



HUMANITIES WEST

Exploring History. Celebrating the Arts.

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Tickets: City Box Office 415/392-4400
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Humanities West Announces its 2017-2018 Season

*A Unique Lecture & Performance Series
Exploring History, Celebrating the Arts*

***Norman Sicily: Art & Power in Palermo* November 3—4, 2017**

***Ancient Greeks: The Age of Expansion* February 23—24, 2018**

***Lucrezia's Family: The Borgia Dynasty* May 4—5, 2018**

Plus a Special Thursday Evening with Robert Greenberg

***Blues, Jazz, & Rock 'n' Roll* February 1, 2018**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: (SAN FRANCISCO, 19 July, 2017) Humanities West proudly announces its 2017-2018 Season featuring three diverse lecture/performance programs: ***Norman Sicily: Art & Power in Palermo*** on November 3 & 4, 2017; ***Ancient Greeks: The Age of Expansion*** on February 23 & 24, 2018; and ***Lucrezia's Family: The Borgia Dynasty*** on May 4 & 5, 2018. The season includes a special Thursday evening presentation ***Blues, Jazz, & Rock'n'Roll: An Evening with Robert Greenberg, the Erik Jekabson Quartet, & John Santos*** on February 1, 2018. All of the presentations take place at the Marines' Memorial Theatre, located at 609 Sutter Street in downtown San Francisco. A detailed schedule with complete list of presenters and other resources is available online at: www.humanitieswest.org. Single tickets for individual programs range from \$25 - \$80; discounted series tickets are available. For details contact City Box Office 415-392-4400 or info@cityboxoffice.com. Order tickets online at www.cityboxoffice.com.

Humanities West is a Bay Area arts organization dedicated to presenting multidisciplinary programs exploring history and celebrating the arts. Thought-provoking lectures and dynamic performances focus on the people, places, and events that have shaped and still inform modern culture. Each season Humanities West brings together leading scholars, musicians, and artists to entertain and educate a wide audience of arts lovers, travel buffs, students, teachers, and life-long learners. The 2017-2018 Season embarks on a grand adventure exploring the cultural clash of 11th-century ***Norman Sicily***, the intriguing era of the ***Greek Age of Expansion***, and the influence of the ***Borgia Dynasty*** during the Italian Renaissance, along with a special added program celebrating the emergence of the ***Blues, Jazz, & Rock 'n' Roll***.

In cooperation with other institutions, such as the Italian Cultural Institute, San Francisco Conservatory of Music, Mechanics' Institute Library and the Commonwealth Club of San Francisco, additional public lectures, salons, and panels are presented to further expand upon program topics. A schedule of related programs is available online at www.humanitieswest.org.

Season tickets for all three two-day programs, plus the special Thursday evening program are \$339 orchestra and \$240 balcony. A Fridays series plus the Thursday program is \$220 orchestra and \$172 balcony, and a Saturdays-only series is \$225 orchestra and \$144 balcony. Series subscriptions offer significant savings over single-ticket prices. Single tickets for individual Thursday or Friday programs are \$60 orchestra and \$45 balcony, and individual Saturday programs are \$80 orchestra and \$55 balcony; single tickets for both Friday & Saturday are \$125 orchestra and \$90 balcony. Individual balcony tickets for teachers and students are available for \$25/day for any program. Free tickets are available in limited quantities for students age 25 or younger (inquire at info@humanitieswest.org). Order direct from City Box Office 415-392-4400 or www.cityboxoffice.com.

2017-2018 SEASON BRIEF PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

Norman Sicily: Art & Power in Palermo November 3 & 4, 2017

Decades before the rapid conquest of England, Norman mercenary soldiers arrived in Sicily to serve the Lombards or the Byzantines, all the while keeping an eye on long-term opportunities for themselves in Sicily, and eventually settled in to enjoy domination of the local population. This program will discuss the emerging power of the Normans in Sicily and how they honored their former masters by endowing Palermo with great art—an art that glorifies the severe authoritarianism of centralized royal and divine power, as seen in the famous mosaic of Christ Pantocrater in Monreale.

