludwig van Beethoven](#)). Beethoven's only opera was inspired by the composer's passion for political liberty.^[29]
- 1807 *La vestale* ([Gaspard Spontini](#)). Spontini's opera about a [vestal virgin](#) in love was a great influence on [Berlioz](#) and a forerunner of French [grand opera](#).^[30]
- 1812 *La scala di seta* ([Gioachino Rossini](#)). An early Rossini work, this opera is outright *farsa comica*.^[31]
- 1813 *L'italiana in Algeri* (Rossini). This opera is described by Richard Osborne, writing in [Grove Music Online](#), as "Rossini's first *buffo* masterpiece in the fully fledged two-act form".^[31]
- 1813 *Tancredi* (Rossini). This *melodramma eroico* was described by poet [Giuseppe Carpani](#) thus: "It is [cantilena](#) and always cantilena: beautiful cantilena, new cantilena, magic cantilena, rare cantilena".^[31]
- 1814 *Il turco in Italia* (Rossini). This opera stands out among Rossini's output for its frequent ensembles and absence of aria.^[31]
- 1816 *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (Rossini). This work has become Rossini's most popular *opera buffa*.^[31]
- 1816 *Otello* (Rossini). The composer [Giacomo Meyerbeer](#) described the third act of *Otello* thus: "The third act of *Otello* established its reputation so firmly that a thousand errors could not shake it".^[31]
- 1817 *La Cenerentola* (Rossini). Rossini's comedy was composed in just over three weeks.^[31]
- 1817 *La gazza ladra* (Rossini). In this opera Rossini drew upon [French rescue opera](#).^[31]
- 1818 *Mosè in Egitto* (Rossini). This work was originally conceived of as a sacred drama suitable for performance during [Lent](#).^[31]
- 1819 *La donna del lago* (Rossini). Another Romantic-era opera inspired by the works of [Sir Walter Scott](#).^[31]
- 1821 *Der Freischütz* ([Carl Maria von Weber](#)). Weber's masterpiece was the first great German Romantic opera.^[32]
- 1823 *Euryanthe* (von Weber). Despite its weak libretto, *Euryanthe* had a great influence on later German operas, including Wagner's *Lohengrin*.^[33]
- 1823 *Semiramide* (Rossini). This is the last opera that Rossini composed in Italy.^[31]
- 1825 *La dame blanche* ([François-Adrien Boieldieu](#)). Boieldieu's most successful *opéra comique* was one of many 19th century works inspired by the novels of [Sir Walter Scott](#).^[34]
- 1826 *Le siège de Corinthe* (Rossini). For this work Rossini heavily revised his earlier *Maometto II*, placing the action in a different setting.^[31]
- 1826 *Oberon* (von Weber). Weber's last opera before his early death.^[35]
- 1827 *Il pirata* ([Vincenzo Bellini](#)). Bellini's second professional production established his international reputation.^[36]
- 1828 *Der Vampyr* ([Heinrich Marschner](#)). Marschner was a key link between Weber and Wagner, as this Gothic opera shows.^[37]
- 1828 *Le comte Ory* (Rossini). Rossini's opera has enjoyed a high critical reputation throughout the years: 19th-century critic Henry Chorley said that "there is not a bad melody, there is not an ugly bar in *Le comte Ory*", and Richard Osborne, writing in [Grove Music Online](#), calls details that the work is one of the "wittiest, most stylish and most urbane of all comic operas".^[31]
- 1829 *La straniera* (Bellini). *La straniera* is rare among *bel canto* operas in that it offers remarkably few opportunities for vocal ostentation.^[36]
- 1829 *William Tell* (Rossini). Rossini's last opera before his retirement is a tale of liberty set in the [Swiss Alps](#). It helped to establish the genre of French [Grand Opera](#).^[38]
- 1830 *Anna Bolena* ([Gaetano Donizetti](#)). This was Donizetti's first success on the international scene and helped greatly to establish his reputation.^[39]

- 1830 *Fra Diavolo* (Daniel Auber). One of the most popular *opéra comiques* of the 19th century, Auber's tale loosely based on an important Neapolitan rebel leader even inspired a film by [Laurel and Hardy](#).^[40]
- 1830 *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* (Bellini). Bellini's version of *Romeo and Juliet*.^[41]
- 1831 *La sonnambula* (Bellini). The concertato "D'un pensiero e d'un accento" from the finale of Act 1 of this work was later parodied by [Arthur Sullivan](#) in *Trial by Jury*.^[42]
- 1831 *Norma* (Bellini). Bellini's best-known opera, paradigm of Romantic operas. The final act of this work is often noted for the originality of its orchestration.^[43]
- 1831 *Robert le diable* (Giacomo Meyerbeer). Meyerbeer's first *Grand Opera* for Paris caused a sensation with its ballet of dead nuns.^[44]
- 1832 *L'elisir d'amore* (Donizetti). This work was the most often performed opera in Italy between 1838 and 1848.^[39]

