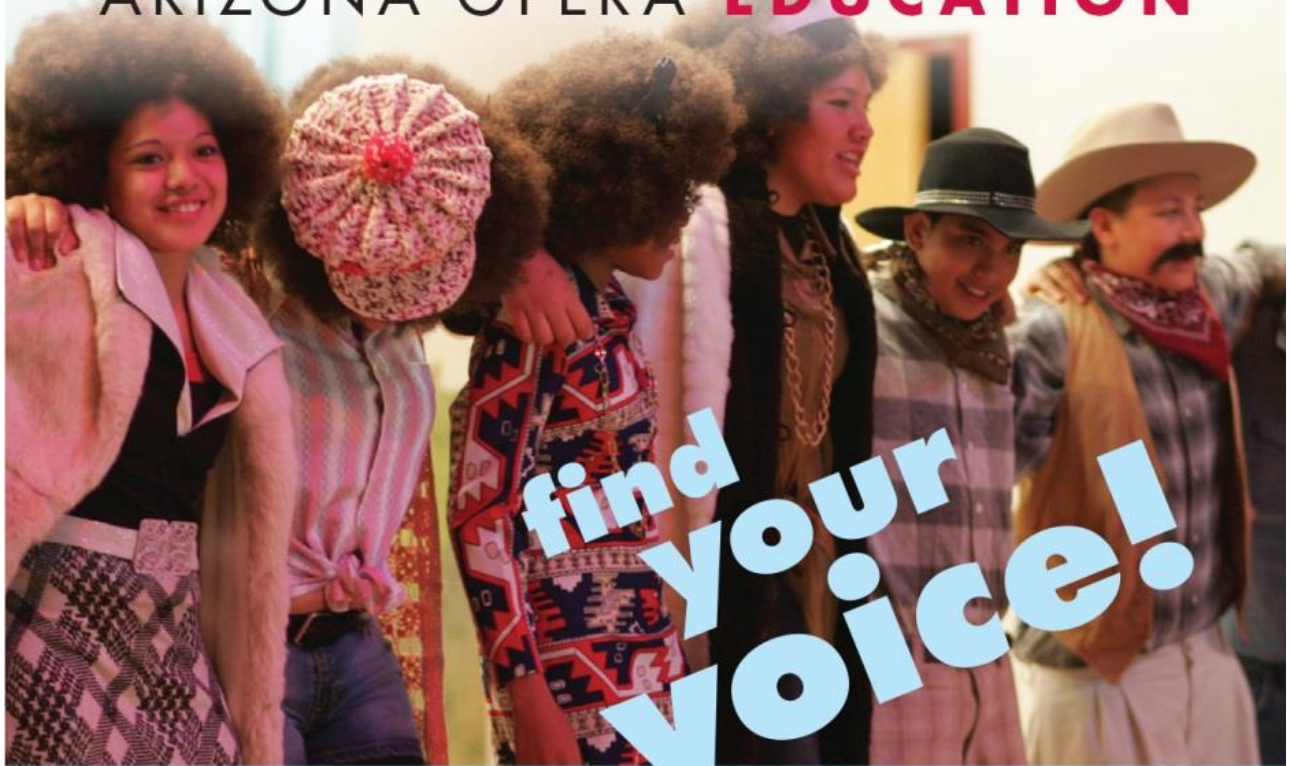


U S A I R W A Y S
ARIZONA OPERA **EDUCATION**



INSTANT OPERA!

Teacher's Guide and Resource Book

ARIZONA OPERA EDUCATION

Dear Educator,

Thank you for scheduling Arizona Opera's Education program *Instant Opera* at your school!

At Arizona Opera, we strive to help students find and explore their own, unique voices. We believe that providing opportunities to explore the performing arts allows students to explore the world around them.

Instant Opera is a unique, opera experience where students create their own opera. This way, the students determine the opera and not the other way around!

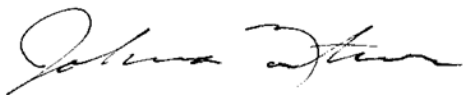
Throughout the program, students will learn about voice types, arias, duets, operatic conventions, and the structure of stories. Students will also be asked to identify the emotions that the composer conveys through his or her music.

