

# The Billy Goats Gruff

Story Adapted by John Davies  
Lyrics and Book by John Davies  
Music by W.A. Mozart,  
G. Donizetti, and G. Rossini

## What should I expect when I show my kids *The Billy Goats Gruff*?

We will present a *45-minute show* to you and your students, in English, that will have your kids rolling with laughter and singing along! The classic *Norwegian folk story* is brought to life by four professional opera singers who not only tell the story, but *provide an important anti-bullying message to students*.

## But what exactly is opera?

Very simply, opera is a play in which everything is sung. In *The Billy Goats Gruff*, your students will see all of the elements of opera come together: vocal music, instrumental (piano) music, acting, dance, and visual art in the form of scenery and props.

# The Billy Goats Gruff

## What can I do to prepare my students for the show?

The first and most important thing you can do is express to your students that opera is fun – for everyone! Your students may think opera is sung by fat ladies in Viking helmets, or that everyone dies in every opera, or that all of the words will be in Italian. None of these is true in *The Billy Goats Gruff*.

This packet includes a whole lot of materials to help you teach about opera in your classroom, as well as lesson plans and worksheets for *The Billy Goats Gruff*. Please feel free to copy and distribute these as you wish.

If you have any questions or would like more information on preparing your students for their experience, please feel free to contact me at any time, via e-mail at [abeck@tulsaopera.com](mailto:abeck@tulsaopera.com) or by phone at (918) 582-4035 x. 104.

With anticipation,



Aaron Beck  
Artistic Administrator  
and Director of Education  
Tulsa Opera

# The Billy Goats Gruff

## Teacher Materials



## Introducing Your Students to Opera

### What is an Orchestra?

- Brainstorm with your students about what an orchestra is.
- Make a semantic map: put suggested words around the board as the students brainstorm.
- Have students justify their ideas.
- Discuss the instruments and classification of instruments in the orchestra.
- Introduce how the orchestra is arranged, using a diagram for illustration.
- Using words in the semantic map, have students write a composition on what an orchestra is.

### What is Opera?

- Brainstorm with your students about what an opera is. What stereotypes have they heard?
- Discuss how opera singers' voices are not amplified and how singers must project.
- Introduce the voice parts and operatic singing.
- Make a chart of the voice parts from high to low.
- Play examples of different voices and have students brainstorm on the character's personality.
- Discuss typical roles of different voice parts. (ie. Soprano is often the heroine, Bass is often evil.)
- With the class, choose a current movie or tv show and assign each character a voice part.

# The Billy Goats Gruff

## Teacher Materials



### Introducing a Specific Opera

- Start by introducing the characters of the opera and their voices.
- Tell a little bit about the story through the characters.
- Ask students for adjectives to describe the characters.
- Using their adjectives, ask students to write character analyses.
- Using character analyses, have students write their own story before learning the full synopsis.
- Use the students' stories to then introduce the full synopsis.
- Ask students to draw a picture of the opera's setting as it is described in the libretto (words to the opera).
- Have students read the libretto aloud as a play. Stop periodically to review what has happened.
- As you progress through the libretto, listen to the music from different sections of the opera.
- Point out how the music highlights the drama.
- How does the music convey characters' emotions?
- Play each character's introductory aria (solo song). Does it match their character analyses?
- Have students draw a picture of their favorite character in appropriate costume.
- Have students draw a picture of their favorite scene.
- After studying each act, ask students to predict what will happen next.
- Before teaching them the end of the story, ask students to write their own endings.



# The Billy Goats Gruff

## Teacher Materials



### Bringing Opera into Your Classroom

*There are several starting points for a study of opera:*

#### English

Many operas are based on works of great playwrights such as Shakespeare, Goethe (Gounod's *Faust*), Sir Walter Scott (Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*), and Hugo (Verdi's *Rigoletto* and the musical *Les Misérables*.)

#### Science

Acoustics is as much an art as a science, yet acoustically sound theaters sometimes happen by accident. A concern of any opera singer is the acoustics of the theater in which the performance takes place. Although they will not be aware of the scientific concerns of “Q” or reverberation time, singers are aware of resonance and projection on stage. *Scientifically-minded* students might enjoy thinking about theaters from this point of view.

