

DOWNTON ABBEY: THE MUSIC AND THE ERA

To avid followers of the Edwardian era on both sides of the Atlantic, *Downton Abbey* has become a not-to-be-missed television event. Since its inception in 2010, public fascination with the portrayal of life and love in an historic, but fictional, English country house has snowballed, especially after PBS acquired the first series for broadcasting in 2011 as part of its 'Masterpiece' series. It is currently PBS's highest rated drama in four decades.

Series 5 of *Downton Abbey* was viewed by an estimated 120 million viewers in over 200 countries and a 6th series is in development. Dubbed into Mandarin, the quintessential English characteristics of *Downton Abbey* seem to transcend cultures and languages worldwide.

The 'soap opera' has been a staple of American television for decades and *Downton Abbey* – though only based on historical fact - has elements of a classic soap opera: plots, sub-plots, twists and unexpected endings that affect the everyday lives of different people.

My presentation looks at the music of *Downton Abbey* within the context of the Edwardian period (beginning of the 20th century) including references via slideshow and audio examples of the era's arts, social developments, technical innovations, historical events and retrospective perceptions. The popular music of the period as well as television period drama theme tunes will also be discussed – audience participation is non-optional ☺

The growing popularity of *Downton Abbey*, with its 27 Emmy nominations and multiple Golden Globe awards to date has led to the series being parodied by *The Simpsons* (*Simpton Abbey*) and by a fast-food chain (*Downton Arby's*) ... the ultimate praise?

DURATION: c1 hour

FEE: \$250

EXPENSES: a contribution toward travel costs is appreciated.