

Turning a Story into an Opera

An opera is a drama that is mainly sung. Some operas, such as Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, have both singing and spoken dialogue. The opera *Goldie B. Locks and the Three Singing Bears* have both singing and spoken dialogue.

Many opera stories are **adapted** (changed and rewritten) from a story or a play. The **composer**, who writes the music, usually works closely with the **librettist**, the person who writes the words, to shape the story into a form that is suitable for singing.

It takes longer to sing words than to speak them, so an opera has fewer words than a play of the same story. To shorten the text, the composer and the librettist have to decide what is most important and which words and sections of the plot they can leave out. They may want to omit some unimportant character. Even with these changes, many operas are three hours long, and a few last as long as five hours! *Goldie B. Locks and the Three Singing Bears* is a very short opera; it takes only about 40 minutes to perform.

Read *Goldilocks & the Three Bears (the original story)* before you see the opera. Then compare the two versions by asking yourself these questions.

- ♪ Describe the characters as they appear in the opera. What things are the same? Which are different?
- ♪ Are all the characters and objects that were in the story also in the opera? Are there characters in the opera that were not in the story?
- ♪ Was the plot the same in the story and the opera? If not, what were the differences?
- ♪ When you saw the opera, did it look the way you imagined it after reading the story? Did anything surprise you?