Presenters include Teofilo Ruiz (*UCLA*), Clifford 'Kip' Cranna (*SF Opera*), Fred Astren (*SFSU*), Sharon Gerstel (*UCLA*), and Beverly Allen (*Syracuse University*). A special performance of Sicilian opera music features Marie Plette (*soprano*), Philip Skinner (*bass-baritone*), and Bryndon Hassman (*piano*). Early music specialist Tim Rayborn performs troubadour music from the court of Frederick II.

Ancient Greeks: The Age of Expansion Feb. 23 & 24, 2018

Before Athens' Golden Age, the ancient Greek economy had already expanded dramatically. Greeks had colonized lands on the shores of the Mediterranean and Black Seas. They created communities of citizens, framed laws, and developed institutions to govern themselves. Homer immortalized the Trojan War and Olympian gods and goddesses. Lyric poets sang of love and political intrigue. The Olympic Games rewarded physical fitness and mental discipline. New forms of scientific reasoning were pioneered in Greek cities on the Anatolian coast, and students of Pythagoras brought science to southern Italy. This presentation explores the pivotal cultural strands that make the Greek Age of Expansion one of history's most intriguing eras.

Presenters include Josiah Ober (*Stanford*), Richard Martin (*Stanford*), Margaret Miles (*UC Irvine*), and Emily Mackil (*UC Berkeley*). The program includes a performance of musical selections inspired by the myth of Orpheus featuring Kayleen Asbo (*story & piano*) and Evan Kahn (*cello*); and a special performance of *The Odyssey: A Modern Folk-Opera*, an original musical composition for solo guitar and voice written and performed by Joe Goodkin.

Lucrezia's Family: The Borgia Dynasty May 4 & 5, 2018

Much maligned for their misuse of power, the Borgias are being reassessed in our age of secular power politics. Were Alfons (Pope Callixtus III), Rodrigo (Pope Alexander VI), Césare, and Lucrezia dastardly characters or stereotyped as Machiavellian? Was Lucrezia one of history's great vixens or her powerful family's pawn? Were the Borgias simply victims of early biographers intent on character assassination and gender politics, or of a poor understanding of how political power was used? This program re-examines the Borgias in the context of their considerable contributions to the Italian Renaissance.

Presenters include Thomas Dandeleit (*UC Berkeley*), Carol Lansing (*UCSB*), Jon Snyder (*UCSB*), Meryl Bailey (*Mills College*), and Allyson Burgess Williams (*SDSU*). Kip Cranna (*SF Opera*) introduces the Friday musical performance featuring Shira Kammen and the Gallimaufry Chamber Chorus.

***Plus a Special Thursday Evening Presentation:**

Blues, Jazz, & Rock'n'Roll: An Evening with Robert Greenberg, the Erik Jekabson Quartet, & John Santos February 1, 2018

An extraordinary offshoot of the otherwise horrific institution of slavery was the synthesis of African and European music in the melting pot of North America. This synthesis created a dazzling array of utterly unique musical genres, among them, the Spiritual, Blues, Ragtime, Jazz, and Rock 'n' Roll. Starting with West African music, this program will explore the development and evolution of the African-American Spiritual, Blues, and the emergence of Ragtime. Special attention will be given to the "birth" of jazz in the amazing multi-racial, multi-ethnic city of New Orleans, and the role of New Orleans native Louis Armstrong in the popularization of jazz in the 1920's. From there, the presenters will trace the development of "Swing" in the 1930's, "Bebop" in the 1940's; post-WWII youth culture; and the advent of Rock 'n' Roll in the 1950's—itself a harbinger of the Civil Rights and Youth movements of the 1960's.

This program is presented in collaboration with the Berkeley-based California Jazz Conservatory, the only accredited, stand-alone conservatory dedicated to jazz studies in the United States.