1833–1849

Gaetano Donizetti



- 1833 *Beatrice di Tenda* (Vincenzo Bellini). Bellini's tragedy is notable for its extensive use of the chorus.^[45]
- 1833 *Hans Heiling* (Heinrich Marschner). Another important Gothic horror opera from Marschner.^[46]
- 1833 *Lucrezia Borgia* (Gaetano Donizetti). One of Donizetti's most popular scores.^[47]
- 1834 *Maria Stuarda* (Donizetti). This work was dismissed as a failure in the 19th century, but since its revival in 1958 it has made frequent appearances on stage.^[48]
- 1835 *Das Liebesverbot* (Richard Wagner). An early work by Wagner loosely based on Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*. The composer later disowned it.^[49]
- 1835 *I puritani* (Bellini). Bellini's drama, set during the [English Civil War](#), is one of his finest achievements.^[50]
- 1835 *La Juive* (Fromental Halévy). This grand opera rivalled the works of Meyerbeer in popularity. The tenor aria "Rachel quand du seigneur" is particularly famous.^[51]
- 1835 *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Donizetti). Donizetti's most famous tragic opera, notable for Lucia's mad scene.^[52]
- 1836 *A Life for the Tsar* (Mikhail Glinka). Glinka established the tradition of Russian opera with this historical work and the later *Ruslan and Lyudmila*.^[53]
- 1836 *Les Huguenots* (Giacomo Meyerbeer). Perhaps the most famous of all French grand operas, widely regarded as Meyerbeer's masterpiece.^[54]
- 1837 *Roberto Devereux* (Donizetti). Donizetti wrote this work as a distraction from the grief he felt at the death of his wife.^[55]
- 1838 *Benvenuto Cellini* (Hector Berlioz). Berlioz's first opera is a virtuoso score which is still highly difficult to perform.^[56]
- 1839 *Oberto* (Giuseppe Verdi). Verdi's first opera is a sensational melodrama.^[57]
- 1840 *La favorite* (Donizetti). A grand opera in the French tradition.^[58]
- 1840 *La fille du régiment* (Donizetti). Donizetti's venture into French *opéra comique*.^[58]
- 1840 *Un giorno di regno* (Verdi). Verdi's only comedy apart from his last opera, *Falstaff*.^[57]
- 1842 *Der Wildschütz* (Albert Lortzing). Lortzing's "comic masterpiece", intended to show a German work could rival Italian *opera buffa* and French *opéra comique*.^[59]
- 1842 *Nabucco* (Verdi). Verdi described this opera as the genuine beginning of his artistic career.^[60]
- 1842 *Rienzi* (Wagner). Wagner's contribution to the *Grand Opera* tradition.^[61]
- 1842 *Ruslan and Lyudmila* (Glinka). This episodic version of a [Pushkin](#) fairy tale was a major influence on later Russian composers.^[62]
- 1843 *The Flying Dutchman* (Wagner). Wagner regarded this German Romantic opera as the true beginning of his career.^[63]
- 1843 *Don Pasquale* (Donizetti). Donizetti's "comic masterpiece" is one of the last great *opera buffas*.^[64]
- 1843 *I Lombardi alla prima crociata* (Verdi). Verdi's follow-up to *Nabucco* was the first of his operas to be performed in America.^[65]
- 1843 *The Bohemian Girl* (Michael Balfe). One of the few notable 19th-century English-language operas apart from the works of [Gilbert and Sullivan](#).^[66]
- 1844 *Ernani* (Verdi). One of the most dramatically effective of Verdi's early works.^[67]

- 1845 *Tannhäuser* (Wagner). Wagner's "most medieval work" depicts the conflict between pagan love and Christian virtue.^[68]
- 1846 *Attila* (Verdi). Verdi was troubled by ill health during the writing of this piece, which was only a moderate success at the premiere.^[69]
- 1846 *The Damnation of Faust* (Berlioz). Frustrated at his lack of opera commissions, Berlioz composed this "dramatic legend" for concert performance. In recent years, it has been successfully staged as an opera, though the critic [David Cairns](#) describes it as "cinematic".^[70]
- 1847 *Macbeth* (Verdi). Verdi's first venture into Shakespeare.^[69]
- 1847 *Martha* (Friedrich von Flotow). Flotow unashamedly aimed at satisfying popular taste in this comic and sentimental work set in the England of [Queen Anne](#).^[71]
- 1849 *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (Otto Nicolai). Nicolai's only German opera has been his most lasting success.^[72]
- 1849 *Le prophète* (Meyerbeer). A grand opera about the life of the religious fanatic, [John of Leiden](#).^[73]
- 1849 *Luisa Miller* (Verdi). Fans of Verdi think that this setting of [Schiller's](#) "bourgeois tragedy" has been underrated.^[74]

