



# ***Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?***

## **TEACHER RESOURCE GUIDE**

***This guide is intended to prepare you and your students for the upcoming performance of the adapted opera, *Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?****

Please use the Table of Contents to navigate through this resource guide. We have supplied all the information needed for you to be successful in preparing your students for the show. However, you are not restricted to the lessons in this resource guide. Be creative!

# *Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?*

## TEACHER RESOURCE GUIDE

Dear Educator,

Thank you for scheduling Arizona Opera's Education program *Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?* at your school!

At Arizona Opera, we believe that providing opportunities to explore the performing arts allows students to discover the world around them. We strive to help students find and explore their own, unique voices. *Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?* is a great way for students to experience opera. The beautiful storyline and colorful production makes this a great opera for all ages.

Throughout the program, students will be introduced to musical concepts including basic voice types found in classical music, diverse musical structures, and operatic terminology. Additionally, they will learn skills such as evaluating content and how language functions in differing contexts.

This Teacher Resource Guide will help you to prepare your students for the performance. Whether you have only 5 minutes to prepare or multiple class periods, this guide should provide you with lesson plan ideas to incorporate opera into your classroom.

We look forward to visiting your school and please contact me at [education@azopera.org](mailto:education@azopera.org) or at (602) 875-5866 with any questions.

Best,



Cassie Robel  
Director of Education  
Arizona Opera

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

What is Opera? .....	4
Attending the Opera .....	5
Synopsis.....	6
About the Composer .....	7
<i>Don Giovanni</i> becomes <i>Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?</i> .....	8
What to Listen For .....	9
Fifteen Minutes to Prepare.....	10
Thirty Minutes to Prepare.....	10
Opera Term Matching Activity .....	13
Opera Dictionary.....	14



# What is Opera?

Before the Opera begins, ask your student what they think Opera is. Write “WHAT IS AN OPERA” on the board and list all of the ideas they come up with.

After the performance, make a new list and see what has changed, and what has stayed the same.

## What is an Opera?

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, makeup 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.

## How is it performed?

Unlike singers who perform popular music, opera singers do not use a microphone. An opera singer works to use their body as a source of “natural” amplification.

## Language

Operas are written in many different languages, so opera singers must study and be prepared to sing in languages other than English. While you will be hearing an opera in English, many of our mainstage productions are sung in Italian, French, German, Spanish, and more!

Singers prepare all of these languages by studying diction, which helps them pronounce the words correctly. They translate the text word-by-word so they know exactly what they are singing. Not only do singers learn what they are saying, but what everyone else on the stage is saying as well!



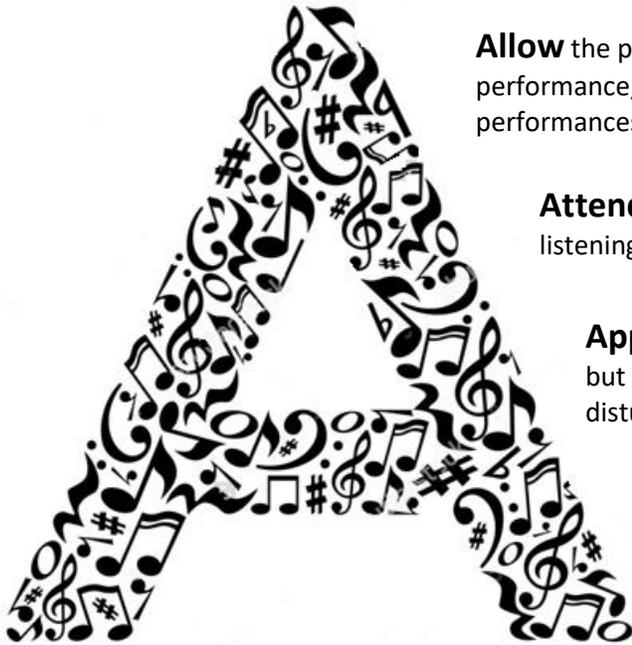
# Attending the Opera

Unlike the actors on your television, performers on the stage are aware of their audience and want very much to tell their story.....live! 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 their 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.

