



PRESENTS

THE ATLANTA OPERA

THE DAUGHTER
OF THE
REGIMENT
DONIZETTI



2017-2018

FIELD TRIP EDUCATOR GUIDE

Dear Educators,

Welcome to ArtsBridge’s 2017-18 Field Trip Season! We are thrilled to present The Atlanta Opera’s production of *The Daughter of the Regiment*.

The Atlanta Opera Student Short is a fully-staged, abbreviated version of our mainstage production and will feature mainstage artists and the full Atlanta Opera orchestra and chorus. Highlights from the two-act opera have been carefully selected and threaded together to create this special performance, providing students with a thorough narrative of the opera.

This will be the first opera experience for many of your students and will be most fully enjoyed with a bit of preparation before they arrive at the theater. This guide has been developed to acquaint both you and your students with the opera *The Daughter of the Regiment*, as well as to familiarize students with the world of opera (vocabulary, history, etc.) Our goal is to provide you with an innovative, multidisciplinary approach to teaching required skills and curriculum, including Georgia Performance standards and national arts standards.

Thank you again for sharing this experience with your students. We value your feedback and we use it when planning future community engagement programs. We welcome comments from you, your students, and/or administration following the performance. It is our sincere hope that you enjoy the performance, and look forward to seeing you and your students at the opera!

We look forward to inspiring and educating your students through the arts on March 1st at the world-class Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre!

See you at the theatre,

The Atlanta Opera and The ArtsBridge Team

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ABOUT COBB ENERGY PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE



The landmark Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre is a cultural, entertainment and special events venue of a national significance. Atlanta's first major performing arts facility in four decades, Cobb Energy Centre boasts state-of-the-art systems, amenities and design features that allow the expression of any artistic idea and captivate performers, patrons and event planners. The Centre's strong suit is versatility. It can accommodate events as diverse as Broadway, concerts, corporate functions, private parties and family entertainment.

The Centre's distinctive façade and three-story lobby – highlighted by a 65-foot, floor-to-ceiling glass curtain wall – offer visitors a grand welcome and stunning introduction to a venue of great warmth, elegance and possibilities. Nothing speaks "special occasion" like the majestic lobby – a gathering space and promenade with two grand staircases, specially designed, colored-glass chandeliers and walls of Venetian plaster.

The Centre's 2,750-seat John A. Williams Theatre captures the richness and intimacy of vintage theatres. Yet it incorporates modern touches and technology – including advanced sound, lighting and acoustical elements – that allow fine-tuning for each performance. With equal poise, the Theatre can host concerts, opera, drama, comedy, lectures, dance and spoken word.

For special occasions and events – from wedding receptions and themed parties to corporate banquets and black-tie galas- the Centre's flexible spaces include a 9,500- square foot Courtyard, 3,100-square-foot Terrace and 10,000-square-foot Ballroom – divisible into three independent spaces, each with autonomous sound and lighting controls. The Ballroom's pre-function area is ideally suited for pre-and post-event gatherings.

DID YOU KNOW?

- More than 250,000 patrons visit the Cobb Energy Centre each year.
- The Cobb Energy Centre opened in 2007.
- The Cobb Energy Centre has two main spaces:
 - John A. Williams Theatre, 2,750 seats
 - Kessel D. Stelling Ballroom, 10,000 square feet
- No seat is more than 160 feet from center stage in the John A. Williams Theatre.
- There are 1,000 parking spaces on site.
- The Centre is located one mile from the new Braves stadium and only 15 minutes from downtown Atlanta.
- ArtsBridge programs began in 2007 and reach 30,000 – 40,000 to 50,000 students each year.

FIELD TRIP GUIDELINES

Below are simple guidelines for ArtsBridge Field Trips to Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre. Please read carefully and contact us at (770) 916-2805 if you have questions.

Reservations: All field trip admissions are to be made in advance. Please do not bring more than the number of seats reserved. Performances are expected to sell out and we will not be able to accommodate an increase in numbers at the last minute. All patrons, including teachers and chaperones, must have a reservation in order to attend these performances. Children under the age of three are not permitted to attend.

Payment: Payments must be made in full, 3 weeks prior to the day of show or we will not be able to accommodate your reservation. An invoice will be given to you at the time your reservation is made. Once you have paid in full, we will send a confirmation, which will serve as your school's ticket into the performance. ArtsBridge reserves the right to cancel unpaid reservations after the payment due date.

Transportation: The Centre can accommodate school buses, vans and cars. Please be aware that vans and cars will incur a \$6 per vehicle parking fee. A third party contractor runs the Centre's garage and charges this fee. There is no charge for parking school buses. All buses, vans and cars must comply with directions provided by on-site staff.

Arrival: All vehicles should approach the Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre from AKERS MILL ROAD (map enclosed). Upon entering the driveway, buses will be directed to the circular drive where they will temporarily pull up to the curb for unloading. A Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre representative will board the bus and check-in your school. Students will be immediately unloaded and buses will be directed to their designated parking areas.

Seating: Students are seated as they arrive, starting with the floor level, first row. The exception to this is for programs with older and younger students in attendance at the same time. In this case, students in kindergarten and first-grade will be seated in the first few rows of the theatre. There are three levels of seating, with the back row of the top level no more than 160 feet from the stage.

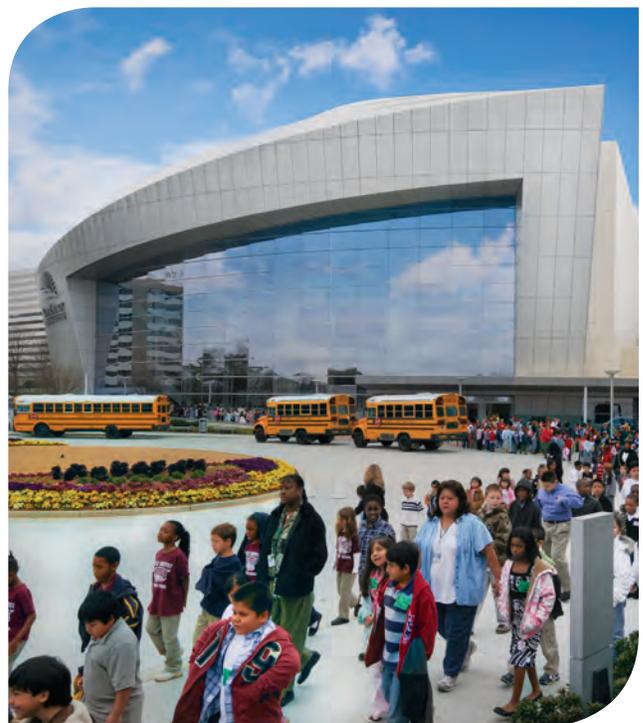
Restrooms: Please seat your entire group, before taking restroom breaks so that you can be easily found. Students MUST be accompanied by adult chaperones when going to the restroom. We encourage that you take groups so there are fewer trips.

Chaperones: Chaperones have a job to perform while at the Centre. Please make sure that your chaperones are interspersed among students, and that they are prepared for the day's responsibilities. Please discuss restroom visits, emergencies, behavior, etc. with your chaperones prior to arrival.

Behavior: Students and teachers are encouraged to enjoy performances, applaud and express enthusiasm in a manner that is appropriate for the performance, yet not disruptive for others. We request that all phones, tablets and any other electronic devices be completely turned off or on silent mode during the performance. We ask that chaperones on upper levels watch for students tossing or throwing items to lower levels and prevent students from climbing or leaning on railings. No student can leave the audience chamber without an accompanying chaperone. Students/classes that are disruptive may be asked to leave the performance with no refund. (See *Theatre Etiquette* on Page 7)

Departure: Performances last approximately one hour. Upon conclusion of the performance, classes will be dismissed to the designated parking area to board their buses and return to school.

Lunch: There is no facility for students to eat lunch in the Cobb Energy Centre. We recommend students eat lunch at the Galleria Specialty Mall, Cumberland Mall, at a park on the route to/from the venue or on their bus.