1850–1875



Richard Wagner

- 1850 *Genoveva* ([Robert Schumann](#)). Schumann's only excursion into opera was a relative failure, though the work has had its admirers from [Franz Liszt](#) to [Nikolaus Harnoncourt](#).^[75]
- 1850 *Lohengrin* ([Richard Wagner](#)). The last of Wagner's "middle period" works.^[76]
- 1850 *Stiffelio* ([Giuseppe Verdi](#)). Verdi's tale of adultery among members of a German Protestant sect fell foul of the censors.^[77]
- 1851 *Rigoletto* (Verdi). The first – and most innovative- of three middle period Verdi operas which have become staples of the repertoire.^[78]
- 1853 *Il trovatore* (Verdi). This Romantic melodrama is one of Verdi's most tuneful scores.^[79]
- 1853 *La traviata* (Verdi). The role of Violetta, the "fallen woman" of the title, is one of the most famous vehicles for the soprano voice.^[80]
- 1855 *Les vêpres siciliennes* (Verdi). Verdi's opera displays the strong influence of Meyerbeer.^[81]
- 1858 *Der Barbier von Bagdad* ([Peter Cornelius](#)). An oriental comedy drawing on the tradition of German Romantic opera.^[82]
- 1858 *Orpheus in the Underworld* ([Jacques Offenbach](#)). The world's first [opерetta](#), this cynical and satirical piece is still immensely popular today.^[83]
- 1858 *Les Troyens* ([Hector Berlioz](#)). Berlioz's greatest opera and the culmination of the French Classical tradition.^[70]
- 1859 *Faust* ([Charles Gounod](#)). Of all the musical settings of the [Faust](#) legend, Gounod's has been the most popular with audiences, especially in the Victorian era.^[84]
- 1859 *Un ballo in maschera* (Verdi). By the time he came to write *Un ballo in maschera*, Verdi was rich enough not to have to work for a living. This opera ran into trouble with the censors because it originally dealt with the assassination of a monarch.^[85]
- 1862 *Béatrice et Bénédict* (Berlioz). The last opera Berlioz wrote is the fruit of his lifelong admiration for Shakespeare.^[86]
- 1862 *La forza del destino* (Verdi). This tragedy was commissioned by the Imperial Theatre, Saint Petersburg, and Verdi may have been influenced by the Russian tradition in the writing of his work.^[87]

- 1863 *Les pêcheurs de perles* ([Georges Bizet](#)). Though a relative failure at its premiere, this is Bizet's second most performed opera today and is particularly famous for its tenor/baritone duet.^[188]
- 1864 *La belle Hélène* (Offenbach). Another operetta by Offenbach which pokes fun at Greek mythology.^[189]
- 1864 *Mireille* (Gounod). Gounod's work is based on the epic poem by [Frédéric Mistral](#) and makes use of Provençal folk tunes.^[190]
- 1865 *L'Africaine* ([Giacomo Meyerbeer](#)). Meyerbeer's last [Grand Opera](#) received a posthumous premiere.^[191]
- 1865 *Tristan und Isolde* (Wagner). This romantic tragedy is Wagner's most radical work and one of the most revolutionary pieces in music history. The "[Tristan chord](#)" began the breakdown of traditional [tonality](#).^[192]
- 1866 *Mignon* ([Ambroise Thomas](#)). A lyrical work inspired by [Goethe](#)'s novel *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, this was Thomas's most successful opera along with *Hamlet*.^[193]
- 1866 *The Bartered Bride* ([Bedřich Smetana](#)). Smetana's folk comedy is the most widely performed of all his operas.^[194]
- 1867 *Don Carlos* (Verdi). Verdi's take on French grand opera is now one of his most highly regarded works.^[195]
- 1867 *La jolie fille de Perth* (Bizet). Bizet turned to a novel by Sir Walter Scott for this *opéra comique*.^[196]
- 1867 *Roméo et Juliette* (Gounod). Gounod's version of Shakespeare's tragedy is his second most famous work.^[197]
- 1868 *Dalibor* (Smetana). One of the most successful of Smetana's operas exploring themes from Czech history.^[198]
- 1868 *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (Wagner). Wagner's only comedy among his mature operas concerns the clash between artistic tradition and innovation.^[199]
- 1868 *Hamlet* (Thomas). Thomas's opera takes many liberties with its Shakespearean source.^[100]
- 1868 *La Périchole* (Offenbach). Set in Peru, this operetta mixes comedy and sentimentality.^[101]
- 1868 *Mefistofele* ([Arrigo Boito](#)). Though most famous as a librettist for Verdi, Boito was also a composer and he spent many years working on this musical version of the Faust myth.^[102]
- 1869 *Das Rheingold* (Wagner). The "preliminary evening" to Wagner's epic [Ring](#) cycle tells how the ring was forged and the curse laid upon it.^[103]
- 1870 *Die Walküre* (Wagner). The second part of the [Ring](#) tells the story of the mortals Siegmund and Sieglinde and of how the [valkyrie](#) Brünnhilde disobeys her father Wotan, king of the gods.^[104]
- 1871 *Aida* (Verdi). Features one of the greatest tenor arias of all time, *Celeste Aida*.
- 1874 *Boris Godunov* ([Modest Mussorgsky](#)). Mussorgsky's great historical drama shows Russia's descent into anarchy in the early 17th century.^[105]
- 1874 *Die Fledermaus* ([Johann Strauss II](#)). Probably the most popular of all operettas.^[106]
- 1874 *The Two Widows* (Smetana). Another comedy by Smetana, the only one of his operas with a non-Czech subject.^[107]
- 1875 *Carmen* (Bizet). Probably the most famous of all French operas. Critics at the premiere were shocked by Bizet's blend of romanticism and realism.^[108]



1876–1899

Giuseppe Verdi, the celebrated portrait by [Giovanni Boldini](#), 1886 (National Gallery of Modern Art, Rome).

