

Shreveport Opera Xpress (SOX)

presents

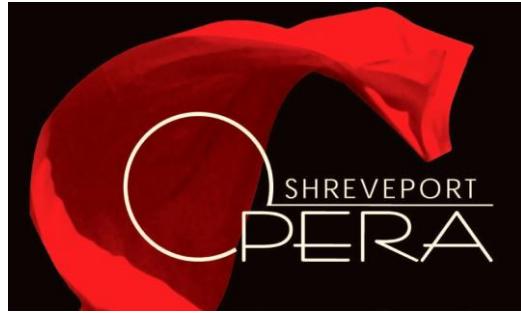
Operatizers

*A “Taste-Testing” Concert of
Musical Theater Pieces and Opera Arias*

Study Guide

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Thank you for inviting Shreveport Opera Xpress (SOX), the education and outreach program of Shreveport Opera, to your school! We are delighted to bring this year's productions to schools and many other venues throughout the Ark-La-Tex. We are committed to producing outstanding professional operas for children that educate as well as entertain. The objectives of the SOX program and this study guide are:

- To introduce students to the fundamental components of opera;
- To introduce basic music terminology;
- To excite children about seeing live performances;
- To plant the seed for the audience of the future;
- To include an important social message and character education; and
- To help all involved understand that opera is also fun!

This study guide contains information that I hope you will find useful as you prepare your students to see *Operatizers*.

I urge your school coordinator or principal to please fill out and return the evaluation form. Your positive feedback and improvement suggestions are a fundamental part of ensuring grants and other funding opportunities for future performances. We also LOVE to receive written reviews from the students.

Should you have any questions or need anything further, please don't hesitate to contact me at cathey@shreveportopera.org or by phone at (318) 227-9503.

All the best,

Cathey Sholar
Director of Patron Services & Company Manager
Education Outreach Coordinator
Shreveport Opera
212 Texas Street, Suite 101
Shreveport, LA 71101
www.shreveportopera.org

OPERATIZERS! **EVALUATION FORM**

The following information is used for grant reporting and to secure future grants to continue the Shreveport Opera Xpress (SOX) educational outreach program to schools. Thank you for your help!

Educator Name: _____

Date: _____ School: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____ Parish: _____

DEMOGRAPHICS

Please give your best estimate for the following:

Total Students in Attendance: _____ Grade Levels: _____

Total Teachers/Adults in Attendance: _____ # with Special Needs: _____

% White _____ % Black _____ % Asian _____ % Hispanic _____ % Other _____

PRE-PERFORMANCE

Did you make use of the materials provided on the Shreveport Opera website? Yes No

If No, please indicate why: _____

If Yes, please rate the quality and suitability of the guide: Excellent Good Fair Poor

POST-PERFORMANCE

How would you rate the quality of the performance? Excellent Good Fair Poor

How would you rate the quality of the overall experience? Excellent Good Fair Poor

On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being "not at all" and 10 being "very", how valuable was this performance? _____

Tell us why: _____

Did this program have...?

... a value, musically, that is important to your students? Yes No Other _____

... a positive impact on your students' advancement? Yes No Other _____

Should we continue this program? Yes No Would you request us again? Yes No

If no to either question, why not? _____

Shreveport Opera Xpress creates new productions annually. What social messages or topic(s) would best serve the needs of your students? _____

We love student feedback! Please send this form, as well as any student drawings, notes and/or thank you letters to:

**Shreveport Opera, 212 Texas Street, Suite 101, Shreveport, LA 71101
318-227-9518 (fax); boxoffice@shreveportopera.org**

Musical and Operatic Definitions

ALTO (It.)

The lowest female voice; also called contralto

ARIA (It.)

Pronounced (AH-ree-ah) - A song for solo voice

BARITONE

Pronounced (BARR-ah-tone) - The middle range male voice, between tenor and bass

BASS

Pronounced (BASE) - Lowest of the male voices

COSTUME

Clothing a singer wears to portray a character

COMPOSER

The person who writes the music

DESIGNER

The person who creates the scenery, costumes and lights

DUET

Pronounced (do-ET) - Music written for two people to sing together, usually to each other

ENSEMBLE

Two or more singers singing at the same time to express their emotions and tell the story

LIBRETTO (It.)

Pronounced (lih-BRET-oh) - The word literally means “little book.” The text or words of an opera

MELODY

A series of musical tones that make up a tune

MEZZO-SOPRANO (It.)

