

OPERATUNITY

ARIZONA OPERA EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING



STUDY GUIDE

About OperaTunity

In opera, people fight, hearts get broken, men and women cry, and yet we find a way to sing! Laughter is indeed the best medicine, but it is also a terrific teacher, especially for people who think they hate opera. Our singers lead each group through operatic terminology and traditions, taking them to levels of understanding and even appreciation. With our trunk full of beautiful melodies, and clever shtick we'll make it happen! Our programs are interactive, and improvisational. Call us in-your-face-opera.



Meet the Performers:

Mark Fearey has worked with vocal and instrumental artists in Germany, Austria, New York, Miami, Los Angeles, and throughout Arizona. Currently he is the much awarded music director for the Valley Youth Theatre, where he has conducted Titanic, West Side Story, The Wiz, Annie, Oliver, Peter Pan, The Secret Garden and many more. Mark earned a Bachelor of Music in Piano Performance from the D'Angelo School of Music at Mercyhurst College and a Master of Music in Piano Accompanying from Arizona State University.

Ken Goodenberger has been resident tenor and Musical director with OperaTunity for several seasons. He has sung over five hundred performances with this zany, irreverent opera company, helping to bring new audiences to the art form. He has been a frequent soloist with the Phoenix Symphony. Ken has also served as narrator for the symphony on five different occasions. Mr. Goodenberger's operatic credits include Don Ottavio in Mozart's Don Giovanni, the title role in Gounod's Faust, Cavaradossi in Tosca and Rodolfo in La Boheme, both by Puccini.

Jennifer Song is a native of Arizona. She is a member of OperaTunity and has performed for many years in concerts and schools for the group. She has soloed with the Phoenix Symphony several times. She has won the Arizona Metropolitan Opera Competition several times and won in Arizona for the prestigious McCallister Awards. She has been seen as a soloist for many oratorio across Arizona, North America and Europe.

Jeffrey Stevens, the baritone in OperaTunity, has appeared in comic roles with Opera Southwest in Albuquerque, Tulsa Opera, National Opera in Raleigh North Carolina, Des Moines Metro Opera, Lyric Opera Oklahoma, Amarillo Opera, and Utah Festival Opera. He is as comfortable singing opera and musical theatre as he is singing baroque music having apprenticed with the Bach Aria Group in Stony Brook, New York. He is proud to be alumni of not only ASU (Doctorate of Music and Masters of Music) but also Boston University and Peabody Conservatory.

A Brief History of Opera

Opera is a four hundred year old art form that incorporates all sorts of other art forms: dance, visual arts, music, costumes, sets and make-up. The word “opera” meaning “a work” is essentially a story told to music. Operatic stories come from many sources: history, mythology, fairy tales, folk stories, literature and drama. What all of these stories have in common is that something about their musical and /or dramatic qualities inspired a composer to set it down in music.

The seeds of opera were planted by the ancient Greeks. Greek theater produced some of the greatest plays of all time. Their plays were poetic and were accompanied by strings or pipes. Dance was also a part of Greek drama. The chorus danced along with scenes of the play to highlight the play’s meanings.

The early Christian church created a style of music called Gregorian chant that influenced the development of opera. This chant was made up of the ancient melodies of Hebrew, classic Greek, Roman and Byzantine cultures.

During the Renaissance (14th to 16th centuries), minstrels and troubadours composed harmonic folk songs which informed and entertained. Some songs were gossip; others were songs of love and heroes. These songs had a one-line melody and were accompanied by guitars, lutes, or pipes.

Alfonso the Wise, a great troubadour in thirteenth century Spain, made two important contributions to the development of opera. First, he dedicated his poems and music to Saint Mary. This helped end the Catholic church’s objection to the musical style. His other contribution was the introduction of instruments, including the kettledrum and lute, from Persia and the Arabic culture of the Middle East and North Africa. Alfonso used the instruments to accompany the solo voice, so that the same melody was played in the different ranges.

The motet was developed, where several voices sang the sacred texts, accompanied sometimes by instruments. The motet laid the groundwork for another form of song, the madrigal, one of the last steps in preparing the way for opera. Sung in homes, taverns, and village squares in the native language of the people, this chamber music was written for anywhere from two or three to eight voices and used secular texts.