This study guide will help you to prepare your students for the performance. Whether you have only 5 minutes to prepare or a full class period, this guide should help you prepare your students for the performance and give you some ideas about how to incorporate opera into your classroom.

These activities are just guides, so please feel free to make them your own!

Again, we look forward to visiting your school and please contact me at jborths@azopera.org or at (602)218-7325 with any questions.

Best,



Joshua Borths
Education Manager
Arizona Opera

Table of Contents

About the Production

Audience Etiquette: Attending the Opera.....Pg. 4
Production Credits..... Pg. 5
About the Show!..... Pg. 6
How to Build Your Own Story..... Pg. 6

Classroom Activities

Ten Minutes to Prepare..... Pg. 7
Thirty Minutes to Prepare..... Pg. 7
Improvisation in the Classroom..... Pg. 8
Opera Term Matching Activity..... Pg. 10
Character Template..... Pg. 11
Original Story Template..... Pg. 12
Teacher Evaluations..... Pg. 13
Student Evaluations.....Pg. 14

Appendix A

Opera Dictionary..... Pg. 15



Audience Etiquette: Attending the Opera

Unlike the actors on your television, performers on the stage are aware of their audience and want very much to communicate their art to you. By the time you see a scheduled performance, many people have worked very hard to bring you their best efforts.

In order to show respect for those efforts, every audience member must give the performance his or her full attention and avoid any behavior that interferes with the performance.

We have rules that help us accomplish this goal, and you should do your best to understand and follow them:

- 1) Watch and listen to the performance with both your eyes *and* ears!
- 2) When asked a question by a performer, respond enthusiastically!
- 3) Show your appreciation by laughing, applauding, etc.
- 4) However, keep your reactions appropriate and do not disrupt the flow of the performance.
- 6) No talking during the performance, unless you are responding to the performers!
- 7) Once the performance begins, stay seated ☺



Production Credits

The Performers



Pianist Woan Ching Lim collaborates in classical vocal, instrumental repertoire, musical theatre and ballet. Woan Ching serves as staff accompanist/pianist of University of Arizona. Recent performances include Tucson Desert Song Festival, Ballet Arizona, Vancouver International Song Institute and Arizona Opera Company. Originally from Malaysia, Woan Ching holds a Master of Music degree in Collaborative Piano from the University of Arizona.



Baritone Seth Kershisnik is a doctoral candidate in voice performance at the University of Arizona in Tucson. Originally from Utah, Seth has been performing around the state as a member of Arizona Opera's OperaTunity Troupe for several years. Having sung many roles such as Figaro in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, Germont in *Traviata*, Seth hopes to add his performance in *your* opera to his repertoire!



Tenor Mitchell Struges is a member of the Arizona Opera chorus and OperaTunity Troup! A graduate of the University of Arizona, Mitchell's past performances include *Gianni Schicchi*, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *The Consul & Amahl and the Night Visitors*. In 2012, Mitchell received first place in Arizona NATS and was a national finalist for the American Prize in Vocal Performance in both art song and opera.



Mezzo-Soprano Katie Trim has performed in Arizona Opera's *Who Wants to be an Opera Star?* across Southern Arizona. With training from the University of Arizona, Katie has become a local favorite performing with the Southern Arizona Opera Guild and appearing in many local recitals and concerts.



Soprano Erika Burkhart has been a member of Arizona Opera's OperaTunity Troupe and has studied extensively at the University of Arizona. In addition to performances around Tucson with the Southern Arizona Opera Guild, Burkhart is often featured with the Tucson Chamber Artists.

About the Show!



Instant Opera is a 45-minute show that is never the same thing twice! Audience members learn about opera, and create their own show through improvisation and imagination.

Throughout the performance, students will be asked questions about setting, characters, actions, and emotions (everything you need to make a story... or an opera!). Our fearless singers then improvise an original opera based on the audience suggestions.

In between improvisations, the singers will teach students the basics of opera and demonstrate that even though opera is often in foreign languages, you can still understand the emotional story told in the music.

