

Operatunities

Grade Level or Special Area: Music – Grade 8

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Length of Unit: 8 Forty-Five Minute Lessons

I. ABSTRACT

During this unit students are introduced to opera vocabulary and definitions. Students will gain an increased knowledge of opera history. Students will listen to, describe and evaluate selections from various operas. Students will have an opportunity to create, perform and evaluate an opera of their own creation.

II. OVERVIEW

A. Concept Objectives

1. Learn to play instruments alone or with others
2. Learn to read and notate music
3. Develop an appreciation for composing
4. Develop an understanding of opera
5. Develop an appreciation of opera and its connection to various historical and cultural traditions

B. Content from the *Core Knowledge Sequence*

1. 8th Grade Music: Vocal Music
 - a. Opera
 - i. Terms: overture, solo, duet, trio, quartet, chorus, aria, recitative
 - ii. Composers and works: Gioacchino Rossini, from *The Barber of Seville*: Overture and “Largo al Factotum.
 - iii. Composers and works: Guiseppe Verdi, from *Rigoletto*: aria, “Questo o quella”; duet, “Figlia!..Mio padre!; aria, “La donna e’ mobile”; quartet, “Bella figlia dellamore”
2. 8th Grade Music: Elements of Music
 - a. Vocal ranges: soprano, mezzo-soprano, alto; tenor, baritone, bass
 - b. Recognize introduction, interlude, and coda in musical selections
 - c. Recognize them and variations
 - d. Understand many musical notations and terms

C. Skill Objectives

1. Students will improve their understanding of the history of opera.
2. Students will create a Venn diagram showing the difference and similarities between Opera and popular music.
3. Students will analyze and describe the peculiarities of opera music.
4. Students will develop an understanding of vocal ranges.
5. Students will be able to identify Rossini and Verdi as opera composers.
6. Students will create and perform a one-act opera.
7. Students will learn various opera vocabulary and definitions.
8. Students will learn that it takes a variety of jobs to put on an opera.
9. Students will keep a steady beat while listening to music.
10. Students will sing with or without accompaniment.
11. Students will be able to identify soprano, alto, tenor, and bass voicing.
12. Students will learn to play a rhythmic accompaniment to an operatic composition.

III. BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

- A. For Teachers
 - 1. Ganeri, Anita and Barber, Nicola. *The Young Person's Guide to the Opera*
 - 2. Taverna, Alessandro. *Masters of Music Opera*.
- B. For Students
 - 1. Music: Classical Music: From Baroque to Romantic, p 147, 6th grade
 - 2. Music: Recognize vocal ranges: soprano, mezzo-soprano, alto; tenor, baritone, bass, p. 146, 6th grade
 - 3. Music: Sign unaccompanied, accompanied, and in unison, p. 99, 4th Grade
 - 4. Music: Sing and play simple melodies, p. 99, 4th Grade
 - 5. Music: Understand many basic notations and terms, p. 99, p. 170, 7th grade

IV. RESOURCES

- A. Flash Cards (All Lessons)
- B. CD Player (All Lessons)
- C. Rhythm Sticks (Lesson one and two)
- D. CD of Mozart's Overture to *The Marriage of Figaro* (Lesson One and two)
- E. Picture of Rossini and Verdi (Lesson two, five, six, and seven)
- F. CD of Rossini's William Tell Overture (Lesson two)
- G. CD or tape of Opera Examples (Lesson three)
- H. CD of *Beethoven's Wig 2* by Richard Perlmutter (Lesson four)
- I. CD of Verdi's *Rigoletto* (Lesson four, six and seven)
- J. Plastic Cups (Lesson four)
- K. Pencil (All Lessons)
- L. DVD Player (Lesson five and seven)
- M. DVD *Opervox* (Lesson five)
- N. CD of Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* (Lesson six)
- O. Flash Lights covered with cellophane (Lesson six)
- P. Blank Paper (Lesson seven)
- Q. DVD *Make Mine Music* (Lesson seven)
- R. Children's Book of your choice (Lesson eight)
- S. Optional: Instruments, simple Props and Costumes (Lesson eight)

V. LESSONS

Lesson One: Introduction to Opera (45 minutes)

- A. *Daily Objectives*
 - 1. Concept Objective(s)
 - a. Learn to play instruments alone or with others
 - b. Develop an understanding of opera
 - 2. Lesson Content
 - a. 8th Grade Music: Vocal Music
 - i. Opera
 - 3. Skill Objective(s)
 - a. Students will improve their understanding of the history of opera.
 - b. Students will learn various opera vocabulary and definitions.
 - c. Students will keep a steady beat while listening to music
 - d. Students will learn to play a rhythmic accompaniment to an operatic composition.
- B. *Materials*
 - 1. Flash Cards