When refugee scholars from the fall of Constantinople (1453) flooded Europe, their knowledge of the classics of Rome and Greece added to the development of European musical traditions. Greek mythology and tragedies provided the subject matter for the first librettos (the lyrics or text of an opera or musical).

Composers experimented with instrumental music to make preludes or overtures. Development of the recitative, or sung speech, and the instrumental bridge enabled them to connect the song, dance and scene of the drama into the spectacle which was to become opera.

Jacopo Peri (1561-1633) was credited with writing the first opera, *Dafne*, based on the Greek myth of Daphne. Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643) was considered the first great composer of Italian opera. His experimentation with instruments and his willingness to break from the old traditions enabled him to communicate a depth of emotion that continues to be an important element in opera today.

Music Glossary:

Act: main division of a play or opera

Allegro: musical term for fast and lively

Alto: the lowest female voice, sometimes called contralto

Aria: an operatic song for one voice

Bar: a division of music containing a set number of beats

Baritone: the middle range of the male voice between tenor and bass

Bass: the lowest male singing voice

Beat: the basic pulse of a piece of music

Bravo: "well done" in Italian. Audiences say this to express their appreciation for a performance
Chord: a group of notes played at the same time in harmony

Chorus: a group of singers, also a group of people that support the leads in a theatrical production
Composer: the person who writes the vocal and/or orchestral music (score)

Conductor: the person in charge of all the musical aspects of an opera; both orchestral and vocal
Duet: a musical composition for two performers

Finale: the ending segment of an act or scene

Forte: loud

Fortissimo: a musical term for very loud

Libretto: the words of an opera or other long musical

Lyrics: words of an opera or song

Madrigal: a style of singing similar to a motet only with secular texts

Mezzo-soprano: female voice between soprano and alto

Minstrel: musical entertainers who covered the whole range of entertainment through all levels of society

Motet: a style of singing where several voices sing sacred texts

Opera Buffa: a comic opera

Opera Seria: opera with dramatic and intense plots (serious)

Orchestra: a group of musicians playing various musical instruments together

Overture: a piece of music played before the beginning of an opera or ballet

Pipes: tubular wind instruments such as flutes or recorders

Prelude: see definition of "overture"

Presto: a musical term meaning very fast

Quartet: four people singing or playing instruments together

Recitative: a conversational part of an opera, sung in a rhythm imitating ordinary speech

Scale: a series of notes arranged in descending or ascending order of pitch.

Set: the visual background on stage. The set shows the location of the action

Soprano: the highest female or boy's singing voice

Sonata: a musical composition for one instrument or two, usually with three or four movements
Strings: stringed instruments in an orchestra such as violin, cello, and viola

Symphony: a long elaborate musical composition (usually in several parts) for a full orchestra
Tempo: the speed of the music

Tenor: the highest adult male singing voice

Trio: three people singing or playing instruments together

Troubadour: lyric poets and poet-musicians often of knightly rank who flourished from the 11th to the end of the 13th century chiefly in the south of France and the north of Italy and whose major theme was courtly love.

Before the Performance

MOVEMENT ACTIVITIES:

Exercise One: Walking on a Beat

Students choose a spot in the room. Tell the students you are going to clap to 16. Students are to step on every beat. Students are to leave their spot, but must return to it by count 16. Clap to 16 at a walking pace. Count out loud so the students know how much time has elapsed. Repeat the exercise with 8, 12, and 4 counts. Change tempos. Ask students to vary their steps; walk low, on tiptoes, backwards, sideways, etc. They do not need to talk to touch each other.

Purpose: Focus, Concentration, beginning of rhythmic awareness.

Demonstrate moving while maintaining a steady beat in a variety of tempos.

Arizona Dance Standards, Strand 1: Create, Concept 3: Elements of Dance, PO1 Time: Tempo 201

Exercise Two: Moving Like Animals

Have children spread out in the room. Tell them to choose an animal they have studied in other classes (reading, science, etc.) and move around the room like that animal. Ask questions: Is the animal big? Small? Heavy? Light? Fast? Slow?

Purpose: To explore movement qualities.

Use movement to express ideas, concepts, feelings and images (e.g. numbers, patterns, symbols, sounds, textures, animals) found in other disciplines.