Pronounced (MEDZ-oh soh-PRANH-oh) - The middle female voice, between soprano and contralto

OPERA

Pronounced (AH-per-ah) - A play that uses singing instead of speaking and is accompanied usually by piano in rehearsals and orchestra in performances

PIANO (It.)

Pronounced (pee-AN-oh) – A musical instrument used to accompany singers in rehearsals when there is no orchestra. The orchestral score is reduced from parts for many instruments to one part for the pianist, which combines all the important music that must be played to give a complete sound for the singers.

RECITATIVE

Pronounced (ress-it-uh-TEEVE) - A type of music using words sung with the rhythm of natural speech with some melody added. Recitative can come before an aria or stand alone and it gives information or moves the story along.

REHEARSAL

The time singers and musicians spend practicing before a performance

PROPS

Objects placed on the stage, excluding scenery. Short for “properties”

SCORE

The book which contains both the music and the text of the opera

SET

The scenery used on the stage to show location for the action

SOPRANO (It.)

Pronounced (soh-PRANH-oh) - The highest female voice

STAGE DIRECTOR

The person who decides how the singers will move on stage and how they will act while they are singing their parts

TENOR

Pronounced (TEH-nor) - The highest male voice

TRIO (It.)

Pronounced (TREE-oh) - Music written for three characters to sing together

VIBRATO (It.)

Pronounced (vi-BRAH-toe) - The natural way for a voice or instrument to enlarge its sound through a very rapid but very tiny waver in pitch

VOCAL RANGE

The scope of the human voice from its highest to its lowest sounds; voices fall into these categories:

Female: Soprano – high

Male: Tenor – high

Mezzo-soprano – middle

Baritone – middle

Alto or contralto – low

Bass – low



INVESTIGATE OPERA & MUSICAL THEATER

WHAT DOES THE WORD OPERA MEAN?

The meaning of the word "opera" comes from the Latin word "opus" which means a "work." What is a "work?" It is something that a person makes or thinks up. It is a poem or a song or a drawing or a composition or any other creative thing a person makes. The plural of opus is opera. "Opera" means "works" in the Latin language. Today we use the word "opera" to describe one large work of performing art that combines many kinds of performances. Opera = many works that are combined together. In opera there is a symphony orchestra, a dramatic play or comedy, singing and acting, scenery, costumes, special lighting and sometimes dancing.

WHERE DID OPERA BEGIN?

Opera was created over 400 years ago in Florence, Italy. In 1597 a composer named Jacopo Peri wrote a play that was sung throughout instead of spoken. He did this because he was trying to write a play the way the ancient Greeks did. During this time period educated people were trying to learn all they could about the world of ancient Greece and imitate it. This first opera was about a character in Greek mythology and was called Daphne. The idea of presenting plays that were sung became very popular and more and more composers began to combine music and drama. Love of opera spread all over Europe and eventually the world. Operas have been written in every language and their popularity shows no signs of slowing down.

As in a play, designers must be called in to create the costumes, lights, sets and makeup for an opera production. As the actual performance approaches, the singers have dress rehearsals where they get to wear their new costumes and perform in front of the newly crafted scenery. Rehearsals give the singers an opportunity to practice their music and their acting with each other.

In opera, the composer sometimes writes both the words and the music. However, the person who usually writes the words is the librettist.

Some great operas to know are The Marriage of Figaro, Don Giovanni, The Flying Dutchman, La Boheme, Tosca, and Porgy and Bess (to name just a few).

HOW IS THE OPERATIC VOICE DIFFERENT?

Operatic singing is different from popular singing. There is more vibration in an opera singer's voice. This vibration is called vibrato, an Italian word. It helps the singer hold notes for a long time without taking a breath. Proper breathing is very important because the air in the lungs must be let out very slowly in a controlled way. Opera singers must be able to sing very high and very low, in a wide range and sing fast runs, which are many notes in a row, sung very rapidly. They do not use microphones or amplifiers to project their voices. All the power in their voices must come from inside their bodies. It takes years of study and breath control to learn how to do this. The highest singing voice is called soprano and the lowest voice is bass. Opera singers must also be able to sing in different languages because most operas are performed in the language in which they were originally written.

WHAT ARE OPERETTAS?

Operettas are usually shorter than operas, and are usually of a light and amusing character. Operettas are often considered less "serious" than operas. The operetta is a precursor of the modern musical theatre or "musical." In the early decades of the 20th century, the operetta continued to exist alongside the newer musical, with each influencing the other. Some famous operettas include Die Fledermaus and The Merry Widow.

WHAT IS MUSICAL THEATER?