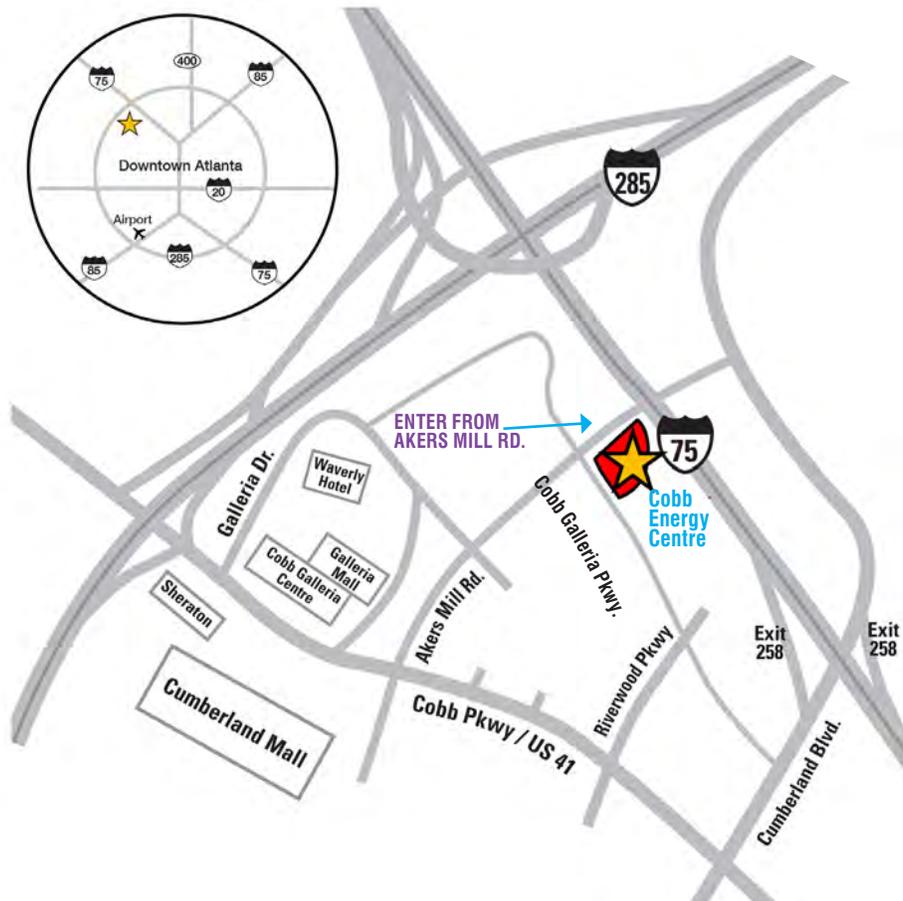
TRANSPORTATION INFORMATION

Buses: All school buses must approach the building from AKERS MILL ROAD on the North side of the building. This will be crucial in assuring a fairly smooth flow of traffic. There will be Centre representatives guiding you. Buses will pull onto the site from behind the building and then drive to the front. PLEASE MAKE SURE YOUR DRIVERS USE THE MAP BELOW. There is no charge to park school buses on-site.

Checking In: When you arrive at the front of the building, a representative from the Centre will board your bus to check-in your school. You and your bus driver will be given a large number that will be taped to the bus windows. Please remember your number, as it will help you find your bus after the performance.

After the Show: After the performance, buses will be parked in the Centre's surface lot in numerical order and representatives will assist you in locating your bus(es). We encourage everyone to board their buses as quickly and safely as possible. For safety reasons, we hold all buses until everyone has boarded, so please make your way directly to the surface parking lot following the performance (see map below).

Cars/Vans/SUVs: You will approach the building in the same manner, but will park in our parking deck. Please note there is a \$6 per vehicle parking fee for cars/vans/SUVs. After you have parked, make your way to level 2 of the deck and to the west side (theatre side) of the building. When you emerge from the parking deck, there will be a Centre representative to check you in and direct you to your seats.



ADDITIONAL MAP FOR ALL VEHICLES ATTENDING



2800 Cobb Galleria Pkwy, Atlanta, GA 30339

THEATRE ETIQUETTE

A live performance is a unique experience shared between performers and audience members. Unlike television or movies, audience distractions can disrupt the performers, production and audience. Before you arrive at the Cobb Energy Centre, please review the following information with your students and chaperones, and help ArtsBridge create a meaningful experience for all.

- Arrive early. Groups are seated on a first come, first served basis. Seats are not assigned for ArtsBridge events.
- Food, drink, candy, gum, etc. is not permitted in the theatre.
- Silence or turn off all electronic devices. We encourage you to share your ArtsBridge experience at the Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre via social media, but please refrain from doing so or texting during performances; the glow from your device is distracting.
- Photography and video/audio recording of any kind is not allowed in the theatre during the performance.
- Respect the theatre. Remember to keep your feet off of the seats and avoid bouncing up and down.
- When the house lights dim, the performance is about to begin. Please stop talking at this time.
- Talk before and after the performance only. Remember, the theatre is designed to amplify sound, so the other audience members and the performers on stage can hear your voice!
- Use the restroom before the performance or wait until the end.
- Appropriate responses such as laughing and applauding are appreciated. Pay attention to the artists on stage – they will let you know what is appropriate.
- If you need assistance during the show, please find your nearest volunteer usher.
- As you enter and exit the theatre, remember to walk and stay with your group.
- Open your eyes, ears, mind and heart to the entire experience. Enjoy yourself!



Photos by Raiferman



PRE-SHOW ACTIVITIES

Before attending an ArtsBridge Field Trip, review the following questions and vocabulary with your students:

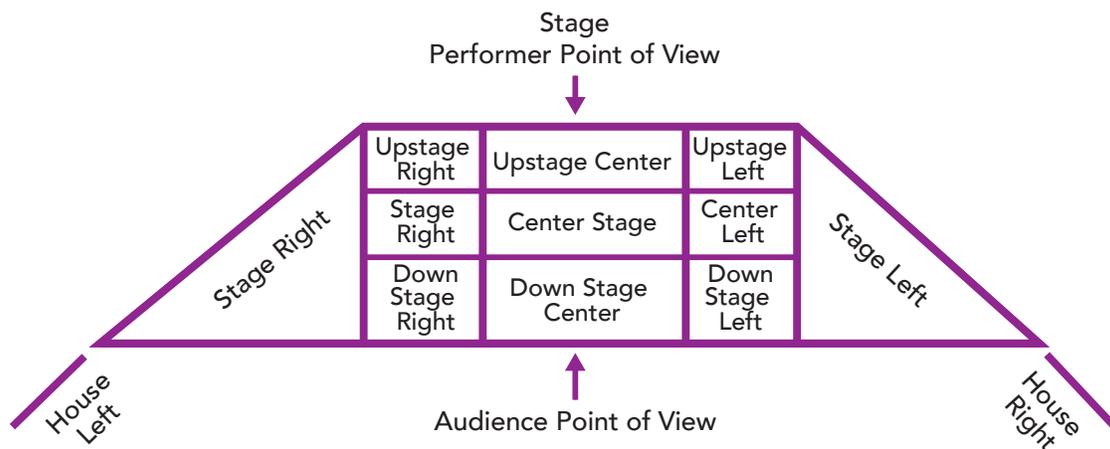
1. How many of you have experienced a live theatre performance? What did you see?
2. What are some of the differences between going to the theatre and watching television or going to a movie?
3. The BAD Audience Member! A fun way to review theatre etiquette with your students is to have them point out bad audience behavior during a show. Here's one way to illustrate this concept:



Photo by Raferman

- a. Have students present something to the class. The key is they are “actors” and the class is the audience.
- b. Once they are into the activity, you (the teacher) leave the room and then re-enter. Enter loudly, chew gum, step on people’s feet, talk to them, etc. Be the worst audience member. Find a seat and continue to talk to others, ask what’s going on in the performance, take pictures, talk on your cell phone etc.
- c. Ask the class to list all the bad behavior. Write these on the board.
- d. Ask the audience members how they felt when the bad audience member came into the theatre. Could they hear the actors? Were they distracted?
- e. Ask the actors how they felt. Could they concentrate on their performance?

4. Review the stage diagram below with the students. Draw the diagram on the whiteboard and have students come up and write in each part of the stage.



WHAT TO EXPECT AT THE OPERA

Many people have preconceived ideas about the opera. Read the truth behind some of the most popular opera myths and see if they answer some of your questions about the opera as well.

MYTH #1: OPERA IS BORING AND STUFFY.

Not true! Operas tell some of the most interesting, scandalous, and beautiful stories of all time. It's not unusual to find love triangles, murders, fatal illnesses, and messages from beyond the grave.