## The 4 A's of Audience Etiquette



**Allow** the performers to do their job by not talking during the performance, unless you are responding to their prompts. Once the performance begins, stay seated.

**Attend** or pay attention to the performance by watching and listening with both your eyes and ears!

**Appreciate** the performers by laughing, applauding, etc., but remember, keep your reactions appropriate and do not disturb the flow of the performance.

**Applaud** at the conclusion of the performance.



# Synopsis

## Characters:

**Big Bad Wolf** – Baritone

**Little Red Riding Hood** – Soprano

**3<sup>rd</sup> Pig** – Mezzo-Soprano

**Narrator** - Tenor

Once upon a time—not so far from our own—there was a Big Bad Wolf. Every day, the Wolf would wander the forest looking for creatures to taunt, hassle, and bully. He loved feeling superior to his victims, he loved seeing them cower in fear, and he rejoiced when they ran away from his great, loud howl. The wolf loved the chase!

However, on this day, three of the Wolf's latest victims ran into each other, deep in the woods. Little Red Riding Hood and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Pig each were looking for their families. They were separated from them while running away from the Wolf.

Little Red Riding Hood first tells the story of how she became lost in the woods: While bringing cookies to her Grandma, the Wolf convinced her to stray from the path to pick a bouquet of flowers. While delayed in the woods, the Wolf got to Grandma's house first. But before he could eat her, Little Red Riding Hood appeared. The Wolf quickly hid Grandma, and donned her bonnet and frills. Slowly, Little Red Riding Hood realizes that it is the Wolf—and not her Granny—under the covers, and the real Grandma jumped out of hiding, distracting the Wolf! They set a rendezvous deep in the woods, and Little Red Riding Hood narrowly escaped the Wolf and ran into the forest.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Pig had a similar story: To be independent, the Pigs' mother kicked them out of the family home. As they debated how to build houses of their own, each became more insistent that his way was right. One wanted to make a house from straw, one from sticks, and the third from bricks. However, as their houses were being constructed, the Wolf appeared and blew down the first two houses. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Pig safely watched from her brick abode as her brothers scattered into the forest, with the Wolf trailing behind. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Pig resolved to find her brothers and teach this Wolf a lesson.



The two friends resolved that if they don't work together to teach the Wolf a lesson, who would? At this moment, Little Red's Granny and the other Pigs appeared in the clearing, and everyone rejoiced that they were together once more. They devised a plan, and set it into action:

They knew that the Wolf loved sweet foods, so Little Red would bake cookies, Granny would knit a net, and the would set a trap, luring the Wolf to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Pig's brick house. From the roof, they would ensnare the Wolf with the smell of chocolate chip cookies, and capture him in their net. Only then, would the Wolf be forced to confront his victims and learn that there are consequences for his actions...

# About the Composer

**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart** (1756-1791) is arguably the greatest composer the Western World has ever seen. Although he lived to be only 35 years old, Mozart defined and forever changed the world of music. Mozart's many operas, symphonies, masses, concertos, sonatas, etc., have never left the musical canon.



Mozart was a child prodigy like his father, Leopold Mozart, who took Mozart around the world to perform for all of the great courts of Europe. During this time, it was his keyboard skills that brought the young Mozart acclaim. However, at this young age, he was already experimenting with composition. After all, Mozart started composing pieces like *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star* at the age of 4 and his first opera at 9 years old.

As Mozart grew up, he became fiercely independent and became infamous for doing what *he* wanted to do and not what his family or patrons wanted him to do. After leaving his hometown of Salzburg, where he was under the patronage of the Cardinal, Mozart settled down in Vienna where he became one of the first freelance composers. At this time, most composers required a court position in order to make ends meet. Mozart, however, defied convention and through his subscription concerts, commissions, teaching jobs, etc., Mozart made a modest living as a musician. Quite a feat.