The program was developed by Wolf Trap Opera, and has been charming and educating audiences for almost a decade.

How to Build Your Own Story

Instant Opera requires students to engage with the performers and make their own opera. So, what makes a story?

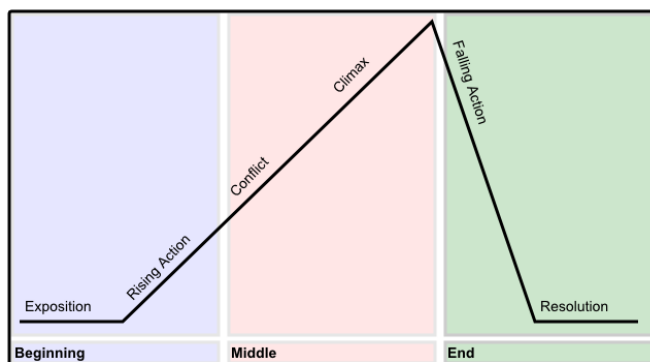
There are an infinite number of stories, but most stories share the same structure and elements. All stories have a beginning, a middle, and an end. Your opera will have these as well!

At the beginning of the story—this part is called the **exposition**—the characters and the setting are introduced.

After this introduction, a conflict or problem is revealed. We call this part of the story the **rising action**.

The part of the story where the conflict is most dire is called the **climax**. During the climax, the resolution—or ending of the story—is determined.

Everything that happens after the climax is called the **falling action**, and the ending itself is called the **resolution**.



Plot Diagram created for www.StoryboardThat.com - Creative Commons License (100% free use)

Other terms that are used in literature include:

1. **Character-** a person in a novel, play, or movie. The **characterization** of this person includes what they look like, how they move, what they like, what they dislike, what they want, and other traits that make this person unique.

Setting- The location and time period of a story. For example, “A long time ago, in a galaxy far far away...”

Action- What the characters are doing. For example, Hansel and Gretel are leaving a trail of breadcrumbs.

Conflict/Problem- The situation, thing or person that is working against the characters. For example, the little mermaid’s problem that she must overcome is that she lives in the water but loves a human prince. There are many types of conflicts including **man verses man, man verses society, man verses nature**, etc.

Ten Minutes to Prepare

You may not have much time to prepare your students for this program. If you have only 10 minutes available in your schedule, please consider the following:

- 1) Brainstorm a list of what students already know or think they know about opera. Ask them to pay attention during the assembly, with the intent to change or add to the list afterward.
- 2) Write the words, **character, setting, action, and conflict** onto the board. Ask the class to define these literary terms. Use literature you are currently reading in class to guide the students through these questions. Brainstorm possible characters, settings, actions, and conflicts that they want to see in their opera!

Thirty Minutes to Prepare

If you have 30 minutes before the performance, please consider some of these additional activities:

- 3) Tell students they will be introduced to many terms used in opera. Give them a copy of the Opera Matching Activity and have them see if they can use their deductive reasoning to infer the meaning of each word.
- 4) Improvisation is a skill that everyone needs to learn in order to think on his or her feet, work with others, and be confident in front of groups of people. Try out a few of our improvisation activities to see what it feels like!
- 5) Using the story and character templates provided, have your students make their own stories to help prepare for writing their own opera.

Improvisation in the Classroom

Improvisation is not just fun. It is a wonderful way to instill confidence, communication, cooperation, and creativity. These skills are not just used in theater, but are used in every school and professional situation. Below are a few improvisation games you can do with your class to prepare for *Instant Opera!*

The Rules

There are only 4 rules of improvisation:

- 1) Always say “Yes, and...” Never negate a fellow student does and always add to their idea.

For example, a student points to a desk and says, “What a cool car!” Don’t respond, “No, it’s a horse.” Instead respond, “Yes! And... that car would be great to take on a road trip!”