MYTH #2: OPERA IS SUNG IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE SO I WON'T UNDERSTAND THE STORY.

We can help! It is true that many operas, like *The Daughter of the Regiment*, are sung in languages other than English. This Atlanta Opera production will be sung in French. Since most people in our audience do not speak French, we project English translations called "supertitles" on the screen above the stage. This way, you can follow along even if you do not understand the language. You also can read the synopsis of the opera before you arrive. Knowing the story will also help you follow along.



Photo by Rafterman



If you like what you have seen and heard, let the performers know! It is okay to applaud at the end of songs, called arias, and at the end of a scene. If you really liked what you heard, call out "bravo" (to the men on stage), "brava" (to the women) and "bravi" (for all on stage). And of course, a standing ovation is always welcome!

MYTH #3: I NEED TO WEAR A TUXEDO OR A BALL GOWN TO THE OPERA.

Some people like to dress up when they go to an opera performance, but there is no dress code to attend an opera. You will see people wearing everything from jeans to ball gowns. Dressing up can be a part of the fun of attending an opera performance but you should wear whatever makes you comfortable. The opera is a place for everyone.



MYTH #4: OPERA SINGERS JUST SCREECH AND HIT HIGH NOTES ALL THE TIME

Most of the music we listen to today is electronically reproduced and amplified by speakers. Opera is one of the only places you'll hear singers perform without a microphone. All the sounds you will hear at the opera are natural and coming straight from the singer's throats and the orchestra's instruments to your ears. Opera singers have trained for years to project their sound and make it larger than life. While you may not be accustomed to live, unamplified singing, it can be a wonderful experience if you think about how much skill is required.

THEATRICAL VOCABULARY

Review the following theatrical terms with your students before attending the performance! This will help them better understand all of the elements of a production.

Author – the writer of a script; also called the book

Audition – to perform to get a role for the production; usually includes singing, dancing and reading scenes from the show; usually takes place in front of the Director & Creative Team

Ballad – a slow song for actors to showcase vocal clarity

Blocking – the specific movement of actors on stage; usually given by the Director

Box Office – a booth inside the theatre where tickets are sold

“Calling the Show” – the process of calling out the lighting, sound and scene-change cues during a performance; usually done by the stage manager

Casting – the process through which actors are chosen for roles in the production

Casting Agent – one who chooses actors for roles in the production

Choreographer – one who designs dance sequences and teaches them to the cast of the production

Composer – one who writes the music

Conductor – one who directs the orchestra

Costumes – a set of clothes in a style typically of a particular country or historical period

Curtain Call – the appearance of one or more performers on stage after a performance to acknowledge the audience’s applause

Director – one who supervises the creative aspects and guides the artistic vision of the production

Dress Rehearsal – rehearsal in which performers practice with costumes, props, lights and microphones

Dresser – one who assists performers with their costumes during dress rehearsals and shows

Electrician – one who works with the lighting designer to adjust and operate lighting instruments

Ensemble / Chorus – typically singers, dancers or actors who perform in group numbers

Head Carpenter – one who builds the sets for the production

House Left – the left side of the theatre, when facing the stage (audience’s point of view)

House Manager – one who oversees all aspects of the audiences; responsible for ushers and audience safety

House Right – the right side of the theatre, when facing the stage (audiences point of view)

Lighting Designer – one who decides where the lighting instruments should go, how they should be colored and which ones should be on at any particular time to affect mood, visibility and to showcase costumes and sets

Lyricist – one who writes the words to a song

Makeup Artist – one who applies cosmetics to a performer’s face and body

Music Director – one who teaches and rehearses the music with the orchestra

Orchestra Pit – the lowered area in front of a stage where the orchestra (musicians) sit and play during the performance

Overture – an orchestral piece at the beginning of an opera, suite, play, oratorio, or other extended composition

Producer – a person responsible for the financial and managerial aspects of staging a play, opera, musical, ballet, etc.

Program – a listing of the order of events, names of the cast and crew and other relevant information for the production

Property (Props) Manager – one who manages all items used on stage that cannot be classified as scenery, electrics or wardrobe

Proscenium arch – the arch opening between the stage and auditorium; the frame of the stage

Read-through – the cast reads through the script without movement or music; typically done at the first rehearsal

Set Designer – one who designs the scenery for the stage

Sitzprobe – the first rehearsal with both the performers and the orchestra, with no staging or dancing

Sound Designer – one who plans and executes the layout of all sound playbook and equipment for the show

Sound Operator – one who handles the sound playbook and mixing equipment for the show; works with Sound Designer

Sound Board – a desk comprising a number of input channels where each sound source is provided with its own control channel through which sound signals are routed into two or more outputs; controls all microphones and music

Spotlights – a lamp projecting a narrow, intense beam of light directly onto a place or person, especially a performer on stage

Standby / Understudy – one who studies a role and is prepared to substitute a performer when needed

Stage Left – the left side of the stage, when facing the audience (performer’s point of view)

Stage Manager – one who is responsible for the quality of the show’s production, assists the director and oversees the show at each performance

Stage Right – the right side of the stage, when facing the audiences (performer’s point of view)

Technical Rehearsal – rehearsal incorporating the technical elements of a show such as the scene and property shifts, lighting, sound and special effects

Uptempo Song – a fast, upbeat song for actors to showcase dancing and acting ability

Usher – one who guides audience members to their seats

Wig Master / Mistress – one who obtains and customizes wigs for performers to wear

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE

THE DAUGHTER OF THE REGIMENT

Composer: **Gaetano Donizetti**
Librettists: **Jules-Henri Vernoy de Saint-Georges and Jean-François Bayard**
English Dialogue: **E. Loren Meeker**
Premiere Date: **February 11, 1840**

Conductor: **Christopher Allen**
Stage Director: **E. Loren Meeker**
Chorus Master: **Rolando Salazar**

SYNOPSIS

ACT I:

A group of Swiss, including the Marquise of Berkenfeld and Hortensius, her major-domo, nervously await the outcome of a skirmish with the French troops. They pray to the Virgin for protection, but the Marquise cannot refrain from commenting how the French troops are like pirates, not respectful of rank. Assured that the danger is past, the Marquise enters a nearby cottage. Sgt. Sulpice of the 21st Regiment enters, soon followed by the vivandière Marie. Marie has been raised since infancy by the men of the 21st, who regard her as their joint "daughter." Marie has learned the easy ways and surprising oaths common to

French soldiers. The men of the Regiment come in with Tonio, a Tyrolean peasant they have caught loitering about. Marie reveals that Tonio saved her life when she was about to fall off a precipice, and now she has fallen in love with him. The regimental "fathers" cannot conceive of giving their daughter in marriage to a man who is not a French soldier, let alone a man who is not a member of the 21st. Marie sings the regimental song, an irresistible performance that inspires Tonio to confess that he has followed Marie because he loves her. Marie weighs the evidence of Tonio's affection and decides in his favor. In a scene between the Marquise, who reappears from the cottage, and Sulpice, it comes out that, as she tells it, her sister had been married to Captain Robert of the 21st and they had a daughter, who had been mislaid in earliest infancy. Sulpice assures her that her niece is not at all dead, as the Marquise feared, but rather she has been dutifully raised by the Regiment. The Marquise insists that this is no proper environment for a child of the aristocracy and maintains that Marie must go home with her to receive the training her position warrants. Just then Tonio returns with a uniform of the 21st; he has enlisted to make himself eligible to marry Marie. Marie is upset by this and says she must leave with the Marquise and gives a moving farewell to Tonio and the Regiment. As Marie is led away by the Marquise, Tonio swears that he will find her again one day.



THE DAUGHTER OF THE REGIMENT: Who's who?