But, life was not easy for the adult Mozart. He was often plagued with debts and was always struggling to achieve the success he wanted, and even though he was independent, he was still subject – like everyone in Austria at this time – to the whims and tastes of Emperor Joseph II.

Mozart died in 1791 and was buried in an unmarked grave, which was customary during this period of the Enlightenment. Mozart's best known operas include *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, *Così fan tutte*, and *The Magic Flute*.

## Mozart's timeline:

- Age 4 – Takes first music lessons
- Age 5 – Composes his first musical pieces called *minuets*
- Age 6 – Tours Europe performing for kings and queens
- Age 8 – Write first symphony
- Age 9 – Writes first opera
- 20's – Writes *The Marriage of Figaro*
- Age 35 – Dies after writing over 600 compositions

# ***Don Giovanni becomes Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?***

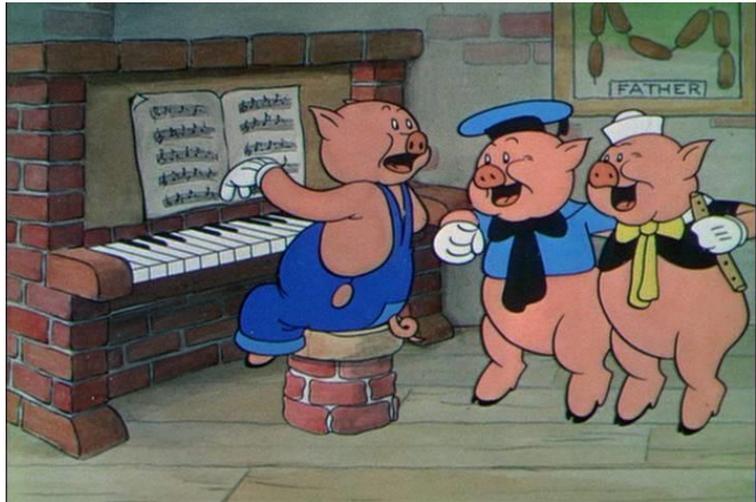
*Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf* is an adaptation of Mozart's famous *Don Giovanni*. The infamous Don is rediscovered as the Big Bad Wolf, and all of the character's he has bullied have to work together to show the Wolf the errors of his ways.

All the music you hear in *Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf* comes directly from the original opera – but we took the **libretto** and put it in English for you to understand.

*Don Giovanni* (based on the legends of Don Juan) is about a bully who has gotten his way for too long. Eventually, all of his bullying catches up with him when each of the women and men that he bullied work together to punish him. The opera famously concludes when the ghost of a man Don Giovanni killed -The Commendatore – drags him down to hell.

*Don Giovanni*, according to Mozart is an *Opera Buffa*. Opera Buffa is a genre of opera used as an informal description of Italian comic operas, however, *Don Giovanni* blends comedy, melodrama and supernatural elements.

The **Libretto**, written by Lorenzo Da Ponte was considered a **drama giocoso**, a common designation of its time that denotes a mixing of serious and comic action.



The performance you will see today is a new production, meaning we have made these sets and costumes exclusively for this school tour. The sets are intended to resemble a tiny opera stage that opens up to a whole new world when the story begins.

To create *Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf*, we took the over 3 hour opera and condensed it to the approx. 40 min performance you are seeing today! This means that we had to leave certain characters and plot elements out of the story. We got a little help from some fairytales you know and love to help you understand the story better.