Arizona Dance Standards, Strand 2: Relate, Concept 4:
Relating Dance with other Disciplines, PO 1 101, 201,
301, 401

MUSIC/RHYTHM ACTIVITIES

Exercise One: Listening

Students sit at their desks with closed eyes. Students listen to all the sounds they can hear for 30-60 seconds. Students open their eyes and share what they heard.

Purpose: Focus, concentration, attention to environment, preparing for music making.

Exercise Two: Clapping on a Beat

Students count and clap 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8 all together out loud. Repeat until all are clapping together and can count silently. Students continue to count silently while they:

- A. Clap on all the odd beats
- B. Clap on all the even beats
- C. Clap two beats and rest two beats
- D. Rest two beats and clap two beats

Divide the class in half. Half the class claps on the odd beats while the other half claps on the even beats. Then half the class claps two then rests two while the other half rests two then claps two. You can also use rhythm instruments in addition to clapping.

Maintain a steady beat.

Arizona General Music Standards, Strand 1: Create,

Concept 2: Playing instruments, alone and with others, music from various genres and diverse cultures PO 1.

Exercise Three: Exploring Sounds Around You Ask students to move around the classroom or playground to discover objects that can be played. Explore the different ways in which the object can be played (beating, scraping, shaking) using hands, pencils, rulers, etc.) Sort the items into different categories: man-made vs. natural, flexible vs. rigid, etc. Write about how the sound quality of an object changes when played or struck with different implements. Or when the object has been altered (full trash can versus empty; tin can filled with pencils versus filled with an eraser.)

Distinguish between natural and man-made objects.

Arizona Science Standard 3: Personal and Social Perspectives, 3SC-R1

Categorize objects, organisms and events in different ways according to different characteristics.

Arizona Science Standard 1: Science as Inquiry, 1SC-R3

After the Performance

1. “A Brief History of Opera” on page 2 mentions the use of strings and pipes in Greek theater. What instruments do you think might be considered “strings”? What instruments do you think might be considered “pipes”?
2. Look up the words “minstrel” and “troubadour”. What is the difference between the two?
3. The opera performed by OperaTunity is based on the story of “The Three Little Pigs.” What are some other familiar stories that could be performed as an opera?
4. Listen to classical music selections. Using the music as your inspiration write a short story that you think might make a good opera. Include at least four words from the glossary and four words from the list below:

Arrow	Elephant
Gorilla	Rubber Ball
Balloon	Elf
Internet	Space Aliens
Bicycle	Fish
Jet plane	Teddy bear
Cereal	Flying
Magic	Toaster
Computer	Forest
Pickles	Toys

Write a story that is inspired by listening to a specific piece of music.

Arizona General Music Standards, Strand 2: Relate, Concept 3: Understanding music in relation to self and universal themes.
PO 1

Relate a narrative, creative story, or other communication by drawing, telling and writing.

Arizona Language Arts Standard 2: Writing W-R1

VOCAL ACTIVITIES

- A. Inhale through your nose and exhale through your mouth.
- B. Sing “meow” going up and down the scale
- C. Sing “me-may-ma-moe-moo” going from loud to soft, moving up and down the scale
- D. Spend an hour of class time in which all communication within the classroom is sung in dramatic operatic style.

Sing on pitch loud/soft, fast/slow, high/low.

Arizona General Music Standards, Strand 1: Create, Concept 1: Singing, alone and with others, music from various genres and diverse cultures

Going to the Opera

At a live performance you not only share the performance with the actors or singers but also with everyone else in the hall. Every noise or movement you make could interrupt the group experience. Everyone in the hall is a part of the performance, so everyone needs to follow certain guidelines if the performance is to be a success.

Below are some good things to remember when attending a live performance of an opera or any other performing group.

What to wear to the opera

Going to the opera provides a unique opportunity to wear your best clothes. However you are welcome to wear whatever makes you comfortable. You'll see people in tuxedos and gowns, but also in sports coats and jeans. You can make this event as formal or informal as you like.

Entering the performance hall

Before going into the performance hall, remember to stop by the water fountain and restrooms first. You will not have a chance to visit these once the show has started (unless it is an emergency).

Walk slowly to your seat and speak in a soft voice.

When you get to your seat take some time to read the program. It will tell you about the opera you are seeing, the singers who are performing, and many other interesting bits of information.

There is no late seating- make sure you arrive in plenty of time!