Musical theater is closely related to another theatrical performance art, opera. These forms are usually distinguished by weighing a number of factors. Musicals generally have a greater focus on spoken dialogue (though some musicals are entirely accompanied and sung through). In particular, a musical is almost always performed in the language of its audience. Musicals produced in London or New York, for instance, are invariably sung in English, even if they were originally written in another language (Les Misérables, originally written in French, is a good example). While an opera singer is primarily a singer and only secondarily an actor (and rarely needs to dance), a musical theatre performer is often an actor first and then a singer and dancer. Someone who is equally accomplished at all three is referred to as a "triple threat". Composers of music for musicals often consider the vocal demands of roles with musical theatre performers in mind. Today, theatres staging musicals generally use amplification of the actors' singing voices in a way that would not be used in an operatic context.

Musical theater is a form of theater combining songs, spoken dialogue and dance. The emotional content of the piece – humor, pathos, love, anger – as well as the story itself, is communicated through the words, music, movement and technical aspects of the entertainment as an integrated whole. Although musical theater overlaps with other theatrical forms such as opera, it may be distinguished by the equal importance given to the music as compared with the dialogue, movement and other elements of the works. Since the early 20th century, musical theater stage works have generally been called, simply, "musicals".

Some of the most famous and iconic musicals through the decades that followed include West Side Story, The Fantasticks, Hair, A Chorus Line, Les Misérables, The Phantom of the Opera, Rent, The Producers and Wicked.

Since the 20th century, "book musical" has been defined as a musical play where the songs and dances are fully integrated into a well-made story, with serious dramatic goals, that is able to evoke genuine emotions other than laughter.[2][3] The three main components of a book musical are the music, the lyrics and the book. The book of a musical refers to the story, character development, and dramatic structure, including the spoken dialogue. Book can also refer to the dialogue and lyrics together, which are sometimes referred to as the libretto (Italian for "little book"). The music and lyrics together form the score of the musical. The interpretation of the musical by the creative team of each production heavily influences the way in which the musical is presented. That team includes a director, a musical director, usually a choreographer and sometimes an orchestrator. A musical's production is also creatively characterized by technical aspects, such as set design, costumes, stage properties (props), lighting and sound, which generally change from the original production to succeeding productions.

To research more, simply search opera or musical theater. Wikipedia paired with You Tube can be a great (and free) way to investigate the musical arts.

The Science of Sound

Your Sense of Sound: Energy and 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.

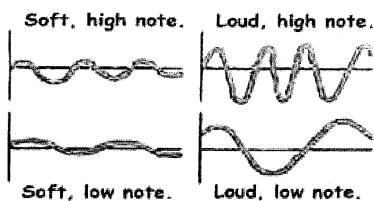
Think about it!

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 year?

The Equipment: How Sound is Heard

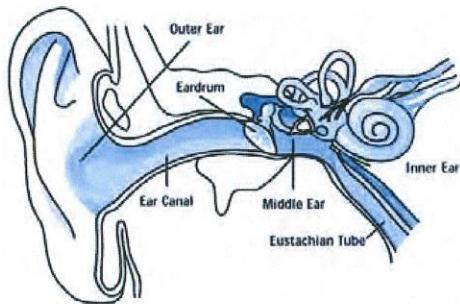
Now that we understand how sounds are created, you want to know how you hear those sounds, right? Your ear has an important job. It collects sounds, interprets sounds, and sends the sound signals to your brain. Human beings, like most mammals, have two ears to do all this work.

Your ear has three different sections:

- 1). Outer ear
- 2). Middle ear
- 3). Inner ear

Each of these sections has a different role to play in collecting and interpreting sound.

The Science of Sound (cont.)



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.

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.

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 hammer, the anvil, and the 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.

Did you know? The ossicles are the three smallest bones in your body. The stirrup is the tiniest of all!

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.

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!

Title:

The Science of Sound

Grade Levels:

2-5

Georgia Performance Standard:

S1CS1, S1CS4, S1P1, S2CS1, S2CS4, S3CS1, S3CS4, S4CS1, S4CS4, S4P, S5CS1, S5CS4

OPERA 101

Directions: Match each term with its definition. Write the letter of the answer in the blank.