#### Shop

The set designer, a type of architect, must work with the set builders to solve some very special and difficult problems. Sets must be sturdy and durable, yet easy to move around the stage for various scenes and break apart to be transported or stored. Properties or “props” (swords, handkerchiefs, cups and saucers, candles, lanterns, etc.) must be obtained or built in accordance with the time period of the opera. Safety is a major consideration, since, depending on the opera and the direction, as many as 150 performers may be on stage at a given time.

# The Billy Goats Gruff

## Teacher Materials



### Bringing Opera into Your Classroom

#### History

Many operas are also based on historical subjects, but in order to make good theater, various fictitious characters are often introduced around the factual ones. An understanding of the historical background is vital to the enjoyment of such opera, just as it is with Shakespearean tragedies. For example, knowledge of the French Revolution would help one understand Giordano's *Andrea Chénier* or Poulenc's *Dialogues of the Carmelites*. History students might enjoy studying the revolution and the opera in relation to each other.

#### Art

Opera shares with the spoken theater the need for realistic sets, props and costumes. It is difficult to paint sets and drops that look good under theatrical lighting. Set painting is a specialized art, and set and costume design require encyclopedic knowledge of historical architectural and clothing styles. A practical awareness of the added demands of stage movement for singing performers, who must project their voices over an orchestra, is also required.

#### Foreign Languages

Since opera was created in Italy and developed in Europe, many operas are not in English, although operas are sometimes sung in translation and many English operas have been written over the last 100 years.



### The Conventions of Opera

A *convention* is generally accepted behavior. In real life, we have millions of cultural conventions that we mostly take granted. Opera is a stylized art form with certain conventions that might at first seem unusual to your students. However, generally when one enters a theatre, we “suspend our disbelief” and accept the theatrical, musical and dramatic conventions of the opera. Before you go to the opera, consider doing the following activities with your students that will familiarize them with opera’s conventions.

***Preview and then share with your students segments of filmed operas – you can find thousands of these on YouTube.***

- Challenge your students to describe what they are seeing and hearing. How many people are onstage? Describe the characters they see. Describe the voices they hear and the music. Can they describe the lights and sets? This may be more difficult than you expect, and refers to the fine arts standard of building a student’s artistic perception. Likewise, challenge the students to note those things – the obvious as well as the not so obvious – that you would not see in real life (for one thing, people singing aloud their thoughts and feelings!).
- Continue to show excerpts from operas, and start to give your students opera vocabulary so they can better describe and analyze the conventions and artistic choices they are seeing.

# The Billy Goats Gruff

## Teacher Materials



### The Conventions of Opera

- Have you been watching the main characters? Try watching some of the others. How are they responding to the action? When do they sing? What are they doing when they are not singing?
- Watch the conductor and the orchestra. What musical instruments are making what sounds? Are there specific musical themes for each main character? What instruments play in the themes? Who is the conductor watching?
- Are you following the plot? What do you need to know in order to understand exactly what's going on? Make a mental note of the ideas presented in the opera that you don't understand and discuss them in each class the next day.
- In the opera, objects hold particular significance to the characters and to advancing the story: a candle, a key, a hat, a shoe, a coat, etc. Have the students watch the videotape of the opera and discuss the meaning of those symbols to each of those characters.
- Are there other symbolic objects that they notice? Discuss these as well.

# The Billy Goats Gruff

## Turning a Story Into 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 *The Billy Goats Gruff* is sung all the way through.

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! The *Billy Goats Gruff* is a short opera; it takes only about 45 minutes to perform.

**Read *The Billy Goats Gruff* 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?



When you saw the opera, did it look the way you imagined it after reading the story? Did anything surprise you?



Was the plot the same in the story and the opera? If not, what were the differences?



# The Billy Goats Gruff



This is the original tale of *The Billy Goats Gruff*. This story came from Norway. Ask your teacher to read this story in class and see if you can answer the questions at the bottom together.