2. Rhythm Sticks
 3. Cd of Mozart's Overture "*The Marriage of Figaro*"
 4. CD Player
 5. Appendix A – Time Line of Opera.
 6. Appendix B – Four beat accompaniment rhythms – Not included make up your own four beat rhythms
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
1. An *opera* is a play in which the characters sing their lines rather than speak them.
 2. *Opera seria* is serious opera that was popular in the seventeenth century. It is usually based on Greek or Roman myths.
 3. *Opera buffa* is comic opera that at first was used as an intermission during acts of the opera seria. They later became full-length operas. The themes are based on everyday events.
 4. In opera the *Classical* period was a style that was graceful, with believable plots and stirring music.
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
1. I begin every middle school class with the same activity each day. I have them review music flash cards. My flash cards come in different colors. Each color is a different element of music. I introduce one color at a time and when they get fast at those then I add another color. This gets them engaged quickly and they are memorizing basic musical terms and notations.
 2. Start the opera lesson with an open discussion by asking students to answer the question: What is opera? Write the answers on the classroom board. You will get answers like: it is loud, screechy, sung by fat ladies. Continue to ask the question so that they really start to think about what they know about opera.
 3. From the list on the board come up with a class definition for opera. Write it on the board and save it. Tell the students that we are going to see in the next few lessons if our definition of opera is correct.
 4. Make a time line in your classroom that you can add vocabulary and important events to. You can have students raise their hand when they think that they hear something important and then they can come forward and add it to the time line.
 5. Discuss how the first operas were performed over four hundred years ago in Italy. The operas were performed for special occasions and royal weddings. All of the operas were based on Greek or Roman myths. One of the first operas was performed in 1600 and was called Euridice. Euridice was a popular Greek legend. It was about the hero Orpheus who visits the underworld to beg Pluto to free his beloved wife, Euridice, who died from a snakebite. In order to charm Pluto, Orpheus plays his lyre beautifully and Pluto gives him permission to lead Euridice out of the underworld. In order for Orpheus to lead her out of the underworld, he is not aloud to look back at her. He cannot help himself and ends up looking back at her and loses her forever. The play was originally performed for the marriage of King Henry IV and Maria de Medici. The composer changed the ending so that it would end happily.
 6. By the late 1600's opera begins to spread to other countries in Europe. Italian opera was the rage of its time. The two leading opera styles were opera seria (serious opera) and opera buffa (comic opera). Opera seria were stories based on Greek and Roman mythology. They were known for their spectacular stage effects and for brilliant singing required from performers. Opera buffa began as short musical sketches performed between the acts of opera seria. The first opera

buffa was performed in 1733. Opera buffa was different from opera seria because it used situations and characters from everyday life. They were comic and light.

7. 1750 to 1820 is known as the Classical period. Classical Opera was very popular during this time period. Audiences had begun to tire of serious opera. They wanted to hear performances sung in their own language. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was considered one of the greatest classical opera composers. Mozart wrote his first opera in 1768 when he was just twelve years old. Mozart's operas have brilliant music, witty characters, and stirring themes of love, loyalty, and revenge. They are still as popular with audiences today as when they were first performed.
8. Pass out rhythm sticks to each student. Have the students warm up by keeping a steady beat to the music. Post about six different four beat rhythm cards on the board. Play Overture to "*The Marriage of Figaro*." Use a pointer to point to various rhythm cards and have the student's play the rhythm sticks while listening to the cd. Encourage the students to match the dynamics of the song.

E. *Assessment/Evaluation*

1. As the students leave the room have them each tell you something that they learned about opera.
2. Record which students are able to keep a steady beat and read rhythmic notations?

Lesson Two: Opera Composers (45 minutes)

A. *Daily Objectives*

1. Concept Objective(s)
 - a. Learn to play instruments alone or with others
 - b. Learn to read and notate music
 - c. Develop an appreciation of opera and its connection to various historical and cultural traditions
2. Lesson Content
 - a. 8th Grade Music: Vocal Music
 - i. Opera
 - b. 8th Grade Music: Elements of Music
 - i. Recognize a steady beat and play a steady beat
3. Skill Objective(s)
 - a. Students will improve their understanding of the history of opera.
 - b. Students will be able to identify Rossini and Verdi as opera composers.
 - c. Students will learn various opera vocabulary and definitions.
 - d. Students will learn that it takes many different professionals to put on an opera.
 - e. Students will keep a steady beat while listening to music.
 - f. Students will play a rhythmic accompaniment to an opera composition.

B. *Materials*

1. Flash Cards
2. CD - music of Mozart, *The Marriage of Figaro*
3. CD player
4. Rhythm Sticks
5. Picture of Rossini and Verdi
6. Appendix C – Themed Melodies
7. Appendix D – Football vs. Opera

8. Cd – Rossini’s *William Tell Overture*
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
1. *Grand opera* was popular in the nineteenth century. These operas were spectacular events with dramatic music, exotic stage sets, and usually a huge cast of singers, and even animals onstage.
 2. *Leitmotifs* are short passages of music that identify a particular character, place or idea. Wagner used leitmotifs frequently, particularly in the Ring cycle.
 3. A *librettist* is a person who writes the words or story of an opera.
 4. *Aristocrats* are the wealthy upper class of society.
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
1. Flash cards.
 2. Review *The Marriage of Figaro* overture with rhythm sticks. You can add different rhythm cards or have the students write their own four beat patterns. Choose one of the students to be the conductor and come up and point to the different rhythms. You can break the class into two groups and choose two conductors. Each group would follow their appointed conductor. If a conductor stops pointing then that group would stop playing until the conductor start pointing again.
 3. Add to your class time line by continuing with the history of opera. Grand opera was at its height by the mid 1800’s. Grand opera was for the aristocrats as well as the ordinary people. Rossini and Verdi were popular composers of the Romantic grand opera style.
 4. Rossini was born in Italy in 1792 and died in France in 1868. He was born to a musical family. His mother was a singer and his father a horn player. His father was empathetic towards the French and welcomed Napoleon’s army into Italy. In 1796 Austrian’s restored the old regime and Rossini’s father was thrown in jail. His mother was forced to move and make a living by singing. Rossini’s father was released from jail and joined them but now both had to work to make ends meet. Rossini wrote over 30 operas and was so successful that he semi retired at the age of 32 never to write another opera. Rossini became a gourmet chef after he retired. (Hang up a picture of Rossini on the time line.)
 5. Giuseppe Verdi lived from 1813 – 1901 and wrote some of the greatest operas of all. Verdi tried to join the Conservatory of Music in Milan but was rejected because they felt he was too old. He took private lessons in composition and decided that he wanted to compose operas. He married Margherita Barezzi and she along with their two young children died. This was so devastating for him that he almost quite composing. His masterpieces included *Rigoletto*, *Il trovatore*, and *La traviata*. Verdi became so famous that the ruler of Egypt asked him to write a new opera for the opening of an opera house in Cairo. Verdi wrote *Aida* for the special occasion. (Hang up a picture of Verdi on the time line.)
 6. Richard Wagner born in 1813 and died in 1883 was one of the great opera composers. He called his operas music dramas and believed that the music, singing, acting, and staging were equally important. He wrote an opera called *The Ring*, which lasts for over fifteen hours. The story line of *The Ring* may sound somewhat like a movie you may have seen. Three water nymphs guard a hoard of gold on the bottom of the Rhine River. Alberich, a Nibelung dwarf, steals the gold and makes a ring from it. Whoever wears the ring has magical powers and will rule the world. The ring changes hands many times, until finally it causes the downfall of gods, whose greed for power destroys them. What movie does that remind you of? (*Lord of the Rings*.) Wagner’s used motifs in his

opera. Motifs are themes that are used to identify different characters or feelings. For example what do you think of when I sing the following musical themes? Sing or play the melodies in Appendix C and see if the students can guess what character or item the melody belongs to.