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| 1. _____ aria | A The words of a song. |
| 2. _____ ballet | B Music, singing, drama, dance, poetry, sculpture, and painting combined to create one theatrical performance. |
| 3. _____ lyrics | C A theatrical art form in which dancing is combined with music, scenery and costume to tell a story. |
| 4. _____ opera | D A song for solo voice with instrumental accompaniment. |
| 5. _____ orchestra | E A large group of players of musical instruments, typically including strings, percussion, brass, and woodwinds. |
| 6. _____ play | F An elaborate instrumental composition, usually performed by an orchestra. |
| 7. _____ recitative | G A story performed by actors on a stage. |
| 8. _____ symphony | H A style of singing designed to sound like ordinary speech. |

Error Patrol!

DIRECTIONS

Be on the lookout for errors! Each sentence in the passage below has an error in capitalization, punctuation, or grammar. Cross out each error. If a correction needs to be made, write the correct work of punctuation mark in the space above each line.

Opera and musical theater has much in common. Both types of performance combines music singing, and acting. Do you know the difference between opera and musical theater. Some people saying that the difference is that musicals contain spoken words, and there are some musical that are completely sung. What were the real difference between the two?

One major difference between opera and musical theater, is the use of microphones.

Musical theater singers often use microphones to help project they voices, but opera singers do not. All the power and Volume in an opera singer's voice come from inside his or her body. It takes years of study. And breath control to learn how to do this. Proper breathing was important to an opera singer. In order to hold notes for a long time, the singer must learn how to control the speed of their breath.

You might think that you can't not be an opera singer if you were not born with the gift of a beautiful voice. The truth is, almost anyone can develop a strong voice, but it takes lots of practice and, professional training. Even someone born with a beautiful voice be needing training in order to succeed as an opera singer. Many singers are not willing to put in years of hard work, but those do stand out from the rest.

Title: Error Patrol!

Grade Levels: K-5

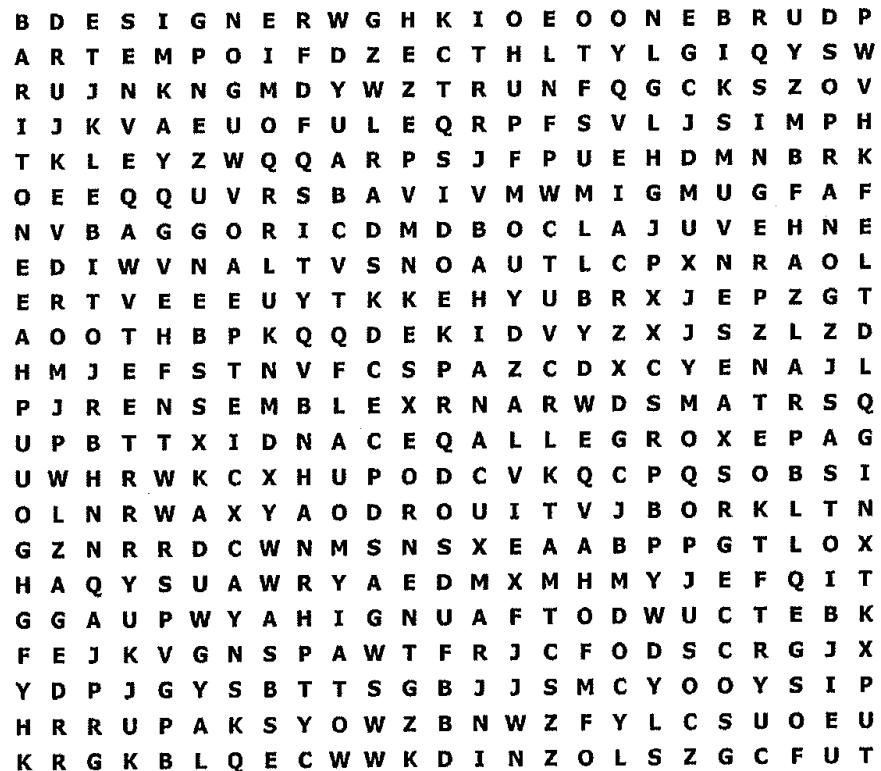
Perf Standard: English Language Arts

Conventions

- The student demonstrates understanding and control of the rules of the English language, realizing that usage involves the appropriate application of conventions and grammar in both written and spoken formats.

OPERA WORD SEARCH

Find the following music vocabulary words in the puzzle below. Circle them.



ALLEGRO

ARIA

BARITONE

BASS

COMPOSER

COSTUME

DESIGNER

DUET

ENSEMBLE

LIBRETTO

MEZZO

OPERA

PIANO

PROPS

REHEARSAL

SCORE

SET

SINGER

SOPRANO

TENOR

STAGE

TEMPO

Bravo!

to our

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