- 1876 *Siegfried* ([Richard Wagner](#)). The third part of the [Ring](#) sees the hero Siegfried slay the dragon Fafner, win the ring and free Brunhilde from her enchantment.^[109]
- 1876 *Götterdämmerung* (Wagner). In the final part of the [Ring](#), the curse takes effect leading to the deaths of Siegfried and Brünnhilde and the destruction of the gods themselves.^[110]
- 1876 *La Gioconda* ([Amilcare Ponchielli](#)). Apart from Verdi's *Aida*, this is the only Italian grand opera to have stayed in international repertory.^[121]
- 1877 *L'étoile* ([Emmanuel Chabrier](#)). This comic piece has been described as "a cross between *Carmen* and Gilbert and Sullivan, with plenty of Offenbach thrown in".^[111]
- 1877 *Samson and Delilah* ([Camille Saint-Saëns](#)). An opera with that was heavily influenced by those of Wagner.^[112]
- 1879 *Eugene Onegin* ([Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky](#)). Tchaikovsky's most popular opera, based on the verse novel by [Alexander Pushkin](#). The composer strongly identified with the heroine Tatyana.^[113]
- 1881 *Hérodiade* ([Jules Massenet](#)). An opera telling the Biblical story of [Salome](#), Massenet's work was eclipsed by Richard Strauss's treatment of the same subject.^[114]
- 1881 *Les contes d'Hoffmann* ([Jacques Offenbach](#)). Offenbach's attempt at writing a more serious work remained unfinished at his death. Nevertheless, this is his most widely performed opera today.^[101]

- 1881 *Simon Boccanegra* ([Giuseppe Verdi](#)). Verdi heavily revised this opera over twenty years after it was first performed.^[60]
- 1882 *Parsifal* (Wagner). Wagner's last opera is a "festival play" about the legend of the [Holy Grail](#).^[115]
- 1882 *The Snow Maiden* ([Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov](#)). One of Rimsky-Korsakov's most lyrical works.^[116]
- 1883 *Lakmé* ([Léo Delibes](#)). This *opéra comique* set in the [British Raj](#) in India is famous for its "Flower Duet" and "Bell Song".^[117]
- 1884 *Le Villi* (Puccini). An early operatic work by Puccini with plenty of opportunity for dance.^[118]
- 1884 *Manon* (Massenet). Massenet's most enduringly popular work along with *Werther*.^[119]
- 1885 *The Gypsy Baron* ([Johann Strauss II](#)). Strauss's operetta was intended to soothe tensions between Austrians and Hungarians in the Habsburg empire.^[120]
- 1886 *Khovanshchina* ([Modest Mussorgsky](#)). Mussorgsky's second great epic of Russian history was left unfinished at his death.^[121]
- 1887 *Le roi malgré lui* (Chabrier). Ravel claimed he would rather have written this comic opera than Wagner's *Ring* cycle, though the plot is notoriously confused.^[122]
- 1887 *Otello* (Verdi). The first of Verdi's late-period masterpieces was set to an unusually fine libretto by [Arrigo Boito](#).^[60]
- 1888 *Le roi d'Ys* ([Édouard Lalo](#)). A [Breton](#) folk tale with music heavily influenced by Wagner.^[123]
- 1890 *Cavalleria rusticana* ([Pietro Mascagni](#)). A perennial favourite with audiences around the world, this one-acter is usually performed alongside Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci*.^[124]
- 1890 *Prince Igor* ([Alexander Borodin](#)). Borodin spent 17 years working on this opera off and on, yet never managed to finish it. Most famous for its "Polovtsian dances".^[125]
- 1890 *The Queen of Spades* (Tchaikovsky). In a letter to his brother and librettist the composer said that "the opera is a masterpiece".^[126]
- 1891 *L'amico Fritz* (Mascagni). This work has been thought of as a late example of *opera semiseria*.^[127]
- 1892 *Iolanta* (Tchaikovsky). Tchaikovsky's last, lyrical opera set to a libretto by his brother Modest.^[128]
- 1892 *La Wally* ([Alfredo Catalani](#)). Usually thought of as Catalani's masterpiece.^[129]
- 1892 *Pagliacci* ([Ruggiero Leoncavallo](#)). One of the most famous [verismo](#) operas, usually paired with Mascagni's *Cavalleria rusticana*.^[130]
- 1892 *Werther* (Massenet). Along with *Manon*, this is Massenet's most popular opera.^[131]
- 1893 *Falstaff* (Verdi). Verdi's final opera was set to another of Boito's fine libretti.^[60]
- 1893 *Hänsel und Gretel* ([Engelbert Humperdinck](#)). The well-known fairy-tale received a full Wagnerian operatic adaptation at Humperdinck's hands.^[132]
- 1893 *Manon Lescaut* ([Giacomo Puccini](#)). The success of this work established Puccini's reputation as a composer of contemporary music of the first rank.^[42]
- 1894 *Thaïs* (Massenet). The opera that contains the famous *Méditation* interlude.^[131]
- 1896 *Andrea Chénier* ([Umberto Giordano](#)). Set to a libretto by [Luigi Illica](#), this *verismo* drama is Giordano's most popular opera.^[42]
- 1896 *La bohème* (Puccini). Debussy is alleged to have said, as a result of *La bohème*, that no one had detailed Paris at that time better than had Puccini.^[42]
- 1897 *Königskinder* (Humperdinck). Originally a melodrama that blended song and spoken dialogue, the composer adapted the work into an opera proper in 1907.
- 1898 *Fedora* (Giordano). Giordano's second most popular opera.^[42]
- 1898 *Sadko* (Rimsky-Korsakov). The Viking Trader's song from this opera has become extremely popular in Russia.^[126]
- 1899 *Cendrillon* (Massenet). An immediate success at the time of the premiere, the opera enjoyed 50 performances in 1899 alone.^[131]
- 1899 *The Devil and Kate* ([Antonín Dvořák](#)). The lack of a love interest makes the plot of this work almost unique among Czech comic operas.^[133]