7. These melodies remind you of certain things because you have heard them many times. In Wagner's operas he would create these leitmotifs to identify different characters such as the giant, the ring, or feelings of hate and greed. Every time one of these elements appears, its particular motif is played. You may want to ask students if they have motifs that they want the class to guess.
8. Have an open discussion of what jobs it takes to put on an opera. Write the list on the board. Costumes, singers, producers, directors, lighting, make-up, hair dresser, props, set builder, stage manager, ticket sells, advertisement, composers, librettists, conductor, orchestra etc. It takes many people to put on an opera. Choose one of the jobs that you would be interested in. Why would you choose that job? Have a few of the students share their thoughts.
9. Did you know that putting on an opera is a lot like playing football? It takes many different jobs to have a successful football team. Hand out work sheet (Appendix D) and have the students complete it to discover how opera and football are similar.
10. For the closing of class turn on the end of the William Tell Overture and have them do football exercises to the Long Ranger Theme (such as running in place with knees high, jumping jacks, sit ups, push ups etc.).

E. *Assessment/Evaluation*

1. Correct football papers to see if students understand concept of how opera and football jobs are similar.

Lesson Three: Opera Lingo (45 minutes)

A. *Daily Objectives*

1. Concept Objective(s)
 - a. Develop an understanding of opera
 - b. Develop an appreciation of opera and its connection to various historical and cultural traditions
2. Lesson Content
 - a. 8th Grade Music: Vocal Music
 - i. Opera
 - b. 8th Grade Music: Elements of Music
 - i. Understand many musical notations and terms
3. Skill Objective(s)
 - a. Students will improve their understanding of the history of Opera.
 - b. Students will learn various opera vocabulary and definitions.

B. *Materials*

1. CD or tape player
2. CD or tape or opera examples
3. Appendix E – Blank Vocabulary Sheet
4. Appendix F – Vocabulary Definitions
5. Appendix G – Vocabulary Definition Quiz (Example)

C. *Key Vocabulary*

1. *Metropolitan Opera House* is a historical building that opened in 1883. It is where operas are performed.

2. *Modern Opera* was created in the twentieth century. They have experimental plots such as nonsense stories, and different types of musical sounds and styles, like jazz, or cabaret music.
3. *Nationalistic opera* is a style developed by composers at the beginning of the twentieth century to express pride in the music of their country. These operas were often based on traditional folk stories, and included national folk tunes and folk instruments.
4. *Phonograph*

D. *Procedures/Activities*

1. Flash Cards
2. What kind of music are the following selections? Play a variety of opera selections taken from commercials, movies and rock operas. All of the selections should be opera examples. You can have them write down what kind of music they think it is or have them respond by raising their hands. Do not give them the answers till the very end that all of the examples are from operas.
3. Continue time line for opera: The late 1800's saw a change in composers of opera. Composers were now using story lines, folk songs and folk instruments from their native countries. These operas became known as nationalist operas.
4. We call the operas of the twentieth century Modern Opera. The modern opera composers moved away from romantic styles and grand opera. The experimented with new musical sounds such as jazz. They used new subjects for their plots such as nonsense stories or real-life events from modern history.
5. The first opera performed in America was Rossini's, *The Barber of Seville* in 1825 in New York. Opera was more for the high society at the beginning. The opening of the Metropolitan Opera House in 1883 helped strengthen opera in America. The invention of the phonograph also helped in bringing the stars of the Met to every household.
6. We have learned much about the history of opera and now we are going to learn about the vocabulary used in opera circles. Break the class up into groups of about 4 or 5. Hand out one copy of Appendix E to each group. Tell them that they are going to be tested on the vocabulary words the next class period. Tell them that they are to make up deceptive definitions to try and fool their classmates. Explain to the class that you will be taking their answers and making a quiz from them. Have the groups choose a scribe to write down definitions. The kids love this activity. They come up with really fun definitions. By the next lesson you will have to compile a quiz from the various group's definitions. Make sure that you include the correct answer for each word.

E. *Assessment/Evaluation*

1. Have each student evaluate on a scale of one to five how well they worked with the group in order to come up with definitions. Have them write their number by their name on the sheet.

Lesson Four: Identifying Vocal Ranges (45 minutes)