MARIE

a feisty vivandière (camp girl) adopted by the 21st Regiment

Andriana Chuchman, Bryn Holdsworth*

soprano

TONIO

the heroic peasant boy that falls in love with Marie

Santiago Ballerini

tenor

SULPICE

Sergeant of the 21st Regiment

Stefano de Peppo

bass-baritone

THE MARQUISE OF BIRKENFELD

an aristocratic woman who abandoned Marie

Stephanie Blythe, Gina Perregino*

mezzo-soprano

*March 1, 2018 Student Short only

THE DAUGHTER OF THE REGIMENT

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE *(cont.)*

ACT II:

At the Château de Berkenfeld, Marie is being taught dancing, deportment, and singing. The Marquise has determined to make a great match for Marie and marry her to the son of the Duchess of Krakenthorp. Sulpice comes to visit Marie. When it is time for Marie's singing lesson, Sulpice listens impatiently as she is instructed by her aunt in an inspired air by Garat and soon urges her to sing the old regimental song of the 21st instead, much to the dismay of the Marquise. Sulpice leaves to investigate a report that soldiers are appearing in the neighborhood. Marie, alone, thinks that rank and wealth are no substitutes for spontaneity of feeling. The sound of a drum announces the arrival of the men of the 21st to see their daughter. There is a joyful reunion of Tonio, now an officer, with Marie and Sulpice. The Marquise appears and is put out by the sight of Tonio, who tries to make her understand how his love for Marie has changed his life. The Marquise informs Tonio of Marie's coming marriage and asks him to leave. When she is alone with Sulpice, the Marquise confesses her secret: Marie is her own daughter, not her niece, and the noble marriage will make Marie secure from scandal. Hortensius announces the arrival of the guests and the Duchess of Krakenthorp. Everything is ready for the signing of the contract, but Tonio and the soldiers burst in and announce that Marie has been a vivandière and the daughter of the Regiment. The aristocratic guests are horrified by these revelations. The Marquise, remembering her own unhappy past and moved by the sight of Marie's evident love for Tonio, gives her consent to the match. The Duchess retreats in shock, but everyone else celebrates the triumph of true love.

Courtesy of San Francisco Opera



Photo by Scott Schuman courtesy of Washington National Opera.

QUICK FACTS

- The dialogue in *The Daughter of the Regiment* is not sung. The songs are spaced out with spoken dialogue, as in a play, carrying the plot line and connecting the songs to make the story.
- *The Daughter of the Regiment* is a romantic comedy. The music is lively, the story is light-hearted, and the singers employ slapstick antics to bring the opera to life.
- Gaetano Donizetti wrote 65 operas in less than 30 years. At one point, one of every four operas performed in Italy was his.
- Unlike many theatre works, *The Daughter of the Regiment* has no "source material" or pre-written story that the libretto is based upon. The story came from the imagination of its two librettists, Jules-Henri Vernoy De Saint-Georges and Jean-François Bayard.
- There are two versions of the opera: one in French and one in Italian.
- The first performance of *The Daughter of the Regiment* was not well received. Evidently the tenor struggled with the challenging music.
- The opera is sung in French with English dialogue, with English supertitles projected above the stage.

ABOUT THE COMPOSER

GAETANO DONIZETTI

Gaetano Donizetti was born on November 29, 1797 in Bergamo, Italy, a medium-sized city not too far from Milan. Donizetti's family was not affluent, his father was a janitor in a pawnshop and his oldest brother was a military bandmaster.

Donizetti began studying music in Bergamo at the age of nine under the tutelage of Johann Simon Mayr. He was one of the first students enrolled at the Lezioni Caritatevoli school (founded by Mayr) under scholarship. His teachers at the school observed that he had a poor voice, "defective and throaty," for which they tried to expel him. Fortunately, one of his professors recognized his talent and contrived to keep him on studying keyboard and composition.



When he was 17, Donizetti went to the university town of Bologna for further study. It was there where he wrote his first opera, *Il Pigmaliione*. He spent two weeks on it, pulling an all-nighter to get it finished, although it wasn't premiered until 1960, more than a century after his death. The first performance of one of his operas, *Enrico di Borgogna*, took place in Venice in 1818, just before his 21st birthday.

When Donizetti was 23, he was drafted, but before he had to serve in the army a local patroness of the arts bought him out of his commission. Following that, the composer succeeded both by commissions and by currying favor with local and regional nobility. The total number of his operas has been estimated to be as high as 70, and it is said that Donizetti habitually overworked himself in an attempt to keep pace with the demands from various opera houses. Much of his work was written under less than favorable conditions, although the 21st century listener would not perceive that from the melodic and lyrical bel canto compositions. While he is most well-known for his operatic works, Donizetti also composed music in a number of other forms including church music, string quartets, and some orchestral works.

Perhaps Donizetti's most well-known opera is the tragedy, *Lucia di Lammermoor*. He is also well-known for the comedies *Don Pasquale* and *The Daughter of the Regiment*, which came after *L'Elisir d'Amore*, and his three operas on Tudor Queens: *Anna Bolena*, *Maria Stuarda*, and *Roberto Devereux*.

In 1842, Donizetti became Hofkapellmeister, or Court Music Director, to the Habsburgs in Vienna. This would have set him up very nicely and been a very lucrative culmination to his career. However, shortly thereafter on a trip to Paris he contracted syphilis, which was fairly common at that time. Its effects were not immediately apparent, and he was able to continue composing for a while. By the end of 1843, however, he was no longer capable of concentrating well enough to compose. After a little more than two years of steady deterioration into madness, he was institutionalized against his will in February 1846. A year and a half later his family succeeded in bringing him back to Bergamo. There he was alive but completely unresponsive, not recognizing family, friends, or any music. Donizetti died at the age of 51 on April 8, 1848.

BEL CANTO

Bel Canto (Italian for “beautiful singing”) is the term to describe the elegant Italian vocal style of opera that originated in the mid-1700s and flourished through the first decades of the 19th century. The bel canto style was a distinctive artistic movement – a way of emphasizing the voice as the most important expressive element in opera.

Donizetti was one of the three leading bel canto composers. He wrote *The Daughter of the Regiment* in 1840, at the end of what was known as the bel canto era (approximately 1805-1840).

Donizetti’s operas are all about the singing, although he did have a sharp ear for orchestration and for the dramatic shaping of concerted pieces along symphonic lines. Unlike his fellow bel canto composers, Gioachino Rossini and Vincenzo Bellini, Donizetti wrote more simply for the male voices and began the development of the baritone voice that led to its prominence in Verdi’s operas.



Characteristics of Bel Canto Singing

A smooth style of singing, or legato, across the entire range

Agility and flexibility that enables the singer to manage vocal embellishments with ease

Lack of noticeable breath sounds and excessive vibrato

Clear attack and diction

Full, even tones

A well-focused timbre

Refined breath control that governs graceful phrasing

ACTIVITY

Have students brainstorm modern vocalists whose singing has Bel Canto characteristics.

- 1 In what musical genre does the artist fall?
- 2 How is the genre both similar and different from opera?
- 3 What character might the artist play in *The Daughter of the Regiment*? Why?

LA VIVANDIÈRE

Marie, the adopted daughter in *The Daughter of the Regiment*, is based, in part, on a role that many women have actually played in history. Women have traveled with armies for as long as there have been armies, providing cooking, sewing, and laundry services, as well as companionship and, in many cases, a family atmosphere. However, by about 1700, regulations had trimmed their numbers and regulated their functions in most European militaries.

Most armies required women traveling with armies to be wives of soldiers, though there were still plenty of unauthorized women and children in many formations. In France, the army took a pragmatic approach, realizing that its own supply system could not provide all the food and drink that soldiers required, and knowing that soldiers would desert in order to get it.

The French army of the Bourbon monarchy therefore authorized each regiment to have eight soldiers (usually sergeants) whose job was to sell food, drink, tobacco, wig powder, writing supplies, and other sundries to the troops. These soldiers were known as vivandiers. Each vivandier was authorized to marry a woman whose job would be to help him in his business, and these women were known as vivandières. While their husbands performed their military duties, these vivandières cooked, sold food, drink, and sundries, and often ran gambling tables as well. Their children, born in the regiment, helped their mothers with their duties. Beginning in 1766, the War Ministry authorized their sons to enroll as enfants de troupe, earning military pay and rations from age two. These children grew up in the regiment and generally made excellent and dedicated soldiers.

The French Revolution of 1789 swept away the old monarchy and its military system, but the need for female auxiliaries remained. In 1793, a new law eliminated male vivandiers and ordered vivandières to apply for their license directly to the regiment's new Council of Administration. Though it was an unintended consequence, the result was that vivandières became independent businesswomen, no longer dependent on their husbands for their livelihood. As France waged war on other monarchies of Europe, vivandières served heroically on the battlefield, and grew in importance as tactics and strategy changed.

One change that occurred during the wars of the Revolution was that French armies increasingly traveled without tents, meaning they moved faster, but the troops suffered more from exposure. The vivandière's tent thus became the focal point of social life for very practical reasons: it was warm and dry.