1900–1920



[Richard Strauss](#)

- 1900 *Louise* ([Gustave Charpentier](#)). An attempt to provide a French equivalent for Italian [verismo](#), *Louise* is set in a working-class district of Paris.^[134]

- 1900 *Tosca* ([Giacomo Puccini](#)). *Tosca* is the most Wagnerian of Puccini's operas, with its frequent use of *leitmotif*.^[42]
- 1901 *Rusalka* ([Antonín Dvořák](#)). Dvořák's most successful opera with international audiences, based on a folk tale about a water sprite.^[135]
- 1902 *Adriana Lecouvreur* ([Francesco Cilea](#)). Unique among Cilea's operas in that it has remained in the international repertory up to the present time.^[42]
- 1902 *Pelléas et Mélisande* ([Claude Debussy](#)). Debussy's elusive [Symbolist](#) drama is one of the most significant operas of the 20th century.^[136]
- 1902 *Saul og David* ([Carl Nielsen](#)). This Biblical tragedy was the first of Nielsen's two operas.^[137]
- 1904 *Jenůfa* ([Leoš Janáček](#)). Janáček's first great success, a naturalistic depiction of Czech peasant life.^[138]
- 1904 *Madama Butterfly* (Puccini). The first performance of Puccini's now-popular opera was a disaster involving accusations of plagiarism.^[42]
- 1905 *The Merry Widow* ([Franz Lehár](#)). One of the most famous Viennese operettas.^[139]
- 1905 *Salome* ([Richard Strauss](#)). A scandalous success at its premiere, Strauss's "decadent" opera set to [Oscar Wilde](#)'s play is still immensely popular with today's audiences.^[140]
- 1906 *Maskarade* (Nielsen). Nielsen's high-spirited comedy looks back to the world of *The Marriage of Figaro* and has become a classic in the composer's native Denmark.^[141]
- 1907 *A Village Romeo and Juliet* ([Frederick Delius](#)). A tragedy of unhappy love set in Switzerland; the most famous music is the interlude "The Walk to the Paradise Garden".^[142]
- 1907 *Ariane et Barbe-bleue* ([Paul Dukas](#)). Dukas's only surviving opera, based like Debussy's *Pelléas*, on a [Symbolist](#) drama by [Maeterlinck](#).^[143]
- 1907 *The Legend of the Invisible City of Kitezh and the Maiden Fevroniya* ([Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov](#)). A mystical retelling of an old national legend. Sometimes called the Russian *Parsifal*.^[144]
- 1907 *Destiny* (Janáček). An important transitional work in Janáček's career as the composer began to look beyond the traditional themes of Czech opera.^[145]
- 1909 *Elektra* (Strauss). This dark tragedy took Strauss's music to the borders of [atonality](#). It was the composer's first setting of a libretto by his long-term collaborator [Hugo von Hofmannsthal](#).^[146]
- 1909 *Il segreto di Susanna* ([Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari](#)). A comic intermezzo. Susanna's secret is that she smokes.^[147]
- 1909 *The Golden Cockerel* (Rimsky-Korsakov). Often considered Rimsky's greatest work, this satire on military incompetence got the composer into trouble with the censors after Russia's defeat in the [Russo-Japanese War](#).^[148]
- 1910 *Don Quichotte* ([Jules Massenet](#)). Massenet's last great success is a gentle comedy inspired by Cervantes's *Don Quixote*.^[149]
- 1910 *La fanciulla del West* (Puccini). Described by Puccini as his best work.^[42]
- 1911 *Der Rosenkavalier* (Strauss). Strauss and Hofmannsthal's most popular work, this comedy is set in 18th century Vienna.^[150]
- 1911 *L'heure espagnole* ([Maurice Ravel](#)). Ravel's first opera is a bedroom farce set in Spain.^[151]
- 1912 *Ariadne auf Naxos* (Strauss). A mixture of comedy and tragedy with an opera within an opera.^[152]
- 1912 *Der ferne Klang* ([Franz Schreker](#)). The success of this work established Schreker's reputation as an opera composer.^[153]
- 1913 *La vida breve* ([Manuel de Falla](#)). A passionate Spanish drama influenced by [verismo](#).^[154]
- 1914 *The Immortal Hour* ([Rutland Boughton](#)). Boughton's Celtic fairy tale opera enjoyed great popularity in Britain between the world wars.^[155]
- 1914 *The Nightingale* ([Igor Stravinsky](#)). Stravinsky's style changed radically during the composition of this short opera, moving away from the influence of his teacher Rimsky-Korsakov towards the spiky modernism of the *The Rite of Spring*.^[156]
- 1916 *Savitri* ([Gustav Holst](#)). Holst's interest in [Hinduism](#) led him to set this episode from the *Mahabharata*.^[157]
- 1917 *Arlecchino* ([Ferruccio Busoni](#)). Busoni drew on the tradition of Italian *commedia dell'arte* for this one-act piece.^[158]
- 1917 *Eine florentinische Tragödie* ([Alexander von Zemlinsky](#)). Zemlinsky's "decadent" one-act is based on a short play by [Oscar Wilde](#).^[159]
- 1917 *La rondine* (Puccini). Not an initial success, Puccini heavily revised the opera twice.^[42]
- 1917 *Palestrina* ([Hans Pfitzner](#)). A Wagnerian drama exploring the clash between innovation and tradition in music.^[160]
- 1918 *Bluebeard's Castle* ([Béla Bartók](#)). Bartók's only opera, this intense psychological drama is one of his most important works.^[161]
- 1918 *Gianni Schicchi* (Puccini). One act in structure, Puccini's work is based on an extract from Dante's *Inferno*.^[42]
- 1918 *Il tabarro* (Puccini). The first of the operas that make up *Il trittico* – along with *Gianni Schicchi* and *Suor Angelica*

