



Member Society of The Arts Society: Registered Charity No:1103740
www.theartssocietyblackmorevale.org.uk

Programme 2021- 2022

October 7 2021

The Age of Jazz

One hundred years ago a group of American musicians docked in London, bringing with them one of the twentieth century's most important musical genres: jazz, a fascinating blend of rigorous structure, free-wheeling creativity, close-knit ensemble work and improvisation. Drawing on his practical experience both as musicologist and gigging musician, Sandy's talk touches on the disparate influences behind the emergence of jazz, and his musical illustrations range from the blues, ragtime and the very earliest jazz recordings through to classics by Louis Armstrong's Hot Five and the Duke Ellington Orchestra, and the dawn of the Swing Era. Includes live musical illustrations on the double bass.

Sandy Burnett MA (Cantab)

November 4 2021

Moorish Architecture – the legacy of a vanished kingdom

The Alhambra of Grenada, the Great Mosque of Cordoba and the Alcazar of Seville are the three most impressive monuments to the architectural creativity of the Moors in Spain, but there are many other examples worthy of mention too. The classical origins that influenced the Moorish style are less well-known, but fascinating to explore, as is the unique interior decorative style developed by the Moors, which gives their architecture its beauty and exotic appeal – an appeal so strong that the Christians sometimes copied it, even as they slowly reconquered the territory from its Islamic rulers.

Ian Cockburn BA MA

December 2 2021

Repton and the Picturesque

The Picturesque was the final phase of the English Landscape Movement. Capability Brown's serpentine curves, smooth lawns and clumps of trees were now considered insipid and dull by a generation with an enthusiasm for untamed nature and rugged wildness. The aim was always to engender a pleasurable frisson of fear. Repton knew that this was all very well as theory, but his clients actually required practicality and, above all, beauty. Wildness was gradually tamed to become the formal gardens of the nineteenth century.

James Bolton MA MBA Dip ISD

January 6 2022

In the Kingdom of the Sweets

The Nutcracker ballet has delighted audiences at Christmas for many decades yet it was deemed a failure at its initial performances. Based upon the current Royal Ballet production by Sir Peter Wright, this lecture takes a close look at how this well-loved ballet now takes its rightful place on stage and how the music of Tchaikovsky along with story-telling, design, dance and a little bit of stage ingenuity all come together to make the most magical escape for young and old alike. Includes several performance video clips.

Nigel Bates, The Music Administrator, Royal Ballet

February 3 2022

The Mystery of Holbein's *Ambassadors*

Hans Holbein brought with him from mainland Europe to England both sophistication and skill, with far reaching consequences for this island's artistic development. His *Ambassadors* is one of the National Gallery of London's greatest treasures, dating from a tradition in the arts when no object was without meaning and symbolism, practically all of which has been lost to the modern observer. This lecture considers the tempestuous circumstances of its creation and the hidden messages concealed within it. The painting tells us much about the state of Europe at the time and the hopes and fears of its major players.

Anthony C Russell Cultural Historian

March 3 2022

The Manufactured Woman: The Story of Pandora and how she has inspired generations of artists to imagine how and why women came into the world

In Greek legend, Pandora was created with the express purpose of causing trouble to men which, by opening her box, she achieved. This lecture looks at the original sources for the story, draws parallels with both Eve in Genesis and Galatea in Ovid before showing how ballets, operas and plays from *Coppelia* to *My Fair Lady* and *The Winter's Tale* to *Educating Rita* have developed the theme of a creation that runs out of control.

Mary Sharp

April 7 2022

Bloomsbury Group: The Art of Vanessa Bell

Avant-garde painter, designer, decorator, inspired colourist, mother and muse, Vanessa Bell was the warm heart of the Bloomsbury Group, once described by Dorothy Parker as "living in squares and loving in triangles". This has perhaps lessened the fame of her work: this lecture asks the question - was Vanessa Bell the painter as radical as her sister, the writer Virginia Woolf?

Julia Musgrave

May 5 2022

Peggy Guggenheim

The 'poor little rich girl' who changed the face of twentieth century art. Not only was Peggy Guggenheim ahead of her time but she was also the woman who helped define it. She discovered and nurtured a new generation of artists producing a new kind of art. Through collecting not only art but also the artists themselves, her life was as radical as her collection.

Alexandra Epps BA MA

June 9 2022

William Beckford 1760-1844: Genius, Romantic, Notoriety

William Beckford, a man of fabulous wealth, intelligence, and daring taste- a parliamentarian and budding diplomat, was among the most brilliant of his generation. Scandal compelled him to exile abroad where he fell in love with the Gothic which inspired his own design for his vast Fonthill Abbey in Wiltshire and Lansdown tower in Bath. He was a bibliophile, wrote a novel, and had a formidable art collection. This lecture reviews his wide range of talents, his wit, invention, interests and aesthetics.

Denis Moriarty

July 7 2022

This lecture will present the most popular paintings to be found in British collections – in reverse order from No. 20 to No.1, compiled from different polls conducted since 2005 (society members who recall Alan Freeman’s Pick of the Pops will get the idea!). As the list is counted down, there will be detailed discussion of some of the individual artworks, as well as reflections on why some artworks rate so high or low and why some don’t feature at all. Overall, considerable interest, some fun and a little seriousness is promised.

Raymond Warburton BA MA