Courtesy of Manitoba Opera

OPERA 101

Opera is a dramatic story told through song. Considered by many to be the most complete art form, it combines all of the elements of art, words, music, drama and dance. The earliest Italian operas were called by several names, such as “favola in musica” (fable in music) and “drama per musica” (drama by means of music). This last title is very close to the dictionary definition, and is the correct basis for any discussion about opera. The unique thing about opera is the use of music to convey an entire story/plot. This is based on the feeling that music can communicate people’s reactions and emotions better than words (read or spoken) or pictures. Opera takes any type of dramatic story and makes it more exciting and more believable with the help of music. Many famous stories have been made into operas, including *Cinderella*, *Hansel and Gretel*, and *Romeo and Juliet*.



Photo by Tim Wilkerson

A BRIEF HISTORY

The concept of opera was developing many years before the first opera was written. Its beginning can be traced to the ancient Greeks. They fused poetry and music, creating plays that incorporate song, spoken language and dance, accompanied by string or wind instruments. In the 1100s the early Christian church set religious stories to music, a style known as liturgical drama. The first true opera, *Daphne* (1597), was composed by Jacopo Peri. It told the story of a Greek myth. The first great composer of opera was Claudio Monteverdi. Some of his operas are still performed today. German composer Christoph Gluck’s most famous opera, *Orfeo ed Euridice* (1762), marked a shift in importance from the performers to the drama. It also reduced the amount of recitative and laid the foundations for the progression of the art form. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was another prolific composer during this time and many of his operas like *Le Nozze di Figaro* (*The Marriage of Figaro* - 1786) and *Die Zauberflöte* (*The Magic Flute* - 1791) are still frequently performed around the world.

OPERA 101



OPERA AROUND THE WORLD

Italy was the first country where opera became popular. It was the homeland of Jacopo Peri and Claudio Monteverdi. In time this exciting form of entertainment spread to the rest of Europe. France and Germany joined Italy as the principal opera producers. Eventually opera came to reflect the stories and musical styles of each of these countries. The Italians have always been famous for their love of singing, and so in Italian opera there has always been great emphasis placed on the singer and the beautiful sounds of the human voice. It wasn't until the late 19th century and early 20th century with the later works of Verdi and the operas of Puccini that a balance was achieved between the role of the orchestra and that of the singer. These two forces were combined to give a more effective presentation of the story. The French have favored the pictorial side of drama, and this has led to a continuing emphasis on the visual spectacle, especially with dancing. For example, the Paris opera audience in the 19th century would not accept a work for performance if it did not contain a major ballet. Verdi, an Italian composer, had to add ballets to all of his works to get them performed in Paris. The Germans have always sought to extract from both the Italian and French traditions, and go beyond both in an attempt to present more than just a story. In fact, one of the greatest German opera composers, Richard Wagner, chose legends or myths for most of his opera plots so that he could communicate ideas as well as just a story.

DIFFERENT OPERA STYLES

Opera Seria – serious opera. These stories are often tragic, and typically involve heroes and kings or ancient myths and gods. *Julius Caesar* (1724) by George Frederic Handel is a classic example of opera seria.

Opera Buffa – comic opera, always sung in Italian. The jokesters in these operas are always the working class, such as maids, peasants, or servants, who keep busy getting the best of their employers. *The Italian Girl in Algiers* (1813) by Rossini is an amusing example of opera buffa.

Singspiel, or “sing Play,” evolved in German speaking countries out of the comic opera tradition. It includes elements of comic opera, spoken dialogue interjected among the sung phrases, and often, an exotic or fanciful theme. Mozart's *The Magic Flute* (1791) is an example of this style.

Bel Canto – This Italian phrase means “beautiful singing”. These operas grew from a style of singing emphasizing long phrases, breath control and flexibility in singing both loudly and softly. *The Barber of Seville* (1816) by Gioachino Rossini is a popular example of bel canto.

Grand Opera – spectacular opera. It is performed with elaborate sets and costumes. Many people are needed to make it happen. Grand opera involves royalty, heroism, an elaborate ballet scene, and can often last for several hours. Charles Gounod's *Faust* (1869 version) is an example of grand opera.

Music Drama – a style of opera that is created by a single artist who writes both the text and the music to advance the drama. This style fuses many art forms, and makes each one as important as the others. *Die Walküre (The Valkyries)* (1870) and other operas by Richard Wagner defined this style.



Photo by Jeff Roffman

OPERA IN ATLANTA

HISTORY OF OPERA IN ATLANTA

Opera has been an integral part of Atlanta's cultural fabric since October 1866 when the Ghioni and Sussini Grand Italian Opera Company presented three operas in the city. The performances were well received and soon after, small touring companies began to bring more full-length operas to Atlanta.

Atlantans became avid fans of opera and in 1910 The Metropolitan Opera of New York toured Atlanta for the first time. Once a year, for a full week during spring, people flocked to the city to see the Met's wonderful performances and enjoy the many parties that were hosted throughout the city.

The opera was the place to be seen, with people crowding the lobbies and balconies of the various performance venues. The Met tour returned to Atlanta every spring until 1986, with the exception of 1931-1939 due to financial complications of the Great Depression.



Leontyne Price was one of the first African American featured singers with The Metropolitan Opera Company. This photo appeared in the program for the 1964 tour of *Don Giovanni*, in which she sang the role of Donna Anna. (photo: The Metropolitan Opera Company, *Carmen*, 1964 touring season program book / The Atlanta Opera archives)



The Metropolitan Opera Company's 1968 production of *Tosca* with Gabriella Tucci as Tosca, singing "Vissi d'arte." (photo: The Metropolitan Opera Company, *Tosca*, 1968 touring season program book / The Atlanta Opera archives)

With the success and popularity of the Met's annual tour came a desire for Atlanta to have its own opera company. Soon, several smaller, local opera companies began to operate in the area. In 1980, The Atlanta Civic Opera Association was created through the merging of two smaller companies, The Atlanta Lyric Opera and the Georgia Opera. In 1987 the company changed its name to The Atlanta Opera, Inc. Since its early beginnings, the company has grown and changed tremendously.

The Atlanta Opera was the first resident company in the new Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre in the fall of 2007. The Atlanta Opera season runs similarly to an academic calendar, opening in the fall and closing in the spring. It presents mainstage productions at the Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre, with a minimum of four performances each. The Discoveries series offers two additional productions at smaller venues, often of special productions or contemporary works best staged in smaller, more intimate settings.

IMPORTANT JOBS

WHO KEEPS THE OPERA RUNNING?

In addition to the singers and musicians you see on stage and in the orchestra pit, there are many other folks who help bring the show to life!

MUSIC DIRECTOR/CONDUCTOR is responsible for the musical excellence of an opera. They ensure the singers understand the music, sing in the appropriate style, and work with the orchestra to make sure everyone is playing correctly together.

STAGE DIRECTOR is responsible for the action on the stage. They work with the designers to create the concept for the production. He or she helps the singers understand why their characters would act in certain ways, and how the characters communicate with each other.

CHOREOGRAPHER creates movement or dancing for operas. They study dance, movement and do research on different historical periods.

PRODUCTION MANAGER helps make the director's and designers' vision a reality by working with the shops that build the scenery and costumes.

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR makes sure that the lighting, scenery, costumes and props are coordinated and that the crews who handle those elements know what needs to be done during the performance.

STAGE MANAGER manages the rehearsal schedule and takes detailed notes about the stage directions, lighting cues and scenery changes. During the performance, they are backstage calling all the technical cues and making sure the show runs smoothly.

SET DESIGNER creates the concept for the physical environment of the opera and works with the director to create the scenery that helps tell the story. They research history, color, space, architecture, and furniture.

LIGHTING DESIGNER helps create the mood of each scene with light, shadow, and color. They also study the music and work with the set designer and the director to decide how light will be used to help tell the story.

COSTUME DESIGNER creates the look of the characters with clothing. They choose the fabrics and supervise the construction of the costumes, or selection of pre-made costumes.



Photo by Jeff Roffman

The Stage Manager calls cues by watching monitors of a performance of *Turandot* in 2017.

WIG & MAKE-UP DESIGNER creates the hair and make-up styling for the show in tandem with the costumes and the production design. They are also responsible for any special effects make-up like scars, wounds or blood.

WARDROBE MANAGER makes sure all the costumes are clean and pressed and coordinates all the costume changes. Dressers help the singers put on their complicated costumes and change their costumes during the performance.

