



# OPERA CREATION

## Teacher Materials

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# OPERA CREATION

## Overview

The Canadian Opera Company is endeavoring to build awareness beyond the mainstage and highlight the importance of continuing to bring opera in its various configurations to community centers, school classrooms, public performance venues, libraries, universities, and more. The Education and Outreach department at the COC will provide a free and exciting program in conjunction with community leaders to facilitate the creation of an opera by young participants!

Opera creation will allow a group of children (ages 7-13) to create characters, develop writing techniques, improvise dialogue, imagine new storylines, and perform a full show! During the process there will be opportunities to compose music, write a libretto, craft sets, costumes, props and more. This process will encourage collaboration, team-building, communication, listening, literacy and overall confidence.

Dates: January to March, 2018

Times: 1 hour per week for 8 weeks

The COC will:

- Work collaboratively with the partner organizations
- Provide an artist-educator to run a weekly opera creation program
- Contact the location with any changes to staffing or scheduling
- Provide materials to facilitate the program
- Promote and document the final performance

Partner Location will:

- Register a maximum of 25 children (ages 7 to 13) or choose a partner teacher and classroom up to 35 students
- Provide a suitable facility, including a tuned piano (or a keyboard will be provided), and contact person onsite
- Monitor the safety of COC program staff and participants
- Liaise with families and guardians when needed
- Provide a safe space to store program materials and to ensure that the materials are used solely for the purposes of the Opera Creation Program
- Contact the Children, Youth and Family Programs Manager if there are any changes to the facility or contacts
- Promote the final performance

# OPERA CREATION

## Weekly Activities

This timeline is suggested and may vary depending on the participants, classroom needs, teachers, artists, and various other factors.

Week 1 - Introduction and character creation

- ❖ Please refer to page 2 of the handout package for character creation
- ❖ For week 1 reflection, please refer to page 3

Week 2 - Story creation

- ❖ Please refer to page 4 of the handout package for Story Creation
- ❖ For week 2 reflection, please refer to page 5

Week 3 - Dialogue and recitative

- ❖ Please refer to page 6 of the handout package for Dialogue and Recitative
- ❖ For week 3 reflection, please refer to page 7

Week 4 - Score and music writing

- ❖ Please refer to page 8 of the handout package for Score and music writing
- ❖ For week 4 reflection, please refer to page 10

Week 5 - Piecing the libretto together

- ❖ Please refer to page 11 of the handout package for Piecing the Libretto together

Week 6, 7, 8 - Rehearsal, guest artists, and Performance!

- ❖ Please refer to pages 12-15
- ❖ For Weeks 6-8 reflection, please refer to pages 16, 19

# OPERA CREATION

## Lesson Flow

### **Introduction warm-up** (10 min)

- Ice breaker, game, focus activity and/or vocal warm-up

### **Explanation of opera and daily activity** (15 min)

- PowerPoint, brainstorming, video, listening, etc.

### **Core activity** (20-25 min)

- Demonstrate the activity and outline the objectives
- Work as a large group or break into smaller groups
- Assist participants with ideas

### **Presentation and Reflection** (10-15 min)

- Groups present their work, reflect on the activities, and discuss the next steps

## Other ideas

- First day create a guide for the class/manifesto
- Have the participants work on some activities out of class time and bring them ready for class

## Appendix C: Lesson Example

### Lesson Plan (Example)

Date:

Week 1: Introduction and Character Creation

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade (age range or class): 4

Subject/Standard(s):

Music:

C1. Creating and Performing: apply the creative process to create and perform music for a variety of purposes, using the elements and techniques of music;

C3. Exploring Forms and Cultural Contexts: demonstrate an understanding of a variety of musical genres and styles from the past and present, and their sociocultural and historical contexts.

Cross Curricular

English

1. generate, gather, and organize ideas and information to write for an intended purpose and audience;

Drama

B1. Creating and Presenting: apply the creative process to dramatic play and process drama, using the elements and conventions of drama to communicate feelings, ideas, and stories;

Objectives:

By the end of the lesson:

- Students will have an understanding of how opera develops stories and psychological foundations for their characters and how that is developed musically
- Students will create characters with their own unique backgrounds
- Students will identify with and express which emotions they connect with and why

Lesson Outline:

Introduction - Activate prior knowledge

- What is Music? How can music make you feel?
- Play examples and ask students to identify how the music makes them feel (e.g. happy, sad, angry, fearful, surprised etc.)