This process of taking one work of art and transforming it into another is called "**Adaptation.**" Adaptations are important to recognize and understand. Some adaptations are more faithful than others. For example, the *Harry Potter* movies were very faithful to the world of the books when transferring them into the world of cinema. However, some adaptations are less literal and take more liberties with their source material. We hope this performance of *Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf* is a great opportunity to instill curiosity into your students and fosters conversation about adaptation, music, and theatrical performance

# What to Listen For...

There are many things to listen for in *Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf* and you should encourage your students to actively engage in the music. Try not to let them be passive listeners. To help you with this task, here are 4 things for them to listen for while watching the performance:

## 1) *Different Voices*

In this opera, you will be introduced to 4 different voice types – soprano, mezzo-soprano, tenor, and baritone. Often, the sounds of their voices portray the personality and emotion of the character. For example, have your students think about what the Wolf's voice sounds like compared to Little Reds. Does this tell us anything about their characters?

## 2) *The Power of Musical Suggestion*

Like the human voice, the music played underneath the singers often sets the mood for the scene to come. Can you predict the mood of the scene based on the music you hear before the performers sing? Does the music make you feel happy, excited, anxious, sad, etc.?

## 3) *The Number 3*

In many cultures, religions, and philosophies, the number "3" has great significance. It is often a number that symbolizes completion, order, balance, strength, etc. Have your student's count how many times the number "3" is heard. This can take the form of hearing 3 chord sounds, seeing 3 pigs, text being repeated 3 time, etc. Ask them what all of this "3" could mean. How does this connect back to the idea of the Enlightenment? Does this create a sense of order and completeness? Does it make the story seem more like a metaphor than something that actually happened?



# Fifteen Minutes to Prepare

You may not have much time to prepare your students for this program. If you have only 15 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) Play the overture *Don Giovanni*. Without telling your students anything about the story or characters of the opera, have them brainstorm how the different sections of the overture made them feel or what it sounded like to them (example: “The music at the beginning sounds serious,” “The music in the middle sounds playful,” etc.).
  - a. Ask them if they expect to see a show that expresses these ideas based on the overture that sets up the piece.
  - b. Check in with them after the performance. Did they experience the emotions and ideas that they expected to see, hear, and feel?
  - c. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jyjVCbTo5F0>

# Thirty Minutes or More to Prepare

## The Overture

The traditional way to teach opera is to talk through the synopsis, watch/listen to parts of the opera, and talk a little bit about the composer’s biography. The goal of this activity is for students to figure out these things by themselves before all of this information is relayed.

- 1) Play the first 3 minutes of the overture of *Don Giovanni* and have students raise their hands every time there is a musical change (or a new section.)
- 2) Listen to the music again, and have students decide what the emotion or attitude of each section (for example: “This music is playful,” “This section is more energetic,”).
- 3) Have them listen to it a third time and come up with reasons *why* the music made them feel a certain way (for example: “This section as serious because it is slow,”).
- 4) Based on this simple musical analysis, ask students what they expect to experience or see in *Who’s Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?*
- 5) Now, give students the synopsis of the opera. Ask them if the overture prepared them for the themes and emotions that would play out in the opera.

## The Original Story

Either before or after your students learn about *Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf*, consider letting your students explore telling stories through music in deeper ways by having them create their own performances based on a piece of music.

- 1) Chose a piece of “objective” music such as an opera overture, symphony movement, tone poem, etc. and play it for the class.
- 2) Divide your students into groups and have them listen to the music again. Have students list the different emotions the music made them feel.
- 3) Based on these lists of emotions, when in their lives have they felt this way? What dramatic setting or situation did the music remind them of?
- 4) Bringing all of this together, have your students create their own original script or performance based on the piece of music played.

Congratulations! Your students just went through the same process that artists go through and they have just created their own, stories based on classical music (similar to Disney's *Fantasia*)!

## Improvisation in the Classroom

Improvisation is a great way to fill class time and actively engage students in the basics of storytelling, creative expression, and ensemble building. It is a wonderful way to instill confidence, communication, and cooperation. 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 follow up *The Magic Flute*.

### 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...

# 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.   |

# 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, makeup 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.

**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)- 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 where a translation is projected for the audience to read.



*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!”