Once upon a time there were three Billy goats, who were going up the hillside to make themselves fat, and the name of all three was "Gruff."

On the way up, there was a bridge over a flowing stream they had to cross and under the bridge lived a great, ugly troll, with eyes as big as saucers and a nose as long as a poker.

First of all came the youngest Billy Goat Gruff to cross the bridge.

"Trip, trap, trip, trap!" went the bridge.

"Who's that tripping over my bridge?" roared the troll.

"Oh, it's only I, the tiniest Billy Goat Gruff, and I am going up to the hillside to make myself fat," said the Billy goat, with such a small voice.

"Now, I'm coming to gobble you up," said the troll.

"Oh, no! Please don't take me. I'm too little," said the Billy goat. "Wait a bit till the second Billy Goat Gruff comes. He's much bigger."

"Well, be off with you," said the troll.



# The Billy Goats Gruff



A little while after came the second Billy Goat Gruff to cross the bridge.

Trip, trap, trip, trap, trip, trap, went the bridge.

"Who's that tripping over my bridge?" roared the troll.

"Oh it's the second Billy Goat Gruff, and I'm going up to the hillside to make myself fat," said the Billy goat, who didn't have such a small voice.

"Now I'm coming to gobble you up," said the troll.

"Oh, no! Don't take me. Wait a little till the big Billy Goat Gruff comes. He's much bigger."

"Very well! Be off with you," said the troll.

But just then up came the big Billy Goat Gruff.

Trip, trap, trip, trap, trip, trap! went the bridge, for the Billy goat was so heavy that the bridge creaked and groaned under him.

"Who's that tramping over my bridge?" roared the troll.

"It's I! The big Billy Goat Gruff," said the billy goat, who had an ugly hoarse voice of his own.

"Now I'm coming to gobble you up," roared the troll.



# The Billy Goats Gruff

Well, come along! I've got two spears  
And I'll poke your eyeballs out at your ears;  
I've also got two curling stones,  
And I'll crush you to bits, body and bones.

That was what the big Billy goat said. And then he flew at the troll,  
and poked his eyes out with his horns, and crushed him to bits, body  
and bones, and tossed him out into the water, and after that he went  
up to the hillside. There the Billy goats got so fat they were scarcely  
able to walk home again. And if the fat hasn't fallen off them, why,  
they're still fat; and so,

Snip, snap, snout.  
This tale's told out.

## Questions for discussion:

1. Where is Norway? Is it cold or hot in Norway?
2. Billy goats are boy goats. What are girl goats called?
3. What would you do if you had a troll who kept you from crossing a bridge?
4. Does this story have a happy ending or a sad ending? Why?







Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Score: \_\_\_\_\_

# Story Sequencing

Can you sequence these events from The Billy Goats Gruff?  
Draw a line to the correct order of the event.



The Medium Billy Goat  
crosses the bridge

1



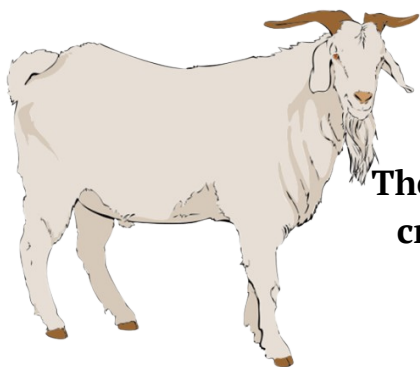
The Biggest Billy Goat  
headbutts the troll!

2



The Small Billy Goat  
crosses the bridge.

3



The Biggest Billy Goat  
crosses the bridge.