PROPERTIES (PROPS) MASTER is responsible for all the objects that the singers touch or move that are not part of their costumes. They do a lot of research to find the perfect period newspaper, set of glasses, bouquet of flowers, or book. They make artificial things look real on stage, like food or drink.

CREW & STAGEHANDS includes carpenters and electricians. They assist with the installation of the set on stage once it has been built. During the performance they are responsible for set and lighting changes

GLOSSARY

BASIC OPERA TERMS & VOCABULARY

ACT / SCENE

Acts and scenes are ways of categorizing sections of operas. An act is a large-scale division of an opera, and each opera will typically include from two to five acts. Acts can be subdivided into scenes, which are often differentiated by a change in setting or characters.

ADAGIO

Literally “at ease,” adagio is a tempo marking that indicates a slow speed. An adagio tempo marking indicates that the performer should play in a slow and leisurely style.

ALLEGRO

Italian for “cheerful” or “joyful,” Allegro is the most common tempo marking in Western music, indicating a moderately fast to quick speed.

ARIA

A song for solo voice accompanied by orchestra.

BRAVO

Italian for “nicely done”; shouted by audience members after a performance

CADENZA

An ornamented musical elaboration played in a free style by a soloist to display his or her virtuosity.

CHORUS

A section of an opera in which a large group of singers performs together, typically with orchestral accompaniment.

CRESCENDO

A gradual raising of volume in music achieved by increasing the dynamic level. When music crescendos, the performers begin at a softer dynamic level and become incrementally louder.

DIMINUENDO

A gradual lowering of volume in music achieved by decreasing the dynamic level. During a diminuendo, the performers begin at a louder dynamic level and become incrementally softer.

DYNAMICS

A musical trait pertaining to loudness and softness. Dynamics encompass a spectrum from **pianissimo** (very soft) to **piano** (soft) to **mezzo piano** (moderately soft), all the way up to **fortissimo** (very loud). Music can shift to another dynamic level either suddenly or gradually, through a **crescendo** or **diminuendo**.

ENSEMBLE

A musical piece for two or more soloists, accompanied by orchestra. Types of ensembles include **duets** (for two soloists), **trios** (for three soloists), and **quartets** (for four soloists).

FINALE

The last portion of an act, a finale consists of several musical sections that accompany an escalating dramatic tension. Finales frequently consist of multiple ensembles with different numbers of characters.

FORTE

Meaning “loud” or “strong” in Italian, forte is a dynamic level in music that indicates a loud volume. Adding the suffix “-issimo” to a word serves as an intensifier—since forte means “loud,” **fortissimo** means “very loud.”

INTERMISSION

A break between acts of an opera.

LEGATO

A type of articulation in which a melody is played with smooth connection between the notes.

LIBRETTO

The text of an opera, including all the words that are said or sung by performers.

MELODY

A succession of pitches that form an understandable unit. The melody of a piece consists of the tune that a listener can hum or sing.

OVERTURE

An instrumental piece that occurs before the first act as an introduction to an opera.

PIANO

Abbreviated p in a musical score, piano indicates a soft dynamic level.

RECITATIVE

Speech-like singing in-between musical numbers that advances the plot.

RHYTHM

Refers to the way music unfolds over time; it is a series of durations in a range from long to short. Along with pitch, it is a basic and indispensable parameter of music.

SCORE

The complete musical notation for a piece, the score includes notated lines for all of the different instrumental and vocal parts that unite to constitute a musical composition.

TEMPO

Literally “time” in Italian, tempo refers to the speed of a piece of music.

TIMBRE

Pronounced TAM-bruh, a French word that means “sound color.” It refers to the complex combination of characteristics that give each instrument or voice its unique sound.

VOCABULARY

ACTIVITY

Write the letter of the correct match next to each problem.



ACTIVITY

1. _____ **CHORUS**
 2. _____ **SCENES**
 3. _____ **DYNAMICS**
 4. _____ **ADAGIO**
 5. _____ **SCORE**
 6. _____ **INTERMISSION**
 7. _____ **ARIA**
 8. _____ **TIMBRE**
 9. _____ **TEMPO**
 10. _____ **LEGATO**
 11. _____ **OVERTURE**
 12. _____ **ALLEGRO**
 13. _____ **LIBRETTO**
 14. _____ **RECITATIVE**
 15. _____ **ENSEMBLE**
 16. _____ **BRAVO**
 17. _____ **CRESCENDO**
 18. _____ **FINALE**
 19. _____ **DIMINUENDO**
 20. _____ **RHYTHM**
- a. A break between acts of an opera.
 - b. A type of articulation in which a melody is played with smooth connection between the notes.
 - c. The last portion of an act.
 - d. Refers to the speed of a piece of music.
 - e. A way to categorize the sections of operas.
 - f. A musical trait pertaining to loudness and softness.
 - g. A gradual raising of volume in music achieved by increasing the dynamic level.
 - h. A song for solo voice accompanied by orchestra.
 - i. A musical piece for two or more soloists, accompanied by orchestra.
 - j. A tempo marking indicating a moderately fast to quick speed.
 - k. Italian for “nicely done;” shouted by audience members after a performance
 - l. Refers to the complex combination of characteristics that give each instrument or voice its unique sound.
 - m. Speechlike singing in between musical numbers that advances the plot.
 - n. The complete musical notation for a piece,
 - o. The text of an opera.
 - p. Refers to the way music unfolds over time; it is a series of durations in a range from long to short.
 - q. An instrumental piece that occurs before the first act as an introduction to an opera.
 - r. A section of an opera in which a large group of singers performs together, typically with orchestral accompaniment.
 - s. A gradual lowering of volume in music achieved by decreasing the dynamic level.
 - t. A tempo marking that indicates that the performer should play in a slow and leisurely style.

SCIENCE OF OPERATIC VOICES

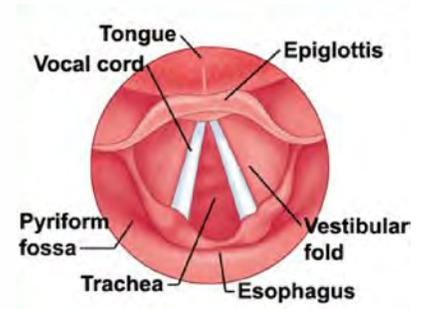
Singing in Europe and America is now generally divided into two categories: classical and popular. What most people think of as operatic or classical singing developed in Europe hundreds of years ago. This style flourished during the seventeenth century as opera became a popular form of entertainment and operatic music increased in complexity. The most recognizable characteristics of a classically trained voice are:

- an extensive range (the ability to sing both high and low)
- varying degrees of volume (loud and soft)
- resonance in the chest and sinus cavities (produces a “hooty”, full or round sound)
- an ability to project or fill a large space without amplification

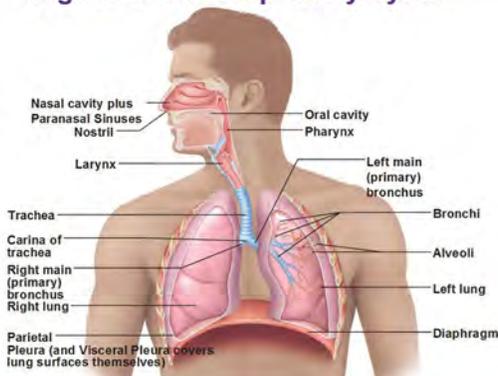
Very few people are born with the capability to sing this way. Classical singers take voice lessons about once a week and practice every day for many years in order to develop a beautiful operatic sound. In fact, most trained voices are not mature enough to perform leading roles on a big stage until they're at least 28 years old. Compare that with the most popular singers on the radio today who could release their first albums as teenagers!

THE VOCAL CORDS

Science tells us that all sound is made by two things vibrating together. The same concept applies when we talk or sing. The sounds we make are really just the vibration of two little strands of tissue called the vocal chords. The vocal chords are held in the larynx, which is sometimes called the voicebox or (in boys) the Adam's Apple. When you want to say something, your brain tells your vocal chords to pull together until they're touching lightly. Then, air pushes through them, and the vocal chords begin to vibrate, opening and closing very quickly. This vibration creates a sound. The pitches you sing are dependent on the speed at which the chords vibrate. A faster vibration creates a higher pitch. The length of the chords also affects the pitch of the voice. Longer chords equal a lower voice.