Introduction to Opera

- Opera is an art form that uses drama, music, visual arts, and dance to tell a story
- Opera has a special way of identifying for the audience exactly how the characters are feeling and why they are feeling that way
- Character analysis: Queen of the Night from Mozart's *The Magic Flute*
- Have students watch and listen - then identify how the Queen is feeling in this moment of time. Afterwards in small groups have students brainstorm a storyline for why she is angry. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dpVV9jShEzU>
- Lastly give the students a quick storyline for the Queen
- The Queen of the Night is upset because her daughter was taken from her, by the man who inherited a temple that should have been left to her

Activity

- Distribute the handout "Creating a character" on page 2 of the handout document
- Have students create their own characters with a backstory and interesting facts
- Handout weekly reflection

Materials:

- Projector
- Speakers
- Handouts
- Whiteboard/chart

Vocabulary:

Aria: a song for one singer, which is typically reflective in nature  
Soprano: the highest female



<p>paper/smartboard for any group brainstorming</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Internet</li> </ul>	<p>voice in opera</p>
<p>Assessment:</p> <p>For Learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Observation</li> <li>- Active participation</li> </ul> <p>As Learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Weekly reflection</li> </ul> <p>Of Learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Completion/quality of handout</li> <li>- Working towards a final presentation</li> </ul>	
<p>Notes:</p> <p>This lesson plan can be easily adapted for other participating grades.</p>	
<p>Next Steps:</p> <p>Prepare characters for Week 2 - Story creation</p>	

Lesson Plan: Opera Creation  
Jan. 25, 2018

Date:

Teacher: Bryna Berezowska  
ages)

Grade: (all

<p>Subject/Standard(s) :</p> <p>Music:</p> <p>C1. Creating and Performing: apply the creative process to create and perform music for a variety of purposes, using the elements and techniques of music;</p> <p>English</p> <p>1. generate, gather, and organize ideas and information to write for an intended purpose and audience;</p> <p>Drama</p> <p>B1. Creating and Presenting: apply the creative process to dramatic play and process drama, using the elements and conventions of drama to communicate feelings, ideas, and</p>
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stories;

Objectives:

By the end of the lesson:

- Students will have an understanding of the elements of opera (music, drama, movement, etc.)
- Students will create music, characters, dialogue and story structure
- Students will present an artistic work for their peers

Lesson Outline:

Introduction - Activate prior knowledge

- Manifesto creation
- Warm up game - Popcorn
- Warm up game - post-it notes, creating sound
- What is opera? Brainstorm the elements of opera

Activity 1

- Introduce Improvised recitative - freeze style

Activity 2

- Brainstorm a theme
- Lead class through story creation (teacher narrator)
  - o Freeze in a stage picture
  - o Reminder to sing (no speaking)
  - o What is the conflict?
  - o Freeze at any time to add elements
  - o Encourage a resolution
- Discuss opera creation, edit elements, and rehearse for a final presentation

Materials:

- Post-its
- Markers
- Whiteboard/chart paper/smartboard for any group brainstorming

Vocabulary:

See opera glossary

Assessment/Reflection:

Reflection question for self-assessment:  
Explain your experience creating an opera.  
What was successful? What would you do differently?

Notes:

This lesson plan can be easily adapted for all ages and abilities

Next Steps:

### **Other information**

- Choose a theme prior to the class beginning
  - o Underwater, in space, superhero, circus, science, nature
  - o Pre-plan the setting - in a cave, at the zoo, on a mountain, etc.
  - o Bring photos or examples of characters or ideas
  
- Determine an attention grabber

- o Waterfall (the leader says waterfall and everyone motions high to low with their hands saying shhhhhh)
  - o Unicorn (the leader says unicorn and everyone claps their hands on their forehead)
  - o Clapping hands (the leader claps a pattern and everyone repeats the pattern)
  - o Create your own attention grabber
- Provide folders for the participants to keep their work each week
  - Add choreography, movement, instruments, and more
  - Edit the lines and songs with the participants
  - Add incentives like stickers, warm-up leader, conductor, pick the first instrument etc.
  - Provide 'jobs' for the participants like stage manager, director, etc.
  - Create consistency in the warm-up activity and structure of the class
  - Celebrate mistakes and create a safe space for participants to stumble and learn
  - Have fun!!