A. *Daily Objectives*

1. Concept Objective(s)
 - a. Learn to play an instrument alone or with others
 - b. Develop an understanding of opera

2. Lesson Content
 - a. 8th Grade Music: Vocal Music
 - i. Opera
 - a) Composer and works: Guiseppe Verdi, from *Rigoletto*
 - c. 8th Grade Music: Elements of Music
 - i. Understand many musical notations and terms
 3. Skill Objective(s)
 - a. Students will create a Venn diagram showing the difference and similarities between opera and popular music.
 - b. Student will analyze and describe the peculiarities of opera music.
 - c. Students will develop an understanding of the vocal ranges and identify their vocal range.
 - d. Students will learn various opera vocabulary and definitions.
 - e. Students will keep a steady beat while listening to music.
 - f. Students will be able to identify soprano, alto, tenor, and bass voicing.
- B. *Materials*
1. Flash Cards
 2. CD player
 3. Cd Beethoven's Wig track 2
 4. Cd Verdi's Rigoletto
 5. Appendix H – Cup Routine
 6. Appendix I – Vocal Range Identification
 7. Appendix J – Venn Diagram
 8. Plastic Cups
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
1. A *soprano* is the highest female part.
 2. An *alto* is the lowest female part.
 3. A *tenor* is the highest natural male part.
 4. A *bass* is the lowest male vocal part.
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
1. Flash Cards.
 2. Yesterday we broke up into groups and made up definitions for opera vocabulary. Today you will take a quiz on the vocabulary words. Three of the definitions are extracted from your papers that were turned in yesterday and one of the choices will be the correct definition. Pass out the quiz to each individual. This is not a group activity. Go over the correct answers with the students and have them correct their own papers. They get a real kick out of this. They like seeing if their answers fooled anyone. Have the students underline the correct answers.
 3. If you have the cd Beethoven's Wig 2 play track number 2. This composer takes well know melodies and puts funny lyrics to the songs. Track 2 is La donna e'mobile but he entitles it "Sing Verdi Very Loud." If you do not have this cd then you can just play the regular recording. Have the students sit in a circle and execute the cup routine. Directions are included in appendix H.
 4. The following song is also a number from Verdi's Rigoletto. It is a duet. A duet it where two voices sing in the same song. The two voices you will hear are Rigoletto who sings Baritone, which is not as low as bass nor as high as tenor, and his daughter Gilda, whom sings soprano. When you hear the baritone voice the boys will stand up, when you hear the soprano the girls will stand up. Play Figlia Mio padre from *Rigoletto*.

5. In the last few numbers you have heard examples of various vocal singing types. Define vocal ranges. Play examples of SATB. I have a wide variety of musical selections. They are not all opera examples. Have the students touch their head for soprano, chest for alto, knees for tenor, and toes for bass.
 6. Each of you has a voice and today we are going to categorize your vocal range. Your voice range can change throughout your life. As you grow and mature your voice changes. Illness, abusing your voice, and exercising your voice can change your range. I always take a moment to tell them how to care for their voice by not yelling, drinking lots of water, and getting rest.
 7. Do some vocalizations with the students to warm up their voices. Humming is the best way to start out vocalization. I also do sirens starting on an ahh and slide from lowest to highest note or from highest to lowest note. Students also enjoy the roller coaster. I take my finger and make designs in the air and they have to follow my finger. The higher it goes the higher the sound. The roller coaster can also change speeds.
 8. Hand out two papers to the students. One is their vocal range paper and one is a Venn diagram that they can fill out. The Venn diagram is comparing and contrasting opera music with popular music of today. (Appendix I and J)
 9. While the students fill out the Venn diagram take small groups of students and have them vocalize to find their lowest and highest note. Write their range on the paper and have them figure out what vocal part they are most likely to fall under at this time.
 10. Depending on how much time is left you can make some general statements about the class's vocal ranges and/or go over the Venn diagram and discuss what the similarities and differences of popular music and opera.
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
1. Evaluate the Venn diagram to see if students are expressing their answers with correct musical terms.

Lesson Five: The Barber of Seville (45 minutes)

- A. *Daily Objectives*
1. Concept Objective(s)
 - a. Develop an appreciation of opera and its connection to various historical and cultural traditions
 2. Lesson Content
 - a. 8th Grade Music: Vocal Music
 - i. Opera
 - a) Composers and works: Gioacchino Rossini, from The Barber of Seville
 3. Skill Objective(s)
 - a. Students will be able to identify Rossini and Verdi as an opera composer.
- B. *Materials*
1. Appendix K – Synopsis of the Barber of Seville
 2. DVD – Opervox
 3. DVD player
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
1. Give a synopsis of The Barber of Seville. The Barber of Seville is the fifth most performed opera in North America. The score for the Barber of Seville was

- written in just under three weeks. Have the students draw a map of characters as you introduce each of the characters. (Appendix K)
2. At this time I show the *Operavox* cartoon version of “The Barber of Seville.” I purchased this from Amazon.com.
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
Check the map to make sure that it includes all the main characters of the Barber of Seville.

Lesson Six: The Barber of Seville Continued (45 minutes)

- A. *Daily Objectives*
1. Concept Objective(s)
 - a. Develop an understanding of opera
 - b. Develop an appreciation of opera and its connection to various historical and cultural traditions
 2. Lesson Content
 - a. 8th Grade Music: Vocal Music
 - i. Opera
 - a) Composers and works: Gioacchino Rossini, from *The Barber of Seville*:
 - b. 8th Grade Music: Elements of Music
 - a) Recognize introduction, interlude, and coda.
 3. Skill Objective(s)
 - a. Students will be able to identify Rossini and Verdi as opera composers.
- B. *Materials*
1. Appendix L – Opera Summary
 2. Cd Player
 3. Cd – Rossini’s *The Barber of Seville*
 4. Four or five flash lights
 5. Four or Five different colors of cellophane
 6. Appendix M – Talent Judge Sheet
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
1. An *overture* is a piece of orchestral music played at the beginning of an opera or ballet.
 2. *Introduction* is a short preliminary passage in a larger work.
 3. *Interlude* is a short piece inserted between the parts of a longer composition.
 4. A *Coda* is the concluding passage of a movement or composition.
 5. *Plagiarism* is copying someone else’s work and claiming it as your own.
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
1. Flash Cards
 2. If needed finish watching *The Barber of Seville*.
 3. Fill out Opera Summary sheet. (Appendix L)
 4. Define overture, interlude and coda.
 5. The overture for *The Barber of Seville* introduces the opera. It gets the audience ready emotionally and mentally. Rossini was the king of plagiarism but he mostly plagiarized from his own compositions. The overture for *The Barber of Seville* was taken from another one of Rossini’s compositions.
 6. Play the overture and have the students listen for instrumentation and dynamics. Watch for students that are listening and reacting to the music. Choose four to five attentive students to be part of your light show. Take four to five flashlights and put different colored cellophane on each of the flashlights.