Performance etiquette

The lights in the hall will begin to dim just before the performance starts. This is your cue to settle in your seat and sit quietly.

The orchestra will begin to play when the lights go dim. This is called "tuning" and is not a part of the performance. When they finish, a bright light will come on and the conductor will enter. It is polite to clap when the conductor enters.

When the conductor turns to the orchestra and begins the music, it is your signal that the show has started and you should again sit quietly.

NEVER bring a camera, video camera, tape recorder or cell phone to a performance. Unlike at a movie, you may not eat food during a performance.

When to clap your hands

An audience claps to tell the performers that they have done a good job or to say "thank you" for the performance. When a performance is exceptionally good the audience will stand and clap. This is called a "standing ovation."

Times when it is appropriate to clap include:

- when the conductor enters the orchestra pit
- after the overture, at the end of an act or scene
- at the end of a special solo
- when the opera is over
- when the performers take a bow

At an opera people will sometimes yell “bravo” to the men, “brava” to the women, or “bravi” to several people to tell them they performed very well. This is appropriate to do when clapping even after a solo.

Leaving the performance hall

When the last applause has ended and the stage curtain is closed, you may leave the performance hall. Never run in the aisles and always allow people in front of you to exit first.

What Language is that?

Translating words meant to be sung is tough. Subject and verb placement varies between languages and this makes word-order changes often necessary. In turn the pattern of accented and unaccented syllables is altered which is important because the words must complement the original music and the new pattern may not fit. Lyrics are usually written in meter, like poetry, with the intent to fit them with a melodic line.

Imagine translating a current song by someone like Fallout Boys into French and having it still fit the beat and mean the same thing. It is easy to see that the original language offers the best means of communicating through music. The audience, however, must not be left “in the dark” with words they don’t understand. To get the best of both worlds, many opera productions are performed in the original language with the English translation of the text projected on a screen above the stage. Projected translations are called surtitles or supertitles.

Audiences aren’t alone in needing translations. Singers are trained to have a working knowledge of the languages used in opera, such as Italian, French, German, English, Russian, Spanish, and Czech. However they are usually not fluent and tend to focus most of their energy on studying pronunciation. Because of this, when a singer is learning a piece, he or she does a literal, word for word translation of the text into English before he or she begins singing the new piece. The singer will also translate the parts of other roles to understand his or her character’s response to what the others are saying. This means that most singers basically translate an entire opera when learning a single role.

Arizona Opera performs primarily in English for schools to make the opera more accessible to students. Your production of *The Mini Elixir of Love* will be sung entirely in English. Your students should however know that if they went to a main-stage performance at the Hall they could expect to hear the original language of the opera.

The Creative Team

Many people work together to create an opera production. Members of the creative team include the singers, the conductor, the stage director, and the designers (sets, lighting, costumes, wig and make-up). These careers are available to everyone, and often involve many years of study and hard work to master.

The Conductor

Few people realize that the conductor determines and directs the performance that the public hears. The conductor communicates information about the music and the timing to show to the singers on stage and to the orchestra through the gestures he makes, often using a baton. The conductor is usually referred to as “Maestro” or “Maestra.”

The conductor trains for his/her work just like the singers. They must be able to play the piano and must have a broad knowledge of singing, the orchestra, and music in general. The orchestral score, with approximately twenty staves (individual lines) of music, must be studied and mastered long before rehearsals even begin. The conductor uses the music as a guide as he or she coaches the singers and the orchestra toward a great performance.

The Stage Director

An operatic stage director faces all the challenges of a theatrical stage director, plus a few special operatic concerns. The opera must be staged to obtain the greatest emotional effect by moving the singers about with a natural flow that enhances the meaning of the story without interfering with the music. The composer has built the framework within which the stage director must work. Entrances, duets, fights, exits, shipwrecks, and all other stage “business” must take place within a specified number of measures or beats. Action must be compressed or extended as written by the composer.

Like a conductor, a stage director must be completely familiar with the musical score. He/She must know translations of Italian, French, German, or whatever language is being sung, as well as have a working knowledge of everything and everyone both on stage and backstage.

At an opera people will sometimes yell “bravo” to the men, “brava” to the women, or “bravi” to several people to tell them they performed very well. This is appropriate to do when clapping even after a solo.