- 2) Don’t every think you’ve failed. There is no such thing as failure in improvisation. There are only learning opportunities. If an improv grinds to a halt, don’t worry! Figure out why that improv didn’t work and start again!
- 3) Keep it simple. Sometimes in improv, we think that every idea needs to be funny and complicated. However, the simplest and clearest ideas are often the most successful.
- 4) Listen! In order to adhere to all of the ideas listed above, you have to listen to your fellow improvisers. Listen first before responding...

Freeze!

Have one student think of a location and action (for example, setting a table, drawing with chalk on a sidewalk, or making a sandcastle).

Allow one student to establish this action. Have the student pantomime all props, etc.



When a second student has an idea of a new location and action, the student says, “Freeze!” The student performing freezes exactly as soon as they hear “Freeze!”

The second student joins the frozen student and assumes a freeze as well. Once the second student is set, the teacher says “Go!” When the students hear “Go,” the second student starts a conversation that establishes a new location and new action.

For example: the first student is planting flowers. He or she kneels and pretends to plant flowers in the ground. A second student shouts “Freeze” and joins the first student by putting his foot underneath the hand of the first student. The second student remains standing. As soon as the teacher says “Go,” the second student says “You sure give a great shoe shine!” The second student has now established that they are not planting flowers, but shining shoes.

Once this is established, another student can yell “Freeze” and take the exact freeze of one of the two students and establish a new location and situation.

If more than one student yells out “Freeze,” the first student to say the word gets to join the improvisation.

Once Upon a Time...

Have all students sit in a circle. Explain the rules of the improvisation game. Give the students a topic (possibly relating to a subject that you are learning about in your classroom) and remind them that they must use appropriate language and each student can only say one word. Pick a student to start the story and proceed clockwise around the circle. Each student must say a word that logically follows the previous word. There shouldn't be any pauses between words. As a class, make up a story based on the suggested topic!

This may come to a screeching halt a couple of times before students are comfortable and get the hang of it.

Example:

Student 1- Once
Student 2-upon
Student 3-a
Student 4-time...

All Together Now!

Like in Freeze, ask for one student volunteer. Have him or her think of a location where lots of people could be in one place doing different jobs (ex: the kitchen of a restaurant, the waiting room of a doctor's office, etc.).

That student establishes the environment and one specific job. As other students come up with ideas, they join the environment and starts interacting with the other students.

This continues until every student is involved in the game.

Usually, after a couple of tries, stories organically emerge!

Opera Term Matching Activity

Match the term on the left with the correct definition on the right...

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| 1) Soprano _____ | A) The group of instrumentalists who accompany the singers. |
| 2) Tenor _____ | B) The lower male voice. |
| 3) Choreographer _____ | C) Sung dialogue that propels the action forward. |
| 4) Orchestra _____ | D) The music that the composer wrote. |
| 5) Recitative _____ | E) A piece of music with two singers. |
| 6) Aria _____ | F) The highest male voice. |
| 7) Overture _____ | G) The person who creates the vision of the production, sets staging, and guides designers and singers. |
| 8) Score _____ | H) The lower female voice. |
| 9) Baritone _____ | I) The words that a composer sets to music. |
| 10) Mezzo-Soprano _____ | J) The highest female voice. |
| 11) Duet _____ | K) The people who work backstage. |
| 12) Director _____ | L) An extended musical solo. |
| 13) Libretto _____ | M) Music at the beginning of an opera. |
| 14) Crew _____ | N) Designs the dancers' movement. |



Character Template

Overview

Every performer has to analyze the character he or she is portraying. Just as it is an important in acting, it is important in literature. To complete this activity, pick a character (either one that you already know or one you are creating for the first time right now). Answer the questions below.

- 1) Give your character a name: _____
- 2) Where does your character live? _____
- 3) How old is your character? _____
- 4) What does your character want? _____
- 5) How does your character look at the world? _____

- 6) What challenges does this character face? _____

<p>List your character's personality traits:</p> <p>What are your character's likes and dislikes:</p>	<p>List your character's physical traits or draw a picture of your character:</p>
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Original Story Template

Overview

Using the character you've created above, create an original story about him or her!