Assign each colored flashlight an instrument. I broke mine into the following: violin, other strings, woodwinds, French horn, and cymbal. The cymbal is not involved until mainly the end of the overture. Turn off the lights and have the students put on a light show for the other students. When their instrument is playing, their light is moving around. If the instruments are playing the same rhythm then they will move together. If the instrument is playing loud then big movements are appropriate. If the instrument is playing staccato then the light will make jerky movements. The students love this activity but choose students that try to do what the music is dictating.

7. Tell the students that for our school talent show we have only one more opening for a musical number. You have assigned them to decide which of the following numbers will be included and which one will be cut. Introduce the two numbers. Both are arias from popular operas. The first is Largo al factum from the popular *The Barber of Seville* and the second selection is La Donna e' mobile from the ever popular *Rigoletto*.
 8. Play the two selections and have them fill out the talent judge sheets included in Appendix M.
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
1. Evaluate student's completion of the opera summary sheet and the talent judge sheets to see if they used correct vocabulary and musical insight.

Lesson Seven: Verdi's Rigoletto (45 minutes)

- A. *Daily Objectives*
1. Concept Objective(s)
 - a. Develop an understanding of opera
 2. Lesson Content
 - a. 8th Grade: Vocal Music
 - i. Opera
 - a) Composers and works: Guiseppe Verdi, from *Rigoletto*
 3. Skill Objective(s)
 - a. Students will analyze and describe the peculiarities of opera music.
 - b. Students will be able to identify Rossini and Verdi as opera composers.
 - c. Students will learn various opera vocabulary and definitions.
- B. *Materials*
1. Paper and pencils
 2. CD player
 3. CD of Verdi's Rigoletto
 4. DVD of Make Mine Music
 5. DVD player
 6. Appendix K
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
1. A *solo* is a composition or passage for a single instrument or voice. Accompanied or not accompanied.
 2. A *duet* is a composition or passage for two instruments or voices. Accompanied or not accompanied.
 3. A *trio* is a composition or passage for three instruments or voices. Accompanied or not accompanied.
 4. A *quartet* is a composition or passage for four instruments or voices. Accompanied or not accompanied.

5. *Chorus* is a composition written usually for four or more parts with many singers on each part.
 6. An *aria* is a sung solo that expresses a character's feelings.
 7. A *recitative* is the part of the text that tells the audience about the plot and moves the action on. It is sung in a speech like way.
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
1. Flash cards.
 2. Define solo, duet, trio, quartet, chorus, aria, and recitative.
 3. Point to Verdi's picture on the time line in front of the class. Verdi wrote many operas and one of his most famous operas is *Rigoletto*. Verdi was so secretive about the music that he had all the singers sign contracts that they would not hum or practice the music outside of rehearsal. They were not allowed to take the music home. This caused the performers much anxiety.
 4. Give a synopsis of *Rigoletto*. (Appendix K) The Opervox DVD has *Rigoletto* included on it but DO NOT show it to your class. It IS NOT appropriate.
 5. As you summarize *Rigoletto* have the students fold an 8 1/2 x 11 sheet of paper into four equal parts. In the upper left hand corner have them write aria, "Questo o quella". In the upper right hand corner have them write duet, "Figlia Mio padre". In the lower left hand corner have them write aria, "La Donna e mobile". And in the last square have them write quartet, "Bella Figlia dell amore." As you tell the summary of the story stop at appropriate times to play the following songs. Have them draw picture of the story line as they listen to the songs. Example: The quartet song should show four separate characters.
 6. If time watch the fun cartoon called "The Whale Who Wanted to Sing at the Met." It is a Disney cartoon about a whale that sings opera. It is a great example of an opera and is enjoyed by the students. It is included in a DVD called *Make Mine Music* and I purchased it from Music in Motion.
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
1. Evaluate the student's ability to transfer the definition of aria, quartet and duet on the paper and ability to display what is happening in the opera.

Lesson Eight: Creating an Opera (45 minutes)

- A. *Daily Objectives*
1. Concept Objective(s)
 - a. Learn to play an instrument alone or with others
 - b. Develop an appreciation for composing
 2. Lesson Content
 - a. 8th Grade: Vocal Music
 - i. Opera
 3. Skill Objective(s)
 - a. Students will create and perform a simple one-act opera.
 - b. Students will sing with accompaniment or will sing unaccompanied.
 - c. Students will learn that it takes many different professionals to put on an opera.
- B. *Materials*
1. Appendix N – Performance Reflection
 2. Children's Book
 3. Simple Props and costumes
 4. Instruments
- C. *Key Vocabulary*

1. A *musician* is one who composes, conducts, or plays music.
2. *Librettist* is the author of the words that are going to be set to music in an opera.
3. The *Choreographer* is a person who plans out or oversees the movement of a composition.
4. The *Director* supervises controls and manages the project.
5. *Singer* is the one who sings.

D. *Procedures/Activities*

1. Select an appropriate children's book to be your inspiration for your class opera. I use *Three Billy Goats Gruff* or *The Emperor's New Clothes*.
2. Read the selected story to the students. Have the students jot down any words, phrases, or events that would be good to present in an opera of the story and share observations with the class. Record the observations on the board.
3. Invite a student to improvise a melody to sing one of the words or phrases. Have the class help you come up with a movement to go along with the melody. Have the whole class repeat the tune and movement. Divide the class into groups of five. Point to each group and have them perform the tune and movement. Conduct them like an orchestra conductor might. They have to copy what your hands do.
4. Select six of the most important words, phrases, or events to retell the story. Arrange the phrases into sequential order to retell the story. Divide the class into five or six groups of about five people and have them choose one of the phrases. Have the students choose between the following jobs: musician, librettist, choreographer, director, and singer.