- 1918 *Suor Angelica* (Puccini). Described by the composer as his favourite among the three operas that comprise *Il trittico*.^[142]
- 1919 *Die Frau ohne Schatten* (Strauss). The third full collaboration between Strauss and the librettist Hofmannsthal gestated for six years before completion, and another two years passed before the first performance.^[162]
- 1920 *Die tote Stadt* (Erich Wolfgang Korngold). Korngold's best known work for the stage.^[163]
- 1920 *The Excursions of Mr. Brouček to the Moon and to the 15th Century* (Janáček). A comic fantasy set on the moon and in 15th century Bohemia.^[135]



Giacomo Puccini

1921–1944

- 1921 *Káťa Kabanová* (Leoš Janáček). The first of the great operas of Janáček's late maturity, based on an *Ostrovsky* play about religious fanaticism and forbidden love in provincial Russia.^[164]
- 1921 *The Love for Three Oranges* (Sergei Prokofiev). A comic opera based on a fairy tale by *Carlo Gozzi*.^[165]
- 1922 *Der Zwerg* (Alexander von Zemlinsky). Another short Zemlinsky opera inspired by a work by *Oscar Wilde*. The composer personally identified with the dwarf of the title.^[166]
- 1924 *Erwartung* (Arnold Schoenberg). An intense *atonal* monodrama.^[167]
- 1924 *Hugh the Drover* (Ralph Vaughan Williams). A *ballad opera*, much of which is based on *folksongs*.^[168]
- 1924 *Intermezzo* (Richard Strauss). A light operetta-style work based on an incident from the composer's own marriage.^[162]
- 1924 *The Cunning Little Vixen* (Janáček). One of the composer's most popular works, the story is based on a cartoon strip about animals in the Czech countryside.^[169]
- 1925 *Doktor Faust* (Ferruccio Busoni). Busoni intended this opera to be the climax of his career, but it was left unfinished at his death.^[170]
- 1925 *L'enfant et les sortilèges* (Maurice Ravel). Originally conceived of as a fairy ballet, the plot of the opera is that of children's fairy-tale.^[171]
- 1925 *Wozzeck* (Alban Berg). One of the key operas of the 20th century. Based on a strikingly unheroic plot, Berg's work blends *atonal* techniques with more traditional ones.^[172]
- 1926 *Cardillac* (Paul Hindemith). An opera in Hindemith's neo-classical style about a psychopathic jeweller.^[173]
- 1926 *Háry János* (Zoltán Kodály). Kodály's *singspiel* incorporated many Hungarian folksongs and dances.^[174]
- 1926 *King Roger* (Karol Szymanowski). One of the most important Polish operas, this piece is full of Oriental harmonies.^[175]
- 1926 *The Makropulos Affair* (Janáček). The first performance of *The Makropulos Affair* was the last that Janáček survived to see among his operas.^[176]
- 1926 *Turandot* (Giacomo Puccini). Puccini's last opera was left unfinished at his death.^[142]
- 1927 *Oedipus Rex* (Igor Stravinsky). Set to a Latin libretto by *Jean Cocteau*, this highly stylised piece fuses opera and *oratorio*.^[177]
- 1927 *Jonny spielt auf* (Ernst Krenek). A "jazz opera" which enjoyed tremendous success in its day.^[178]
- 1928 *The Threepenny Opera* (Kurt Weill). A modern adaptation of Gay and Pepusch's *The Beggar's Opera*.^[179]
- 1929 *The Nose* (Dmitri Shostakovich). *Gogol*'s strange short story provided the plot for this grotesque satire.^[180]
- 1930 *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* (Weill). The composition of this opera was problematic, due to tension between the composer and his librettist, Bertolt Brecht.^[179]
- 1930 *From the House of the Dead* (Janáček). Janáček's last opera inspired by *Dostoyevsky*'s account of life in a Russian prison camp.^[176]
- 1932 *Moses und Aron* (Schoenberg). Left unfinished at his death, Schoenberg's opera frequently employs *serialist* techniques.^[181]
- 1933 *Arabella* (Strauss). This opera was the last that Strauss set to a libretto by *Hugo von Hofmannsthal*.^[162]