Title: _____

Setting: _____

Character 1 (the Character outlined above): _____

Character 2: _____

What is the relationship between Character 1 and Character 2:

What conflict/problem have they encountered:

How does the conflict/problem get worse:

How will they resolve the conflict:

What other details would you like to add to your story?

Map out your story like the diagram on Pg 6:

Teacher Evaluation

Overview

We hope you have enjoyed *Instant Opera!* Please help us continue to better our programs by filling out this quick evaluation. Evaluations are also available on azopera.org. We also ask that you have your students fill out their own evaluations, submit reviews to be published on azopera.org or create artwork to be submitted to Young Arts Arizona!

Teacher Name: _____

Name of School: _____

Grade Levels attended: _____ Number of Students who Participated: _____

1) On a scale of 1-5 (5 being high) how would you rate this program?

1 2 3 4 5

2) On a scale of 1-5 how would you rate this study guide?

1 2 3 4 5

3) Was the format of the study guide helpful?

1 2 3 4 5

4) In your opinion, was the program well-g geared for the age of the audience?

YES

NO

5) Was this program helpful in supporting your classroom curriculum?

6) Did your students enjoy the program AND learn about opera/storytelling?

7) Do you have any suggestions that could help us improve this program?

8) What else could Arizona Opera do to help support educators?

Please return this evaluation to Joshua Borths at jborths@azopera.org or mail with student's evaluations and work to 1636 N. Central Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85004.

Student Evaluation

Overview

We hope you have enjoyed *Instant Opera!* Now that you've created your own opera, you are now ready to help us improve our program.

You can do this in three different ways:

- 1) You can fill out this quick survey!
- 2) Write a review of the performance to be published on azopera.org!
- 3) Create a piece of art based on the opera. This artwork could be selected to be shown in a gallery in Arizona through Young Arts!

Survey:

- 1) On a scale of 1-5 (5 being high) how good were the performers?

1 2 3 4 5

Please give a specific example:

- 2) What did you like best about the performance?

- 3) What did you learn about opera?

- 4) What did you learn about creating your own story?

- 5) Do you have any questions about the performance?

Brainstorm a list the words that stood out to you during the performance:

Appendix A: Opera Dictionary

What is opera?

An **opera** is a musical drama or comedy where the actors sing rather than speak their lines. The word “opera” derives from the Latin word *opus*, which literally means “a work of art.” Like a play, an opera is performed on a stage with singing-actors, scenery, make-up and lighting.

Opera is truly a **multi-disciplinary** art, which means it is a combination of many art forms (singing, orchestral music, theater, visual arts, dance, etc.) and subject areas (history, mythology, literature, etc.). Opera combines these disciplines in a very powerful way to tell a story. Opera can be funny, sad, scary, dramatic, mysterious, fantastical, or any combination of feelings and moods.



The **libretto** (meaning “little book” in Italian) contains all of the words of an opera. A libretto is usually shorter than the script for a play because it takes longer to sing lines than to say them, and because music is also a very important part of telling the story of an opera. The person who writes the words for an opera is often a poet or playwright and is called a **librettist**.

The **composer** writes the music for the opera. All of the music, both vocal (for singers) and orchestral (for instrumentalists) is written in the **score** which separates lines for each instrument and each singer’s vocal part. The score, as a piece of music, reflects the mood, events and emotions of the characters in the story.

Characters are the people in the story. Singers perform the parts of the characters, also called **roles**.

The Performers

Soprano- The highest female voice. She is often the heroine of the opera and often in love with the tenor. A star soprano is often referred to as the “Prima Donna.”

Mezzo-Soprano- The lower female voice. The mezzo sound is typically darker and warmer than the soprano. The mezzo usually plays the older female character (like the mother), the bad guy (the witch), a seductress, or a boy. When the mezzo plays a male character, it is called a **pants** role.

Tenor- The highest male voice. He usually plays the hero of the opera and is often in love with the soprano.



Baritone- The lower (or middle) male voice. The baritone is often the villain, but can also be the hero who sacrifices himself for the tenor or soprano. In comedies, the baritone is often a prankster. He is usually in love with the soprano but loses her to the tenor.

Bass- The lowest male voice. He often plays the wise man or comic buffoon.