The Singers

Professional singers are much like professional athletes. They must train for many years to learn to sing opera. Most singers begin taking voice lessons while teenagers and continue on through college and beyond. Unlike other singers opera singers do not use microphones when they perform. For this reason, it takes many years for a great singer to learn to project his or her voice in order to sing opera. Often a singer is 30 years old before his or her voice is fully developed.

A person’s vocal range (how high or low one sings), whether the singers is a professional or amateur, is determined by many different factors, including the shape and length of one’s vocal cords and the amount of training the person has received. Singers are usually classified in the following ways:

Female Voice Types

Soprano	the highest voice, often the heroine of the opera
Mezzo-Soprano	a soprano with a slightly lower range and heavier sounding voice, usually cast as a maternal type, female antagonist, or in a “trouser role” (playing a man); mezzo means “half,” so this is halfway between soprano and alto

Contralto or “alto” the lowest female voice

Male Voice Types

Tenor the highest male voice, often the hero or romantic lead

Baritone between tenor and bass, often cast a villain in tragic opera or
 as comic relief

Bass the lowest male voice, sometimes in a comic role

The Music Director/ Accompanist

The music director is responsible for coordinating rehearsals and coaching the singers on diction, balance, and tone quality. He/She also makes musical decisions, replaces the orchestra with piano accompaniment when the production is on tour, and may also do some conducting from the piano when necessary.

The Designers

The **scenic designer** creates sets that transform the stage into the appropriate location for the opera story. He or she works with the stage director and conductor to create a unified vision. The scenic designer may also work as the costume designer and lighting designer, requiring the knowledge of an artist, an architect and builder. A general knowledge of music is also necessary, along with a thorough knowledge of the score and the story for each operatic production that is being designed.

The **lighting designer** creates effects with theater lights to make the stage look like another place. Cleeg lights, spotlights, scoops, and other special lights are used, along with colored gels, to create day and night scenes, shadows and other special effects.

The **costume designer** works with the rest of the creative staff to make the best costumes to tell the opera’s story. This person may also create wigs and makeup effects for the performers.

The Stage Manager

The stage manager acts as an adjunct to the director in rehearsal. They record the blocking and see that cast members stay on script and have necessary props. As the lighting, sound and set change cues are developed, the stage manager meticulously records the timing of each as it relates to the score and other aspects of the performance, ensuring that the lighting and sound cues are delivered at the right time.

Once the house opens, the stage manager essentially takes control, calling the cues for all transitions (this is known as “calling the show”), as well as acting as communications hub for the cast and crew.

The process: concept to opening night

In the world of professional opera the singer has the part or role fully memorized before the first rehearsal. Singers are often hired to sing a role several years in advance. If the role is new to them they need to learn the notes and the language and they need to interpret the basic character on their own. Voice teachers help to make the voice work technically correct and vocal coaches help with the language, style, and character development. Coaches also play the entire score on the piano so the arias and duets are learned in the context of the whole. Singers are always in the process of learning new roles so that they can work in many places, including other countries.

Ideally, the company enlists the director to assemble a design team prior to hiring a cast for an opera production. The design team is made up of a set designer, lighting designer, costume designer, and

wig and make-up designer. Their job often begins years before the actual rehearsal process by choosing a look, a style, and a flow for the production. They then work with the opera company to build the sets and costumes.

The entire cast of an opera isn't assembled until approximately three weeks before the opening night. The singers- who are chosen by audition- come from around the world and may not have met each other before the first rehearsal. The conductor leads them through the music with piano accompaniment, showing them his or her interpretation of tempo and phrasing. The stage director shows them where and when and how to move around the stage and how to interpret the drama. This collaboration of conductor and stage director brings to life the opera's plot and music.

The opera is staged in a rehearsal room first. It moves to the theater's stage just a few nights before opening. It is then that the orchestra is brought into the process, along with the technical aspects of theater such as lights, costumes, sets, and scenery. Technically and logistically, the opera usually comes together in just about five days.

Evaluation Rubric

For teacher use: Fill in the criteria for any of the lesson plan activities to grade your students.

Date: _____

Class: _____ Student: _____

Rating scale: 1 = very weak; 2 = weak; 3 = acceptable; 4 = very good; 5 = excellent

	Criteria	Rating	Comments
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			