

## 5. Love is for Ever (October 19)

One of the most beautiful celebrations of married love is Wagner's *Siegfried Idyll*, played by a group of chamber musicians outside his wife's bedroom in their house at Tribschen, Lake Lucerne, to awake her on the morning of her birthday on Christmas Day 1870. This final class will be about love that lasts until death, and the memory of a loved one who has passed on. Sad, undoubtedly, but also unspeakably beautiful.



# Love Songs

ILLUSTRATIONS: Painting by Sir Frank Dicksee (cover); Sutton Foster & Samuel Edwards in *Anything Goes*; Adetomiwa Edun & Ellie Kendrick in *Romeo and Juliet*; Carlos Acosta & Marianela Nuñez in *La fille mal gardée*; Justina Gringyté & Alok Kumar in *Carmen*; Cosima, Siegfried, and Richard Wagner.

For more detail, color illustrations, artist bios,  
and suggestions for further reading, see the class website:

<http://www.brunyate.com/LoveSongs/>

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JHU Osher on Zoom  
Monday Mornings, Fall 2026

# Love Songs

SHAKESPEARE'S SONNETS include some of the most beautiful—and varied—love poetry ever written. When his Romeo and Juliet meet, they discover their compatibility by improvising a sonnet. Their love has inspired paintings, orchestral music, and popular songs. On the stage, their love lives on in operas by Gounod and others, Bernstein's *West Side Story*, and (albeit without words) the Prokofiev ballet. This course is about how such declarations and celebrations of love, spanning many centuries and such different media, endure as an essential part of our culture.

The illustrations opposite come from a film of a Broadway show, a performance at Shakespeare's Globe, a new version of a very old ballet, a famous opera and, indirectly, an orchestral celebration of familial love. The multiple media reflect the scope of the course as a whole, but not the content of that particular class. See the full list on the back. *Roger Brunyate*.

## 1. Lyrical Cocktail Bar (September 14)

The heady aromas of the romantic lyric, played, sung, or on the page, including some special flavors: love that is non-sexual, love that is *only* sexual, loves that endure, and lovers that part. The photo, incidentally, shows Reno Sweeney singing to Billy Crocker in the first scene of Cole Porter's *Anything Goes*; she gets a kick out of him, but he regards her as merely a friend. Not all loves, in life or onstage, are necessarily requited.



## 2. Saying it Straight (September 28)



Romeo and Juliet meet in verse, propose in verse, and die with poetry as well as poison on their lips. This class is about great romantic pairings in many different media: the written word, the spoken stage, the operatic or Broadway duet, the ballet *pas-de-deux*, or the beat of a rock ballad. Not all the stories may end happily, but all begin with an unambiguous declaration of affection, and climax in a mutual celebration of joy.

## 3. Saying it Slant (October 5)

Not having words at their disposal, ballet characters declare their love by other means. Colas and Lisette in Frederick Ashton's *La fille mal gardée*, for example, use a game of Cat's Cradle as a metaphor of their interlacing feelings. But very often characters cannot confess to love all; witness Laurey and Curley's mutual denial in *Oklahoma* or Julie Jordan's extended hypothetical in *Carousel*. This class is about the many different ways of revealing one's love *without* actually saying so!



## 4. In the Heat of the Moment (October 12)

The title character in Bizet's *Carmen* has several arias exciting Corporal Don Jose to passion, making him lose his rank, betray his village fiancée, and become an outlaw, but the only significant duet they have together is just before he murders her at the end of the opera. Physical passion in real life may lead to more lasting forms of love, but on the stage it is typically associated with seduction or adultery—just look at the plots of just about any nineteenth-century opera. Morally despicable, maybe, but it leads to terrific theater!