Orchestra- The group of instrumentalists who accompany the singers. They play under the stage in the orchestra pit where they are less likely to overpower the singers and distract from the action on the stage. However, though they are often not seen, the orchestra is an equal partner in the action of an opera.

Chorus- The group of singers who function as a unit onstage. Choruses are usually featured in crowd scenes where they represent the townspeople, partiers, soldiers, etc.

Dancers- Dance is often included in opera. They are usually part of big crowd scenes, but can also be featured as soloists in some pieces. Many operas contain short ballet sequences.

Production Team

Conductor- The person in charge of the musical interpretation of the opera. He also guides the orchestra through the opera from the first rehearsal to final performance.

Director- Responsible for the overall look or concept of the production. The director determines how the opera will be interpreted and tells everyone on stage when, where and how to move. Finally, he or she guides the performers on how characters are best presented.

Choreographer- Designs and sets the movement of the dancers.

Costume Designer- Designs and creates the clothes singers wear to reflect aspects of the character played by the singer. Costumes should reveal a lot about a character. How old they are, what kind of person they are, what time period he or she lives in, etc.



Scenic Designer- Creates the visual background and set pieces for the opera. He or she creates small models and detailed blueprints which serve as the “instructions” for building the set.

Lighting Designer- Creates the lighting plan that emphasizes the drama of the moment and allows the audience to focus on the action. Lighting design is an important visual element that contributes to the ambience of the stage setting and affects the appearance of people, costumes and props onstage.

Stage Manager- Coordinates all of the elements of the show during rehearsal and performance. He or she is responsible for calling cues, scene changes, and organizing the backstage area so that the show runs smoothly and consistently.

Crew- This group of professionals is responsible for setting up and running all of the equipment for a performance, including changing the scenery, costumes, and props. They also open and close the curtain, operate trapdoors, run sound effects, and run quick costume changes.

What makes an opera?

Opera is a **musical** form. The **orchestra** provides the overriding musical texture, while the **singers** sing and act on the stage.

An **overture** is the piece of music played by the orchestra at the beginning of an opera. It usually, but not always, contains some of the musical themes from the opera and sets the mood for what the audience is about to experience.

Recitative (re-chi-ta-TEEV)- Is sung dialogue that propels the action forward. The singing is generally faster and is composed to sound more like speech.

Aria- An extended musical passage sung as a solo. It often explores emotions as a character absorbs, reflects, and makes decisions in the drama.

Duet- An extended musical passage for two singers. A **trio** is for three singers and a **quartet** is a piece for four singers.

Ensemble- An extended musical passage for more than four voices. Often each character is singing different words at the same time, and ensembles tend to occur at the most pivotal point in the drama or the end of an act.

Supertitles- Since operas are most often performed in the language in which they were composed, most opera productions have translations above the stage (or on the seat in front of you) where a translation is projected for the audience to understand and better follow the story.



Other opera terms to know!

Bel canto- Literally meaning “beautiful singing,” this term describes the specific style of vocal production that opera utilizes. It requires great breath control and ease.

Bravo- Literally, “brave” or “courageous,” this Italian word is a form of high praise that is shouted at times when applause is appropriate. **Bravo** is shouted when a man has sung thrillingly, and **brava** when a woman has done the same.

Cadenza- A brilliant passage in an aria—often improvised by the singer—that showcases the specific skills and strengths of that singer. **Cadenzas** are most often sung by women, although men can perform them as well.

Diva- Literally, “goddess,” refers to an important female opera star. The masculine form is **divo**.

Motif or Leitmotif (light-mo-teef)- While “leitmotif” is usually used to refer to the musical themes of Wagner, a *motif* is a recurring musical idea that reveals or recalls an earlier plot point, character, emotion, or idea in an opera. Keep an eye out for music that sounds familiar! It probably means something important!

Tempo- This refers to the speed at which music is performed. The conductor is in charge of setting the **tempo** or timing of an opera.

Cover/understudy- This is the person who learns a role, music and staging just in case the lead cannot perform due to sickness or injury... as we say in the theater, “The show must go on!”