Musician: plays the tune when the groups perform, may also sing

Librettist: writes down the assigned word, phrase, or event and all the other words the group comes up with; prepares good copy for the teacher; may also sing

Choreographer: comes up with the movements for the group to perform, may also sing

Director: keeps all artists on track; makes final decision in a disagreement; get all members to sign the libretto; may also sing

Singer: performs the songs alone or with others

5. Review the vocabulary word recitative with the groups. Their job is to create a recitative using the phrase that they choose to tell the group's part of the story. They are to move the story forward so that the next group can easily follow. They can make up their own tune or use well-known melodies. Many Core Knowledge songs work well.
6. Have the students perform their recitatives in sequential order to tell the story. If possible video tape the production so that they can see it themselves. Have them fill out the Performance Reflection Questions. (Appendix N)
7. I have found that having the students perform the operas with puppets is very helpful. Some of the students are more willing to perform if their peers can not see them. They get into character more.

E. *Assessment/Evaluation*

1. Grade the students on their participation in the opera performance.

Extended Lessons could include the following:

- a. Watching the video *Rossini's Ghost*. It is a well-done video and gives an insight to Rossini's life and the time period that he lived in.
- d. The Florida Opera House offers *Opera Fun Time Books*. They are not very expensive. The books have many activities in them and I love to have the students act out the simplified scripts of various operas. The booklets also have many other useful activities and worksheets. The opera booklets availability changes based on what operas they have been performing and what they have left over from previous seasons. The phone number for the Florida Opera house is 1-800-741-1010.
- e. *The Telephone* by Menotti is also a good DVD for the students to watch.

VI. CULMINATING ACTIVITY

- A. The culminating activity could include having each of the classes perform their opera for each other.
- B. The best culminating activity would be to have a local opera company visit the school and do their presentation or go and see an opera. Check with local colleges and opera companies for production information.

VII. HANDOUTS/WORKSHEETS

- A. Appendix A: Time Line for Opera
- B. Appendix B: Rhythms Cards
- C. Appendix C: Melodies
- D. Appendix D: Football vs. Opera
- E. Appendix E: Opera Vocabulary
- F. Appendix F: Opera Vocabulary Definitions
- G. Appendix G: Example of Opera Vocabulary Quiz
- H. Appendix H: Cup Routine
- I. Appendix I: Vocal Range Identification
- J. Appendix J: Venn Diagram
- K. Appendix K: Synopsis of Operas
- L. Appendix L: Opera Summary Worksheet
- M. Appendix M: Talent Judge Evaluation
- N. Appendix N: Opera Performers Reflection

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Appendix A

Time Line for Opera

1600's

First operas initially for royalty
Subject matter was Greek or Roman myths
“Euridice” was the first known opera performed
It was performed for King Henry IV and Maria de Medici

Late 1600's

Others countries besides Italy get involved
Opera seria and opera buffa

1733

First full length opera buffa

1750 to 1820

Classical Opera
Opera was composed in many different languages
Mozart was the master Classical Opera composer

1800's

Grand Opera
1825 First opera performed in America
Gioacchino Rossini
Guiseppe Verdi
Richard Wagner

Late 1800's

Nationalistic Opera
1883 Metropolitan Opera House in New York City opens

1900's

Modern Opera
Nonsense stories
Real life events

Appendix B

Rhythm Cards

Not included: You can have your students make up their own four beat rhythms or include rhythm that you are working on in class.

Appendix C

Melodies

Not included because of copy rights

Appendix D

Football vs. Opera

OPERA

FOOTBALL

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| 1. Intermission | 1. _____ |
| 2. Dressing Rooms | 2. _____ |
| 3. Concert Hall | 3. _____ |
| 4. Daily Practice | 4. _____ |
| 5. Props | 5. _____ |
| 6. Stage Manager | 6. _____ |
| 7. Opera Score | 7. _____ |
| 8. Director | 8. _____ |
| 9. Costumes | 9. _____ |
| 10. Stage | 10. _____ |
| 11. Rehearsal | 11. _____ |
| 12. Company | 12. _____ |
| 13. Actor/ Singers | 13. _____ |
| 14. Acts | 14. _____ |
| 15. Vocal Exercises | 15. _____ |
| 16. Audience | 16. _____ |
| 17. Season Repertoire | 17. _____ |