- 1934 *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* (Shostakovich). An attack on the music and subject matter of the opera in the Soviet Union's government journal *Pravda* meant that this work was Shostakovich's last opera.^[182]
- 1935 *Die schweigsame Frau* (Strauss). A comic opera based on a play by [Ben Jonson](#).^[183]
- 1935 *Porgy and Bess* ([George Gershwin](#)). Initially a financial failure, a 1941 production that replaced the work's recitatives with spoken dialogue was a success.^[184]
- 1937 *Lulu* (Berg). Berg's second opera was unfinished at his death, but a completion by [Friedrich Cerha](#) was successfully performed in 1979.^[185]
- 1937 *Riders to the Sea* (Vaughan Williams). Often rated as Vaughan Williams's finest opera, this short, fatalistic tragedy is set on the Aran Isles in the west of Ireland.^[186]
- 1938 *Daphne* (Strauss). A mythological opera with lyrical, pastoral music.^[187]
- 1938 *Julietta* ([Bohuslav Martinů](#)). This dreamlike work set in a town where people have lost their memory is "Martinu's operatic masterpiece".^[188]
- 1938 *Mathis der Maler* (Hindemith). Hindemith's most highly regarded opera is a parable about an artist surviving in a time of crisis, reflecting the composer's own experience under the Nazis.^[189]
- 1941 *Paul Bunyan* ([Benjamin Britten](#)). Britten's first venture into opera was a light piece about an American folk hero with a libretto by [W. H. Auden](#).^[190]
- 1942 *Capriccio* (Strauss). Strauss's final opera is a conversation piece about the genre itself.^[191]
- 1943 *Der Kaiser von Atlantis* ([Viktor Ullmann](#)). Written in the Nazi concentration camp [Theresienstadt](#) and not performed until 1975. The composer and his librettist died in [Auschwitz concentration camp](#).^[192]



Igor Stravinsky

From 1945

- 1945 *Peter Grimes* ([Benjamin Britten](#)). A landmark in the history of British opera, this work marked Britten's arrival on the international music scene.^[193]
- 1945 *War and Peace* ([Sergei Prokofiev](#)). Prokofiev returned to the tradition of Russian historical opera for this epic work based on [Leo Tolstoy](#)'s novel.^[194]
- 1946 *Betrothal in a Monastery* (Prokofiev). A romantic comedy with music drawing on the *opera buffa* style of [Rossini](#).^[195]
- 1946 *The Medium* ([Gian Carlo Menotti](#)). Considered by many to be Menotti's finest work.^[196]
- 1946 *The Rape of Lucretia* (Britten). Britten's first *chamber opera*.^[197]
- 1947 *Albert Herring* (Britten). Britten's comic opera is heavily based upon use of the ensemble.^[197]
- 1947 *Dantons Tod* ([Gottfried von Einem](#)). Einem's opera is a compressed setting of [Georg Büchner](#)'s play about the "Reign of Terror" during the [French Revolution](#).^[198]
- 1947 *Les mamelles de Tirésias* ([Francis Poulenc](#)). Poulenc's first opera is a short *surrealist* comedy based on the play by [Guillaume Apollinaire](#).^[199]
- 1947 *The Telephone, or L'Amour à trois* (Menotti). An *opera buffa* just 22 minutes in length.^[196]
- 1949 *Il prigioniero* ([Luigi Dallapiccola](#)). Much of the music for this opera is based on three 12-note tone rows, which represent the themes of prayer, hope and freedom that dominate the opera.^[200]
- 1950 *The Consul* (Menotti). This opera contains some of Menotti's most dissonant music.^[196]
- 1951 *Amahl and the Night Visitors* (Menotti). This Christmas story was the first opera specifically written for television.^[201]
- 1951 *Billy Budd* (Britten). The plot for Britten's large-scale opera was based on a story by [Herman Melville](#).^[197]
- 1951 *The Pilgrim's Progress* ([Ralph Vaughan Williams](#)). Set to his own libretto, Vaughan Williams's work was inspired by [John Bunyan](#)'s famous allegory of the same name.^[168]
- 1951 *The Rake's Progress* ([Igor Stravinsky](#)). Stravinsky's most important operatic work looks back to Mozart musically and has a libretto by [W. H. Auden](#) inspired by the engravings of [William Hogarth](#).^[202]
- 1952 *Boulevard Solitude* ([Hans Werner Henze](#)). Henze's first full-length opera is an updating of the story of [Manon Lescaut](#), also the source for important operas by Massenet and Puccini.^[203]
- 1953 *Gloriana* (Britten). Composed for the coronation of [Queen Elizabeth II](#), this opera looks back to the relationship between her namesake [Elizabeth I](#) and the [Earl of Essex](#).^[204]

