

Sylvia Sagona Lectures – March 2025

DRAMA QUEENS

A 3-part Lecture Series



**Four Queens at the epicentre of
political and religious upheaval**

Tuesdays March 11/18/25

Fridays March 14/21/28



These are intriguing stories of powerful, manipulative women who would sacrifice their own family and country to achieve their ends.

Catherine de Medici has become a synonym for treachery for her role in the massacre of Protestants; Queen Christina was seen as the epitome of treason for her abdication of the Swedish throne; Queen Caroline, Napoleon's sister, was known as the ultimate betrayer for abandoning her brother to maintain her hold on the crown of Naples.

However, when we dig into the background to these women, we will discover much more complex stories.

Lecture 1 - Queen Catherine de Medici and her daughter, Queen Margot of Navarre (March 11/14)



After the spectacular death of her husband Henri II in a jousting match, Catherine exacted her revenge on his lifelong mistress, Diane de Poitiers, and became Regent for her sons, the next three kings of France. She had to negotiate the bitter hatred between Catholics and Protestants as well as curbing the power of the dangerous and dashing Dukes of Guise. To maintain her grip on power she forced her daughter, Margot, to marry the Protestant King of Navarre, then ordered the massacre of all Protestants at the wedding in Paris. Despite the disastrous reigns of her weak sons, she managed to

negotiate political conflicts, with the help of her advisor, Nostradamus. If she had been a man, would she have been considered treacherous?

Lecture 2 - Queen Christina of Sweden (March 18 / 21)



Queen Christina was notorious in her own day for her provocative behaviour ranging from abdication from the throne of Sweden to conversion to Catholicism, cross dressing and even murder. Celebrated in Rome as the poster girl of the Counter Reformation she caused havoc by chopping up the Farnese antiques for firewood, swearing in church, wearing men's clothes and infuriating Popes and Louis XIV. When not writing memoirs or speaking ungrammatically in seven languages, she set up the first theatre in Rome, dabbled in alchemy and archaeology and embarked on a 30-year affair with a leading Cardinal. Would she now be simply diagnosed with Histrionic Personality Disorder (HPD) or was she the genius she proclaimed herself to be?

Lecture 3 - Caroline Bonaparte, Queen of Naples (March 25 / 28)



Caroline Bonaparte was the most beautiful, headstrong and ambitious of Napoleon's sisters. Always the disruptor of the Bonaparte clan, jealous of her siblings' titles, she was also instrumental in driving a wedge between Napoleon and Josephine. Married young to the dashing but dim cavalry general, Joachim Murat, she pestered Napoleon until he made the mistake of bestowing the crown of Naples on the pushy couple, bent on power and riches. But it was Caroline who ruled and made the decision to allow the English to use the bay of Naples, thus betraying Napoleon in the hope of keeping her crown after his

defeat. Is there one in every family?

Lecture Pricing

The price for the 3 lectures in either stream is \$120 (incl GST) per place

Lecture Details

Stream 1 – Tuesdays March 11, 18, 25 / 10:30-11:30AM

Stream 2 – Fridays March 14,21,28 / 10:30-11:30AM

Venue – “Alloarmo” 5 Grattan Street, Hawthorn. 3122

Note – Doors open for the sessions at 10:00AM sharp

Booking Details

1. Send an email to sagona@yahoo.com stating which stream you would like to attend and the number of places you require
2. We will send you an invoice with bank account details for payment
3. Once payment is received, we will send you a receipt confirming your payment and enrolment in the lecture series.