Halftime

Team

Football Field

Workout

Referee

Players

Season Schedule

Scrimmage

Fans

Coach

Uniforms

Equipment

Stadium

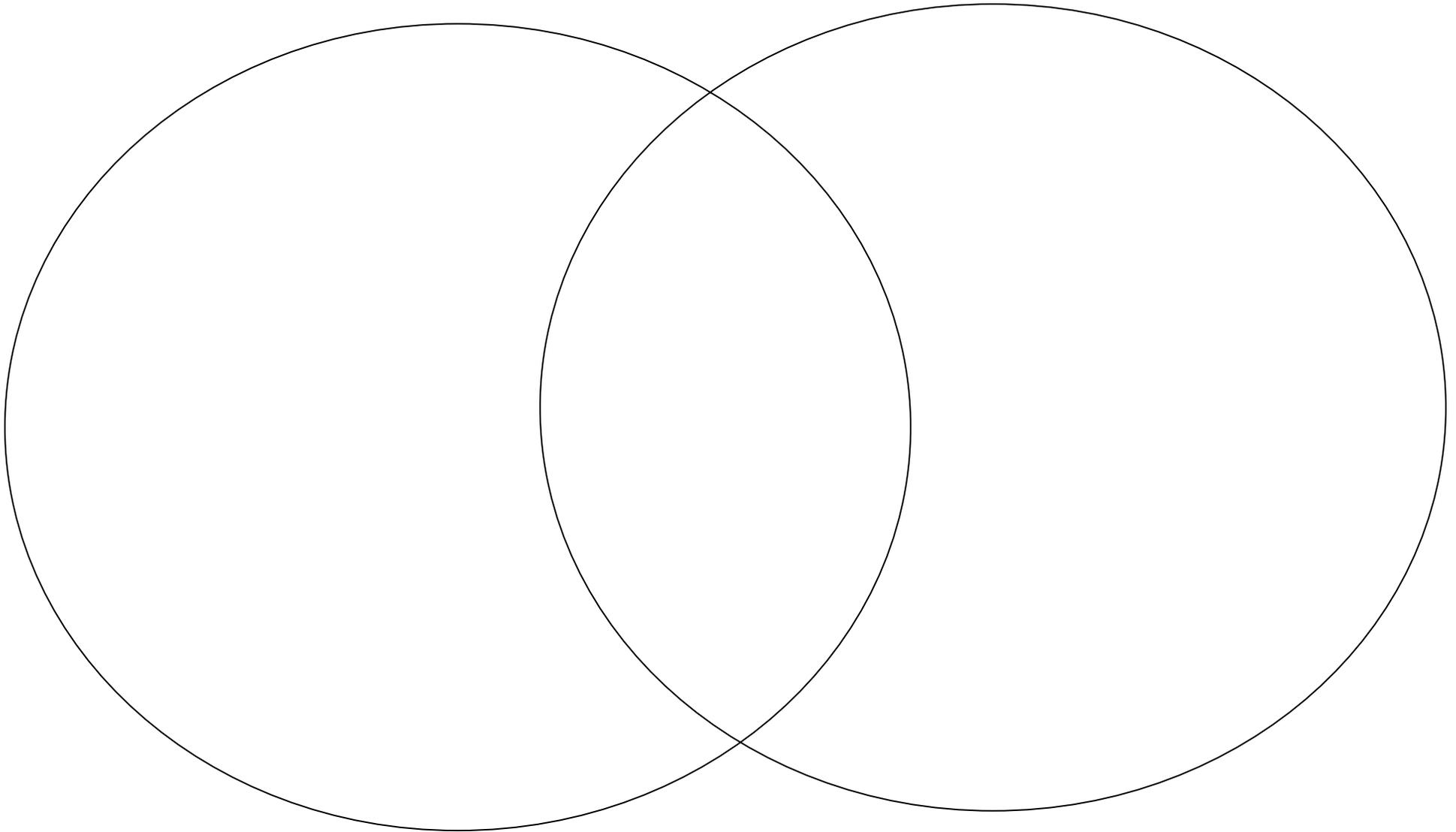
Play Book

Exercises

Locker Room

Football Field

Appendix J
Opera vs. Modern Music



Appendix E

Opera Vocabulary

Leitmotif

Libretto

Recitative

Prop

Opera buffa

Opera seria

Nationalistic opera

Modern opera

Aria

Basso profundo

Belcanto

Castrati

Falsetto

Overture

Solo

Duet

Quartet

Chorus

Principal

Appendix F

Opera Vocabulary Definitions

Leitmotif – A short passage of music that identifies a particular character, place, or idea. These pieces, or themes, are repeated as reminders throughout the opera.

Libretto – The words or story of an opera, written by a librettist.

Recitative – The part of the text that tells the audience about the plot and moves the action on. It is sung in a speech like way.

Prop – An item required onstage to assist singers or actors.

Opera buffa – Meaning “comic opera” in Italian, these began as short comic acts performed during a long opera seria. Later they became complete operas, based on more everyday, comic events.

Opera seria – Meaning “serious opera” in Italian, this type of opera was popular in the seventeenth century. Usually based on Greek or Roman legends, they were dramatic, often complicated, and long.

Nationalistic opera – A style developed by composers at the beginning of the twentieth century to express pride in the music of their country. These operas were often based on traditional folk stories, and included national folk tunes and folk instruments.

Modern opera – Operas created in the twentieth century. They have “experimental” plots such as nonsense stories, and different types of musical sounds and styles, like jazz, or cabaret music.

Aria – A sung solo that expresses a character’s feelings.

Basso profundo – A very deep male voice, lower than a normal bass.

Belcanto – Meaning “beautiful singing” in Italian, this style of singing emphasized the quality of tone, range, and an ability to sing high notes without strain.

Castrati – The male singer who took the part of a woman in seventeenth century Italian operas. Castrati were greatly admired for the melodious and very high singing voices.

Falsetto – A male voice used to reach a higher pitch than usual. Also, a style of singing used by tenors for notes that lie above the normal range, sometimes for comic effect.

Overture – A piece of orchestral music played at the beginning of an opera or ballet.

Solo – to perform alone.

Duet – A piece for two instruments or voices

Quartet – A piece for four instruments or voices

Chorus – A group of singers

Principal – A leading role in an opera.

Appendix G

Opera Vocabulary Definition Quiz (example)

1. Leitmotif
 - a. An instrument used in the opera
 - b. Pastor
 - c. A passage that identifies a character
 - d. A prompt from the stage technician

2. Libretto
 - a. An opera library
 - b. Liberal opera
 - c. A place to work or study
 - d. Written by a librettist

3. Recitative
 - a. Opera that repeats the words
 - b. Sung in a speech like way
 - c. A sensitive person
 - d. A type of dress rehearsal

4. Prop
 - a. An item required on stage
 - b. A puppet
 - c. Plot of the opera
 - d. Something to help the performance

5. Operetta
 - a. Small opera
 - b. Comic style opera
 - c. Main opera singer
 - d. A girl opera star

6. Opera buffa
 - a. A buffet at the back of the stage
 - b. A buff opera singer
 - c. Comic opera
 - d. A child actor

Appendix H

Cup Routine

Directions: Have the students sit in a circle with each student holding a cup in front of them. They will have to sit cross-legged. Count off the introduction and then have all of them start the twelve beat pattern. On the last beat they will pass the cup to the person to their right and pick up the cup that was just delivered to the left of them.

- X – Hit the bottom of the cup on the floor
- O – Turn the cup over and hit the top of the cup on the floor
- C - Clap the top of the cup against your open left palm
- S - Clap the bottom of the cup against your open left palm
- R - Pass the cup to the right of you
- L - Pick up the cup to your left

X O X X C X X S X R L X (Repeat pattern)

Appendix I

Vocal Range Identification

Student Name _____

Range: The pitches a singer can comfortably sing makes up his/her singing range.

Soprano: A singer that sings middle C to high A

Alto: A singer that sings F below middle C to D an octave above middle C.