4

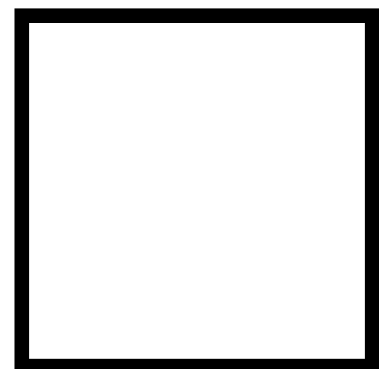
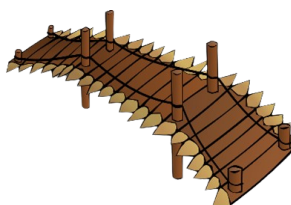
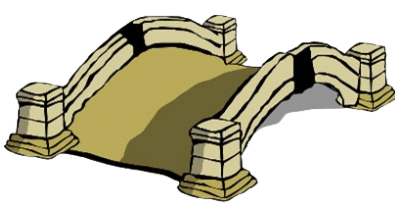
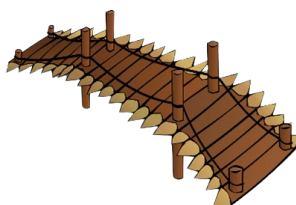
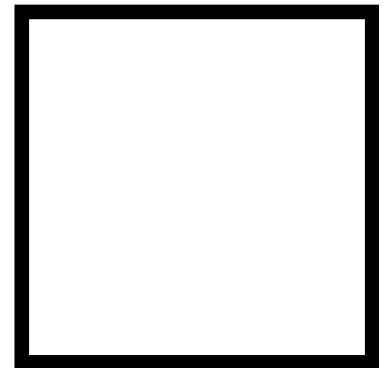
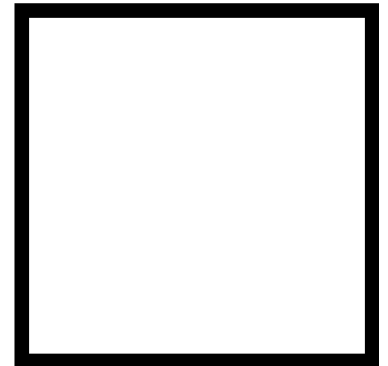
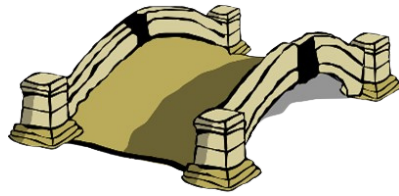


Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Score: \_\_\_\_\_

# What Comes Next?

**Key:**





Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# ***THE BILLY GOATS GRUFF***

## ***WORD SEARCH***

Look for the words listed below.

E	U	C	I	S	U	M	U	G
G	S	B	A	A	R	E	P	O
D	M	T	R	O	L	L	S	A
I	A	N	E	U	E	A	A	T
R	L	B	U	L	L	Y	N	N
B	L	N	B	O	T	S	D	F
C	A	M	B	L	A	R	G	E
M	E	D	I	U	M	S	C	N
P	I	B	I	L	L	Y	L	E

BILLY  
GOAT  
MUSIC  
TROLL

BRIDGE  
LARGE  
OPERA

BULLY  
MEDIUM  
SMALL



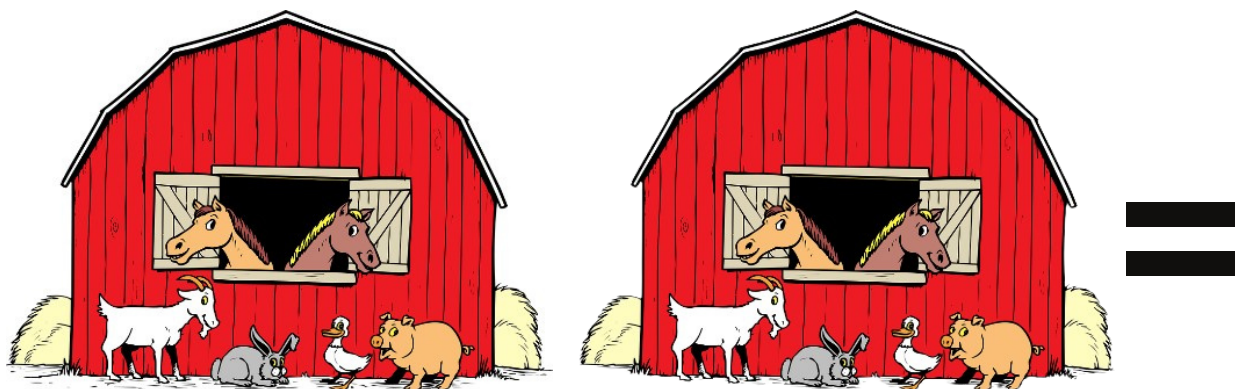
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Score: \_\_\_\_\_