Organs of the Respiratory System



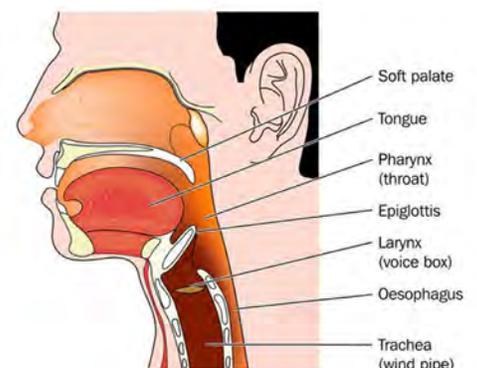
BREATHING/SUPPORT

In order to sing long phrases with a lot of volume and a good tone, singers must breathe in a specific manner, making use of the whole torso area (lungs, ribs, diaphragm and viscera). As they breathe in, each part of this network does its job: the lungs fill up, which forces the ribs to expand and the diaphragm (a flat muscle below the lungs) to move down. As the diaphragm descends, the viscera (stomach, intestines and other organs) are forced down and out. Expelling the air, or singing, is essentially a slow and controlled movement of those muscles. If all of the air escapes from the lungs quickly, the tone of the voice will sound breathy and will lack intensity. Successful opera singers must be able to isolate the diaphragm and ribs, controlling the rate at which they return to their original positions. This allows for a consistent stream of air that travels from the lungs, through the larynx and out of the mouth.

RESONANCE

One of the most obvious characteristics of an operatic voice is a full, resonant tone. Singers achieve this by lifting their soft palate. This is a part of the mouth that most people don't ever think about and it can be difficult to isolate. Here are some simple exercises to feel where it is and hear the resonance in your voice when you lift it: Start to yawn. Feel that lifting sensation in the back of your mouth? That is the soft palate going up. With a relaxed mouth, slide your tongue along the roof of your mouth, from your teeth back toward your throat. You should feel your tongue go up, then down (that's your hard palate), then back up again. That soft, fleshy area at the very back is your soft palate. Say the word “who” like you would say it in normal conversation. Now, say “hoooo” like a hoot owl. Can you hear the difference?

Say the sentence “How do you do?” as if you were an old British woman. Lifting the soft palate is the foundation for the resonance in a singer's voice. With a lot of practice, a singer can lift his or her palate as soon as they begin to sing, without even thinking about it.



SCIENCE OF OPERATIC VOICES

If you sing in a choir at school or church, you're probably already familiar with the different types of operatic voices. We have the same kinds of voice types in opera, but there are a few differences:



Butterfly from *Madama Butterfly*

Sopranos are the highest female voice type, with a range similar to a violin. In opera, they usually sing roles like the daughter, the girlfriend or wife. They can be princesses and good girls, but they can also have some tricks up their sleeves!

Mezzo-sopranos are similar to your choral altos. Their sound is darker and warmer than a soprano. They often play older women, sometimes they play evil women, and sometimes they even play young boys! They can be witches but they can also be attractive – sometimes both at the same time.



Carmen from *Carmen*



Faust from *Faust*

Tenors are the highest male voice type – they often sing roles like the hero, the prince, the boyfriend. They can sound like a trumpet in both range and color. Tenors can be athletic and energetic and they can also be sensitive and emotional. They get all the good high notes and a lot of the applause!



Figaro from *The Barber of Seville*

Baritones fit between choir tenors and basses – not as high as the tenors, but not as low as the basses. They can play both good and bad characters: sometimes they're the boyfriends or brothers – or the ringleader for some comedic shenanigans – but in serious operas they can sometimes be the bad guys.

Basses are the lowest male voice type – they can sound like a bassoon, tuba or low trombone. In a serious opera they can represent age and wisdom (and sometimes evil geniuses), in a comic opera they can make you laugh. Sometimes they steal the show with their super low notes and provide a comforting presence with their warm rumbly tones.



Sarastro from *The Magic Flute*

Think of your favorite story, movie or television show. If that story was to be turned into an opera, what kind of voice types would be best for each of the characters?

You can hear different kinds of voice types in popular music too. Think about your favorite singers – do they have high voices or low voices? What do you like best about the way they sing?

Photos by Tim Wilkerson, Ken Howard, and Jeff Roffman.

THE SCIENCE OF SOUND

YOUR SENSE OF SOUND: ENERGY & EQUIPMENT

Sound is important to human beings because it helps us to communicate with each other. Your sense of sound also helps you to enjoy music like opera. Musicians use sounds to communicate thoughts or feelings. But what is sound exactly? How do we hear it?

THE ENERGY: HOW SOUND IS MADE

Sound is vibrating air. Sounds can vibrate in different patterns. These patterns are called sound waves. The different patterns change the sound we hear. Listen to traffic on a busy street. Noise like this is disorganized sound. Now listen to a piece of music. Music is sound and silence that is organized into patterns.

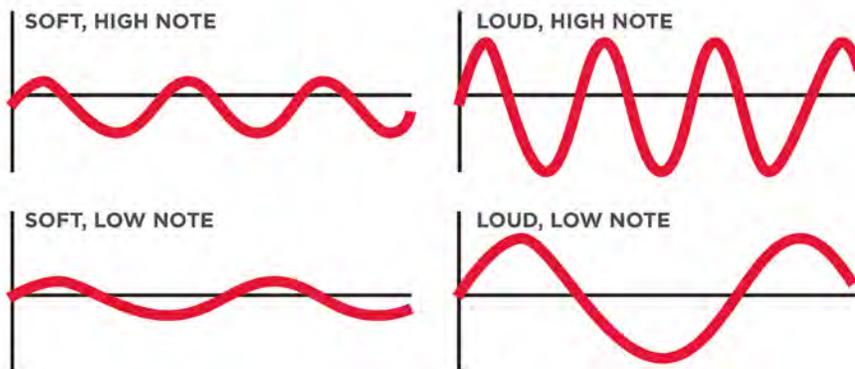
THINK ABOUT IT!

How are the sounds of traffic and music different? How does each sound make you feel? Can traffic sound like music? Can music sound like traffic?

Sound waves can vibrate many times in one second. The number of times a sound wave vibrates in one second is called its frequency. The frequency tells how high or low the sound will be. This is called pitch. High-pitched notes vibrate at a fast rate, so they have a fast frequency. Low-pitched notes have a slow frequency. In opera, the highest pitches are usually sung by women. Very low pitches are sung by men.

Just as the speed of the sound wave determines the pitch, the shape of the wave determines how loud or soft the sound will be. This is called volume.

This is what sound waves look like:

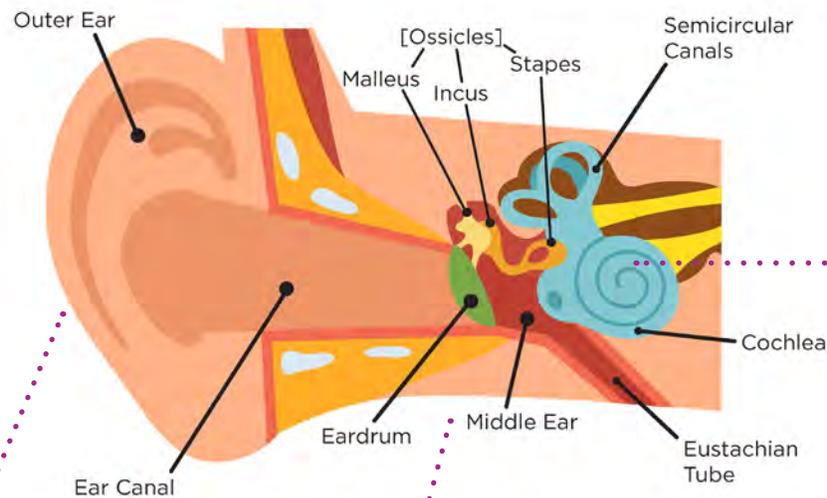


TRY THIS

Stretch a rubber band between your thumb and forefinger on one hand. Pluck it a few times. Can you see and feel the vibrations? What happens if you pluck the rubber band harder? Softer? Change the shape of the rubber band by making it longer and thinner. What do you hear?

ACTIVITY

THE SCIENCE OF SOUND



THE OUTER EAR

This is the only part of your ear that you can see. Your outer ear has two jobs: to collect the sound and protect the rest of the ear. Invisible sound waves travel through the air and enter the outer ear through the canal. The canal is the opening in your ear. The outer ear also makes earwax.