- 1954 *The Fiery Angel* (Prokofiev). Prokofiev never saw what is often regarded as his most *avant-garde* composition performed on the operatic stage.^[206]
- 1954 *The Turn of the Screw* (Britten). A chamber opera based on the ghost story by [Henry James](#). It is remarkable for its tightly laid out key scheme and active orchestral role.^[197]
- 1954 *Troilus and Cressida* ([William Walton](#)). Walton's opera about the [Trojan War](#) was initially a failure.^[205]
- 1955 *The Midsummer Marriage* ([Michael Tippett](#)). Tippett's first full-scale opera was set to his own libretto.^[206]
- 1956 *Candide* ([Leonard Bernstein](#)). Based on Voltaire, the soprano aria "Glitter and Be Gay" is a parody of Romantic-era jewel songs.^[207]
- 1957 *Dialogues of the Carmelites* (Poulenc). Poulenc's major opera is set in a convent during the [French Revolution](#).^[208]
- 1958 *Vanessa* ([Samuel Barber](#)). *Vanessa* won its composer a [Pulitzer Prize](#) in 1958.^[209]
- 1959 *La voix humaine* (Poulenc). A short opera with a single character: a despairing woman on the telephone to her lover.^[210]
- 1960 *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Britten). Set to a libretto adapted from the Shakespeare play by himself and his partner [Peter Pears](#), Britten's work is rare in operatic history in that it features a [countertenor](#) in the male lead role.^[197]
- 1961 *Elegy for Young Lovers* (Henze). Henze asked his librettists, [W. H. Auden](#) and [Chester Kallman](#), for a scenario that would inspire him to compose "tender, beautiful noises".^[211]
- 1962 *King Priam* (Tippett). Tippett's second opera, set to another of his own "recondite" libretti,^[212] was inspired by Homer's *Iliad*.^[206]
- 1964 *Curlew River* (Britten). A modern liturgical "church opera" intended for performance in an ecclesiastical setting.^[197]
- 1965 *Der junge Lord* (Henze). The last composition produced during Henze's dwelling in Italy is considered to be the most Italianate of his dramatic works.^[211]
- 1965 *Die Soldaten* ([Bernd Alois Zimmermann](#)). The first version of the opera was rejected by Cologne Opera as impossible for them to stage: Zimmermann was required to reduce the orchestral forces required and to cut some of the technical demands previously required.^[211]
- 1966 *Antony and Cleopatra* (Barber). The first version of the opera was set to a libretto consisting entirely of the words of Shakespeare and deemed a failure.^[209] Later it was revised by [Gian Carlo Menotti](#) and became a success.
- 1966 *The Bassarids* (Henze). Henze's opera is set to a libretto by Auden and Kallman, who required that the composer listen to *Götterdämmerung* before starting to compose the music.^[211]
- 1967 *The Bear* (Walton). The libretto for Walton's extravaganza was based on Chekov.^[211]
- 1968 *Punch and Judy* ([Harrison Birtwistle](#)). Birtwistle's first opera was commissioned by the [English Opera Group](#).^[211]
- 1968 *The Prodigal Son* (Britten). The third of Britten's parables for church performance.^[213]
- 1969 *The Devils of Loudun* ([Krzysztof Penderecki](#)). Penderecki's first opera is also his most popular.^[213]
- 1970 *The Knot Garden* (Tippett). Tippett created his own modern scenario for the libretto of this work, his third opera.^[206]
- 1971 *Owen Wingrave* (Britten). Britten's anti-war opera was written especially for [BBC](#) television.^[214]
- 1972 *Taverner* ([Peter Maxwell Davies](#)). Davies was one of the most significant figures to emerge in British music the 1960s. This opera is based on a legend about the 16th-century composer [John Taverner](#).^[215]
- 1973 *Death in Venice* (Britten). Britten's last opera was first performed three years before his death.^[212]
- 1978 *Le Grand Macabre* ([György Ligeti](#)). First performed at Stockholm in 1978, Ligeti heavily revised the opera in 1996.^[216]
- 1978 *Lear* ([Aribert Reimann](#)). An [Expressionist](#) opera based on Shakespeare's tragedy. The title role was specifically written for the famous [baritone Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau](#).^[217]
- 1980 *The Lighthouse* (Davies). Davies's second chamber opera was set to his own libretto.^[211]
- 1983 *Saint François d'Assise* ([Olivier Messiaen](#)). 120 orchestral players are required for this opera, as well as a sizable chorus.^[216]
- 1984 *Un re in ascolto* ([Luciano Berio](#)). This opera was set to a libretto assembled by the composer from three different texts by three different authors: Friedrich Einsiedel, [W. H. Auden](#) and [Friedrich Wilhelm Gotter](#).^[218]
- 1984 *Akhmaten* ([Philip Glass](#)). Unlike his first opera *Einstein on the Beach*, the writing and style are more conventional and lyrical and much of the music of *Akhmaten* is some of the most dissonant that Glass has composed.^[219]
- 1986 *The Mask of Orpheus* (Birtwistle). Birtwistle's most ambitious opera examines the myth of [Orpheus](#) from several different angles.^[220]
- 1987 *A Night at the Chinese Opera* ([Judith Weir](#)). This piece is based on a Chinese play of the [Yuan dynasty](#).^[221]
- 1987 *Nixon in China* ([John Adams](#)). Musically [Minimalist](#) in style, this "news opera" recounts [Richard Nixon](#)'s 1972 meeting with [Mao Zedong](#).^[222]
- 1991 *Gawain* (Birtwistle). Birtwistle's opera is based on the medieval English poem *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.^[211]

Significant firsts in opera history

Operas not included in the above list, but which were important milestones in operatic history.

- 1598 *Dafne* ([Jacopo Peri](#)). The first opera, performed in Florence (music now lost).^[223]
- 1600 *Euridice* (Peri). The earliest opera whose music survives.^[223]
- 1625 *La liberazione di Ruggiero* ([Francesca Caccini](#)). First opera by a woman.^[224]
- 1627 *Dafne* ([Heinrich Schütz](#)). First [German opera](#). Music now lost.^[225]
- 1671 *Pomone* ([Robert Cambert](#)). Often regarded as the first [French opera](#).^[226]
- 1683 *Venus and Adonis* ([John Blow](#)). Often considered the first [opera in English](#).^[5]
- 1701 *La púrpura de la rosa* ([Tomás de Torrejón y Velasco](#), born in Spain 1644). Earliest known opera composed in the [Americas](#).^[227]
- 1711 *Partenope* ([Manuel de Zumaya](#)). The first opera written by an [American](#)-born [composer](#) and the earliest known full opera produced in North America.^[228]