# ***Add Up The Goats***



**Remember - only count up the goats!**



# The Billy Goats Gruff

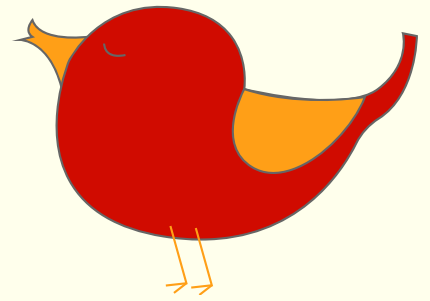
## THE STORY OF MUSIC



Sound was first heard and felt at the beginning of all things. Listen well, for many things sound the same today as they sounded centuries and centuries ago. Sound is one of the few things that have not changed even though new members arrive in the family of sound as time goes on.

Think of sound as voices - the voices of Nature, of creatures, and of the things man has made. Listen to the deep, rumbling voice of thunder, the soft murmur of wind-blown leaves, and the happy song of a bird. Listen to the sounds about you, the voices of people, of animals, of machines, and of Nature. If you listen well, a new world will be discovered, a world which can be heard and felt.

The most beautiful form of sound is music. Music is a pleasant sound. It can express much feeling. It can make one feel sad or it can cause one to dance with joy. It can paint a picture of a lovely scene in our minds or it can tell a story. Because music can make people in all parts of the world feel very much the same, it has been called the universal language. It is the language which can be understood by all people.



# The Story of Music

There are no records telling us about how music was first made. The reason for this is that for hundreds of years there was no way of writing music.

Nature was the first musician. The forces and creatures of Nature formed the first orchestra. The wind sighing through hollows, the rush of waves against the shore, the songs and the cries of creatures sent the first musical notes into the air waves.

Some time after man appeared on this earth, he felt the need of expressing something, and he talked. He discovered that he could produce different tones. When he was happy he had an urge to sing. This was the beginning of song.

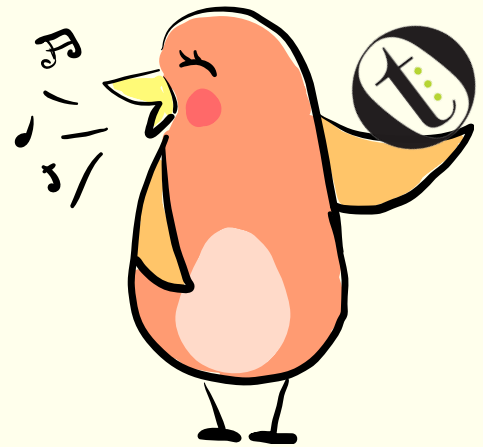
Then he tried to imitate the sounds of other creatures, such as birds. In this way he produced more sounds. It can be seen that emotion and imitation formed the themes for the first melodies. A melody is the tune of a song. Man noticed that he could create different effects by making his tune faster and slower. He discovered the pleasing sound produced by accenting a certain tone and repeating this over and over again in equal time, thus creating rhythm.

The next step in the development of music was the invention of various musical instruments. Instruments give the only bit of evidence which proves that people years ago did have music. The instruments were found by scientists who dug up the remains of cities, which were buried under the dust of centuries.



# The Story of Music

It has been said that a good way to judge a nation is to know its musical instruments. The most primitive source of man-made music is the drum. A hollow log, when beaten upon with the hands, produces a deep, ringing sound.



If a piece of skin is stretched tightly across the ends of the hollow log, a louder and better sound is made. This kind of drum was the only instrument used by primitive peoples, ages ago. Some tribes still use this form of music as a method of communication or to accompany dances. The rhythm produced is somewhat like heartbeats which begin at a normal rhythm, and gradually gain speed as excitement increases. Music which depends solely upon rhythm is the most primitive and most physical of all music.