THE MIDDLE EAR

After sound waves travel through the canal, they reach your middle ear. The middle ear turns the sound waves into vibrations before it sends them to the inner ear. Sound passes through your eardrum and three tiny bones called ossicles. Each ossicle has a name. They are the malleus (hammer), the incus (anvil), and the stapes (stirrup). The eardrum is a thin piece of skin attached to the hammer. The hammer is attached to the anvil and the anvil is attached to the stirrup. When these three tiny bones vibrate, sound is passed on to the inner ear.

THE INNER EAR

Once vibrations enter your inner ear, they travel to the cochlea. The cochlea is a small, curled tube. It is shaped like a snail's shell. It is filled with liquid and lined with millions of tiny hairs. Vibrations cause the liquid and the hairs to move. Then the hairs change the sound into nerve signals for your brain. The brain interprets the nerve signals and tells you what sound you are hearing.

DID YOU KNOW?
Earwax (the yellowish stuff that forms in your ears) is your friend!

It protects the rest of the parts of your ear from getting dirt in them.

DID YOU KNOW?
The ossicles are the three smallest bones in your body.

The stapes is the tiniest of all!

THE BALANCING ACT

Your ears do more than just hear... they also help keep you standing upright! Three small loops are located directly above the cochlea. The loops are called the semi-circular canals. They help us maintain our balance. The semi-circular canals tell your brain the position of your head – is it looking up? Turned to the left? Your brain determines where your head is and then keeps the rest of your body in line.

Try this! Fill a cup halfway with water. Move the cup around a bit, then stop. Notice how the water keeps swishing around even after the cup is still. Sometimes this happens in your semi-circular canals when you spin around very fast. The fluid that continues to move around in your ear is what makes you feel dizzy!

REVIEW

WRITING ABOUT WHAT WE SEE & HEAR

Reviews of performances are important to every opera company. They help the company know how the performance was enjoyed in the outside world, and get other people excited about coming to see the show!

You are the opera critic. Think about the performance you just saw of *The Magic Flute* and write your thoughts like you might see in the newspaper or an online review. Remember that a critic reports both the positive and negative features of a production. You might want to focus on one part of the opera that you particularly liked or disliked. Keep in mind that reviews express the opinions of the person who writes the review and different people will often have different ideas about the same performance! Below are some tips to get you started. To write your own review, you can focus on two different elements – what you **saw** and what you **heard**.

FACTS & OPINIONS

A review often combines two things – facts and feelings. It is a piece of straight reporting in which the reviewer tells the reader what he or she saw (facts), and an opinion piece in which the reviewer tells the reader what they liked or didn't like about those elements (opinions). Here is an example of a reviewer reporting what they saw:

“The town plaza is suggested by Paul Steinberg’s dizzyingly colorful set, with a mosaic floor and walls and piñatas hanging from above.”

For the first part of your review, briefly describe what you saw on stage – report what the sets, costumes and lights looked like. These are the facts about the show.

Next, give your opinion about whether you liked these choices. Did they help tell the story effectively?

THE ART OF THE ADJECTIVE

Critics need to have a great vocabulary of descriptive words when they write about what they hear so that the people reading their reviews can imagine what it was like to be there. People use lots of different adjectives to describe the voices of opera singers. Here's a review that's chock-full of great adjectives:

“The **light, smoky** baritone of George Gagnidze only hints at Rigoletto’s outsize emotions, and the **sweet, pure** soprano of Lisette Oropesa keeps Gilda **sweet** but **inert**. The **handsome, hyperactive** tenor Vittorio Grigolo has two registers, bellowing and crooning, and the conductor, Marco Armiliato, has his hands full trying to keep up with Mr. Grigolo’s **wayward** tempos.”

Sometimes it is very hard to describe the way music makes us feel. While there are definitely objective facts we can evaluate when we listen to music (qualities like loud or soft, fast or slow) most of the time we listen subjectively. This means that every opinion is valid – you don't have to know anything about opera to be moved by someone's singing or a beautiful instrumental solo.

Write a few sentences about the character you liked best and why. How did the music help tell you who the character was? Think of five adjectives to describe the way that person's voice sounded to you. How did it made you feel to listen to them?

ACTIVITY

SUM IT ALL UP

In your opinion, what did you like best about the production? What did you think could use some improvement? Would you recommend that other people come see this opera?

Share your critique with us! The Atlanta Opera wants to know what you thought of our performance. If you would like to share your review with us, please send it on!

The Atlanta Opera Education Department
1575 Northside Dr. NW, Suite 350
Atlanta, GA 30318
or education@atlantaopera.org

POST-SHOW ACTIVITY

Write a Letter

ACTIVITY

Goal: To reflect on the performance experience and to practice writing skills.

When: After the performance.

Explanation: After the show, students will write letters to *The Daughter of the Regiment* performers or to ArtsBridge donors whose support keeps field trip tickets accessibly priced for school groups.

Activity:

1. After attending the performance, discuss the experience with your students. Use the following discussing questions to guide the conversation:
 - a. What was the show about?
 - b. What parts of the show were most exciting?
 - c. Which character did you enjoy the most? Why?
 - d. What did the characters learn?
2. Next, invite students to write a letter to the performers or to ArtsBridge donors about their theater experience.

a. Letter Example #1

Dear *The Daughter of the Regiment* Performers,
My favorite part of the show was....
While watching your show I felt... because...
I have drawn a picture of the scene when....
If I could be in your show, I would play the part of ... because...

b. Letter Example #2

Dear ArtsBridge donors,
Thank you for helping my class go to the Cobb Energy Centre to see *The Daughter of the Regiment*! My favorite part of the show was.... While I was watching the show I felt... because... I have drawn a picture of the scene when... This experience was special because...

3. After writing the letter, students can illustrate a scene from the performance.
4. Last, mail the letters to use and we'll make sure they get to the right people.

ArtsBridge Foundation

Attn: Education Department
2800 Cobb Galleria Parkway
Atlanta, GA 30339

Follow-Up Discussion Questions:

1. What did you choose to share in your letter? Why?
2. How does receiving a letter make you feel?
3. How do you think the recipient of your letter will feel when he or she receives your letter? Why?
4. Why do you think the performers choose to make being a performer their career?
5. Why do you think people give money to help students like you attend ArtsBridge performances at the Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre?



Photo by Scott Schuman courtesy of Washington National Opera

STANDARDS

During the 17th century, women were not allowed to sing onstage, not even in a chorus so men would sing the soprano/mezzo/alto parts.

The term "opera" comes from the Latin opus, or "work."

Opera composers would sometimes hire a group of people to cheer their works or boo the works of their rivals.

Reading:

ELACC(6-12)RL, ELACC(6-12)RI

The Daughter of the Regiment synopsis
About the Composer
Bel Canto Singing
La Vivandière

Writing:

ELAGSE W & L (6-12)

Review
Post-Show Activity

Language/Vocabulary:

ELAGSE RL & RI (6-12)

Introduce Vocabulary and Terms and activities
Glossary – Opera Terms
Opera Terms Activity

Science:

S(6-12)CSI, S7L2, S8P4, SPS9, SAP1

Science of Operatic Voices
The Science of Sound

Social Studies:

Government/Civics: SS(6-7)CG(6-7)

History:

SS (K-5)(6-8) WH14

Bel Canto Singing
La Vivandière
Opera in Atlanta

Music:

M(6-8)GM.6, M(6-8)GM.8, M(6-8)GM.9

About the Performance
About the Composer
Bel Canto Singing
Opera 101
Important Jobs

Theater:

TAMS(6-8).8, TAHSMTI.8, TAMS(6-8).9, TAHSFTI.9

About the Performance
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Opera 101
Important Jobs

RESOURCES AND SOURCES

Web Sources

<http://www.streetmusician.co.uk/Assets/Vocal%20chords%20diagram.gif>

http://encarta.msn.com/media_461517091/Diaphragm_and_Respiration.html

http://64.143.176.9/library/healthguide/en-us/images/media/medical/hw/hwkb17_073_003.jpg

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Gaetano-Donizetti>

Great recordings of *The Daughter of the Regiment* on Youtube:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GAMH2_FHWEE

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=499TQjLEbks>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZE5DyvqXsY>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KBsUGKEGeX4>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LENSpaHSeKg>



Photo by Rafterman