Tenor: A singer that sings bass clef B to G above middle C

Bass: A singer that sings low E to middle C

After your teacher listens to your voice draw in the cleff sign and the notes that you can comfortably sing. What voice part are you most likely? _____

Appendix K

Synopsis of Operas

The Barber of Seville: Almaviva is a count who sees the beautiful Rosina and desires to make her his wife. He follows her to her home town of Seville, Spain. Almaviva wants Rosina to fall in love with him but not because of his position or fortune so he pretends to be a poor student named Lindoro. Rosina is staying with Dr. Bartolo who is an old man but desires to marry Rosina for her fortune. Figaro is the barber for Dr. Bartolo. Figaro also worked for the count from years previously. When Almaviva sees Figaro he asks him to help him get into the house to see Rosina. Figaro tells the count to disguise himself as a drunken soldier to gain entrance into the house. He does this and gets to see Rosina but Dr. Bartolo becomes suspicious when he sees Almaviva hand Rosina a letter. Bartolo demands the letter but Rosina gives him the wash list. Bartolo and the Count start arguing. The noise attracts the guards. Bartolo believes that the Count has been arrested, but Almaviva mentions his true name to the officer and is released. Bartolo is astounded. The next act has Almaviva pretending to be a singing teacher and acting as substitute teacher for Basilio. Basilio is a friend of Bartolo. Bartolo reluctantly lets Almaviva in but does not trust him so he asks for Figaro to shave him while the singing lesson is given. Basilio enters and Almaviva give him money to pretend that he is sick. Bartolo figures out what is happening and sends everyone out. He instructs Basilio to go and get a wedding contract for him so that he and Rosina can be married immediately. The Count and Figaro climb up the ladder to the balcony and enter through a window. Rosina feels betrayed and heartbroken. Almaviva reveals his true identity and the two make up. While Almaviva and Rosina are enraptured by one another, Figaro urges them to leave. It is too late the ladder has been removed. Basilio and the notary enter. Basilio is given the choice of accepting a bribe and being a witness, or receiving two bullets in the head. He chooses to be a witness along with Figaro. Bartolo enters too late; Almaviva and Rosina are promised to each other.

Rigoletto: Rigoletto is the hunchbacked jester of the Duke. The Duke likes to have many women. He has just seen unknown beauty in the church and desires to possess her. Rigoletto makes fun of the husbands of the wives to whom the Duke is paying attention. He advises the Duke to get rid of them by prison or death. The husbands (noblemen) decide to take vengeance on Rigoletto. One named Count Monterone, whose daughter the Duke had dishonored curses the Duke and

Rigoletto. Rigoletto heads home and is met by a bandit names Sparafucile who offers him his services. Rigoletto goes into his house and visits with his daughter that he has been concealing from the prince. He has forbidden her to go anywhere but church. Gilda does not know what her father does for a living. When Rigoletto leaves his home the Duke enters pretending to be Gualtier Malde. The noblemen have followed Rigoletto to his home and when they see his daughter they think that she is Rigoletto's mistress. They abduct her, and when Rigoletto arrives they inform him they have abducted the Countess Ceprano. He helps them with their plan not realizing that they have his daughter. Rigoletto later realized that he has been duped and thinks of the curse. The Duke hears about the abduction and recognizes from the description that it really is Gilda. The Duke tries to find her. Rigoletto tries to find Gilda by singing. He is afraid that she will fall into the hands of the Duke. Rigoletto finds his daughter. She finds out what his profession is and feels shame. Rigoletto pledges an oath of vengeance against his master. In his anger Rigoletto goes to the house of the bandit Sparafucile. Rigoletto enters with Gilda, who has fallen in love with the prince. Rigoletto shows Gilda the Duke who is also at Sparafucile's house and with another woman. Rigoletto hires Sparafucile to murder the Duke. He also orders his daughter Gilda to dress in mans cloths and go to Verona. He tells her that he will follow after her. Gilda goes but fears an attack upon the Duke. A bad storm begins and the Duke decides to spend the night at Sparafucile's house. Gilda returns disguised as a man and hears the bandit promise his sister Maddalena that he will kill the Duke if another has not been found to take his place by midnight. Gilda loves the Duke so she offers herself as the sacrifice. Rigoletto returns with a purse of money and receives a body in a bag. He is about to cast the cask into the river, when he hears the voice of the Duke singing. Bewildered, he opens the bag and finds the body of his daughter, who for a moment revives and declares she is glad to die for her beloved Duke. As she breathes her last breath, Rigoletto exclaims in horror, "The old man's curse is fulfilled.

Appendix L

Opera Summary Worksheet

Briefly define the following drama terms:

1. Plot –
2. Setting –
3. Mood –
4. Hero/heroine –
5. Villain –

Briefly define the following musical terms:

1. Composer –
2. Lyrics –
3. Musicians –
4. Solo -
5. Chorus –

What was the plot of the opera?

Describe your favorite character.

Describe the music – was it happy or sad? What were some of the instruments that created these moods?

How did the different elements of the opera work together as a whole? Did you like it? Why or why not?

Appendix M

Talent Judge Scoring

You are critiquing the performance – not the song!

Performance #1

Song Title: _____

Listen to the complete performance once, and then rate the following with a star.

Tone – Did the performer use the correct vocal sound for the type of song?

Intonation – Was the performer on pitch?

Diction – Could you understand the words?

Balance – Was the singer too loud or too soft?

Musical Effect – Was the overall impression of the song a good one?

Total number of stars: _____

Performance #2

Song Title: _____

Listen to the complete performance once, and then rate the following with a star.

Tone – Did the performer use the correct vocal sound for the type of song?

Intonation – Was the performer on pitch?

Diction – Could you understand the words?

Balance – Was the singer too loud or too soft?

Musical Effect – Was the overall impression of the song a good one?

Total number of stars: _____

Which performer had the most stars and will be selected for our school talent show?

Appendix N

Performance Reflection

1. What are your general feelings about creating the opera?
2. If you could change or improve one thing about your role and participation, what would it be?
3. What part of the process did you enjoy the most?
4. If you could change or improve one thing about the process, what would it be?