Perhaps the invention of the flute, the next oldest instrument, was inspired by hearing the the sound of wind blown through a hollow reed. Flutes made of bone have been discovered among the things used by cave dwellers of Europe. Egyptians who lived around 2000 B.C. used flutes and the Greeks at the height of their culture were fond of the flute.

The twang of the bow string undoubtedly inspired the first lyre, a harp which was used by ancient people. The civilizations of old, Chinese, Hindu, Egyptian, Greek and Hebrew, contributed much in musical instruments. All improved their music and invented certain systems of playing in accordance with their levels of education. Most of these systems are still used today.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_



## The Story of Music Review



1. What is the most beautiful form of sound?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What is the universal language?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Who was the first musician?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What is melody?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. What is the most primitive source of man-made music?

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Did you ever hear a drum? Where?

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Name six sounds you like

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

8. Listen for a few minutes and then list the sounds which you hear during this time.

\_\_\_\_\_





# Putting It All Together

## It takes a Bunch of People to Put on an Opera



These are some of the people needed to put on an opera:

The **Composer**- who writes the music

The **Librettist**- who writes the words

The **Singers**-

- The *Principals* (they sing lead roles)
- The *Comprimario* (they sing the minor or secondary roles)
- The *Chorus/Ensemble* (a group of singers who all sing together)

The **Orchestra**- a group of musicians who, with their instruments, provide both the accompaniment for the voices and a continuous musical sound used by the

composer to express whatever he or she wants to convey at any given point in the opera

The **Conductor**-who leads the orchestra and tell the singers when to sing. He or she does a lot more too. The conductor is the one who decides how to interpret what the composer wrote.

*But it takes a lot more than singers and musicians to put on an opera. Some of the people concerned with the artistic direction of the opera are:*

The **Chorus Master**- who trains the chorus so that they will know the words and the music and how they are expected to perform.

The **Choreographer**-who creates the dances

The **Stage Director**- who directs the movement and action on stage

The **Designers**- who develop the plans for sets, the lights and the costumes





# Putting It All Together

*The people who take these ideas and turn them into reality include:*

The **Production Manager**- who deals with the scheduling, including rehearsal times, and arrivals of people, sets, and costumes. He or she is the one who coordinates the activities of all the people working to put on the opera.

The **Stage Manager**- who, during the performance, dictates when things happen (when the curtain goes up, when people enter and when lights and scenery change)

The **Technical Director**- who is in charge of the building, loading and shifting of the scenery and the props, hanging and focusing lights and generally carrying out the designers' ideas

*They are assisted by: **carpenters, electricians, lighting technicians, wardrobe people, wig makers, and make-up artists.***

These artists and craftspeople are supported by the **Administrative staff**, who decide on the operas presented, raise money for new productions, publicize the season, sell tickets to performances, introduce new audiences to opera, and manage the company's funds and day-to-day operation.

Then there are those non-singing, non-speaking, non-dancing people who appear on stage carrying the spears or the trays or just swelling the crowds. They are called **supernumeraries** (or supers for short).

Finally, there is the **AUDIENCE**, without whom there would be no reason to put on the opera in the first place.





Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Score: \_\_\_\_\_

# ***Opera Vocabulary List***

**Opera-** A drama or comedy set to music and staged. The dialogue between the characters is sung, not spoken.

**Soprano-** The highest female voice

**Comedy-** an opera that is not as serious as most. There is a comic twist.

**Libretto-** The text of an opera; the words and story of the opera.

**Trio-** Sung by three people. They don't always sing the same words.

**Aria-** A song for a solo (one) voice. In most operas, each principal singer sings at least one aria.

**Composer-** The creator of a musical work.

**Baritone-** The middle male voice.

**Orchestra-** Provides the musical background and themes for the singers.

**Synopsis-** A summary of the opera

**Recitative-** When the singing has more of the rhythms of talking.

**Chorus-** A group of people who perform together as characters on stage.

**Duet-** Sung by two people. They don't always sing the same words.

**Tenor-** The highest male voice.

**Bass-** The lowest male voice.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Score: \_\_\_\_\_

# ***Opera Vocabulary***

Directions: Use your vocabulary list to complete the following sentences. Print clearly.