## Appendix A - Vocal Warm-ups

### Stretching

- o Light stretching of the neck and shoulders

- Knod your head yes and no, look side to side and up and down
  - Pretend you are a turtle and hide in your shell by reaching your shoulders to your ears, then relaxing your shoulders
- Shake out your arms and legs
  - Shake out game - shake each limb for 8, then 7, and down to 1
- Talk about posture

### Breathing

- Ask the class to take a relaxed breath
  - Imagine you are smelling fresh baked cookies
  - Imagine filling up an inner-tube around your waist
- Hiss like a snake
  - SSSSSSS - for 4, 6, 8 counts
  - Remind participants to keep the sound consistent
  - Add a snake movement with your hands
- Yawning is a great way to get the feeling of a deep breath and also relaxes the throat

### Sounds

- Laughing from the belly is a great way to introduce "support"
  - Ha ha ha - Laughing higher and lower on pitch
- Humming or lip buzzing
  - Not everyone can do lip buzzes - repeated "bbbbbbbbbb" (bub sounds)
  - Humming is a great alternative - repeated "mmmmmmmm"
  - You can do these exercises on any pitch or on a five note scale  
(Do, re, mi, fa, so, fa, mi re, do)
- Meow
  - Meow like a cat on So, fa, mi, re, do
- Fi, fy, fo, fum
  - Encourage students to stamp their feet on each syllable (all on one note then raise the pitch - Do, do, do, do, re, re, re, re, etc.)

- o I love to sing la,la,la,la,la,la,la,la,la (Do----, so, mi, do---, do, re, mi, fa, so, fa, mi re, do) - the "la" should be quick and agile

## Warm-Up Activities

Activity	Description
Name Game with Actions	Have each participant say their name and do an action with it. Then have all children in the room repeat the action and say that name. Continue this until all participants' names have been learned.
One Word Story	Have participants stand in a circle. They are to tell a story, but each participant can only say one word. Go around the circle having them each say one word to continue the story. Possibly suggest a theme or storyline they need to follow.
Statue	The leader is in a museum and all the participants are the statues. The participants must stand extremely still, and when the leader is not looking at them, quickly change their position. If the leader sees the changing positions they become the leader and the leader becomes a statue.
This is a Scarf, but it's not really a scarf	Have the group stand in a circle. The first person holding the scarf says "This is a scarf, but it

	<p>isn't a scarf, it is a cape" with an action. They then hand off the scarf to the next person and they repeat the saying but then change the meaning of the object.</p>
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## Appendix B: Glossary of Opera Terms

**Aria:** a song for one singer, which is typically reflective in nature

**Baritone:** the middle range male voice type

**Chorus:** a group of singers who act and sing together as a unit.

**Composer:** an artist who writes the music.

**Conductor:** the musical director of the orchestra, chorus and soloists.

**Director:** a person who guides the soloists and chorus to express the story dramatically

**Librettist:** the artist who writes the libretto

**Libretto:** the words of the opera

**Mezzo-soprano:** the middle range female voice type

**Orchestra:** a group of instrumentalists, combined with strings, woodwinds, brass, and percussion sections

**Recitative:** a type of singing unique to opera and is when words are delivered in a way that imitates speech

**Soprano:** the highest female voice type

**Tenor:** the highest male voice type





Activity Example: Match the Term to the Definition

A. The words of the opera	___ Chorus
B. A song for one singer	___ Librettist
C. The artist who writes the libretto	___ Recitative
D. The highest female voice type	___ Tenor
E. A person who guides the soloists and chorus on staging and dramatic ideas	___ Orchestra
F. Is the musical director of the orchestra, chorus and soloists	___ Aria
G. The highest male voice type	___ Mezzo-Soprano
H. A group of singers who act and sing together as a unit	___ Libretto
I. The person who writes the music	___ Conductor
J: The middle range male voice type	___ Soprano
K: A type of singing unique to opera that imitates speech	___ Composer
L: The middle range female voice type	___ Baritone

Appendix C: Lesson Plan Template

[Lesson Title]

Date:

Teacher:  
or class):

Grade (age range

Subject/Standard(s) :	
Objectives:	
Lesson Outline:	
Materials:	Vocabulary:  See Appendix B - Glossary
Assessment:	
Notes:	