## **Key**

Bass	Orchestra	Comedy
Tenor	Baritone	Soprano
Duet	Composer	Opera
Chorus	Aria	Libretto
Recitative	Trio	Synopsis

1. The \_\_\_\_\_ wrote the music for the opera.
2. The librettist wrote the \_\_\_\_\_, the words for the opera.
3. There were three people singing at the same time. There was a \_\_\_\_\_ on stage.
4. A song sung by two people is called a \_\_\_\_\_.
5. We will read the \_\_\_\_\_ or summary of the opera.
6. When the vocalist sing but it follows the rhythm of talking rather than sounding lyrical, it is called \_\_\_\_\_.
7. A \_\_\_\_\_ is the highest male voice, a \_\_\_\_\_ is the middle male voice, and a \_\_\_\_\_ is the lowest male voice.
8. The soprano sang a beautiful, lyrical \_\_\_\_\_ that expressed her happiness.
9. You would be in the \_\_\_\_\_ if you sang with a big group of singers.
10. An \_\_\_\_\_ is just like a drama or a comedy that is staged with lights, costumes and sets, but the words are set to music.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Section: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Score: \_\_\_\_\_

# ***Opera Vocabulary***

Directions: Match the definition to the word by putting the letter on the line.

- a. A drama or comedy set to music and staged. The dialogue between the characters is sung, not spoken.
- b. A song or solo (one voice)
- c. When the singing has more of the rhythms of talking
- d. An opera that is not serious
- e. Provides musical background
- f. Sung by two people. They don't always sing the same words.
- g. Sung by three people. They don't always sing the same words.
- h. The creator of a musical work
- i. The text of the opera
- j. A summary of the opera
- k. A group of people who perform together as characters on stage
- l. The highest female voice
- m. The highest male voice
- n. The middle male voice
- o. The lowest male voice

\_\_\_\_ Recitative

\_\_\_\_ Aria

\_\_\_\_ Chorus

\_\_\_\_ Soprano

\_\_\_\_ Synopsis

\_\_\_\_ Bass

\_\_\_\_ Orchestra

\_\_\_\_ Baritone

\_\_\_\_ Opera

\_\_\_\_ Comedy

\_\_\_\_ Composer

\_\_\_\_ Tenor

\_\_\_\_ Duet

\_\_\_\_ Libretto

\_\_\_\_ Trio



# ***Create an Opera***



Imagine that you're an opera composer like Mozart or Rossini

In order to write your next opera, you'll need the following things:

- A story (plot)
- Characters
- Sets (scenery)
- Props (Items that characters use, like pencils and eyeglasses)

In groups of 2 to 4, create your own opera. Come up with your own story and characters. Draw your sets. (You may have several different sets, especially if your opera takes place in many different locations.) Cut your props out of construction paper.

Then, present your opera to the class. As one group member reads the story, the other group members can hold up the set drawings and use the props as your characters would.

That's it! You've made an opera! The only other part is to add music to the story – perhaps your teacher can help with that!







Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# ***Audience Tips***



Ken is going to the opera. Charlotte has been to many operas and is very helpful, always giving Ken good advice for his behavior during the show. Lourdes never goes to the opera, and she gives Ken bad advice. Put a square around the advice that Charlotte gave Ken and put a circle around the advice that Lourdes gave Ken.

**“You should  
always be on time when  
you go to an opera.”**

**“Most opera  
singers don’t really love  
opera, so they don’t care  
if you enjoy the show or  
not.”**

**“Opera singers  
love to hear your  
applause.”**

**“It’s okay to  
talk during an opera, as  
long as the person next  
to you spoke first.”**

**“It’s alright to  
shout ‘Bravo!’ and  
‘Encore!’ at the end of a  
song.”**

**“You should  
never leave an opera  
early unless you have an  
emergency.”**