

KENTUCKY OPERA

Proudly
Presents

LE NOZZE DI FIGARO
(The Marriage of Figaro)

Music by

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Libretto by Lorenzo da Ponte after the play
by Pierre Beaumarchais

La folle journée, ou Le Mariage de Figaro

Sung in Italian with English supertitles

Count Almaviva Baritone
Figaro, his valet Baritone
Dr. Bartolo (Countess Almaviva's former guardian). Bass
Don Basilio, a music teacher Tenor
Cherubino, a page Mezzo-soprano
Antonio, a gardener Baritone
Don Curzio, a counselor at law Tenor
Countess Almaviva Soprano
Susanna, her maid, engaged to Figaro Soprano
Marcellina, Figaro's former landlady Soprano
Barbarina, Antonio's niece Soprano

Le Nozze di Figaro (The Marriage of Figaro)

LE NOZZE DI FIGARO (The Marriage of Figaro) is the second in a trilogy of plays written by Pierre Beaumarchais. This particular story picks up where THE BARBER OF SEVILLE leaves off. The most famous of the Barber operas was written by Gioacchino Rossini 1816. However an earlier opera, written in 1783 by Paisiello, was highly inspirational to both Mozart and Rossini.

In THE BARBER OF SEVILLE, Count Almaviva has fallen in love with the ward of Don Bartolo, Rosina. Figaro, the jack-of-all-trades, assists Almaviva in winning the heart of Rosina. Bartolo had his own plans for marrying his wealthy ward, which was foiled by Figaro's plotting, resulting in Almaviva and Rosina's elopement. LE NOZZE DI FIGARO picks up after Almaviva and Rosina (now Countess Almaviva) have been married for some time.

Synopsis

The setting is Seville, Spain in 1778 at the Count's Chateau of Aguas Frescas.

Act I – A room in the castle of Count Almaviva

It is the wedding day of Figaro and Susanna. Figaro, the valet (butler) of the Count, and Susanna, the maid of the Countess, are measuring the room they have received from the Count to use as their bedroom. Susanna dislikes the room saying that it is much too close to the rooms of the Count. She then tells Figaro that the Count has been flirting with her. The Countess rings and Susanna leaves. Figaro decides that he will keep the Count from his Susanna.

Dr. Bartolo and Marcellina enter. Figaro owes money to Marcellina and has promised to marry her if he doesn't repay her. Bartolo believes this is his opportunity to get revenge on Figaro, who arranged the elopement of the Count and Rosina (the Countess) whom Bartolo had hoped to marry himself. As Bartolo exits, Susanna enters and has a brief, but unpleasant encounter with Marcellina who then leaves.

Cherubino, the Count's page, dashes in. He explains that the Count discovered him with Barbarina, the daughter of the gardener Antonio, and he will be sent away. He states that he is in love with the Countess as well as every other woman in the palace (*Non so piu*) and asks Susanna to give a song to the Countess. They hear the Count approaching, so Cherubino hides behind an armchair. The Count, thinking that he is alone with Susanna, begins flirting with her until he is interrupted by the arrival of Don Basilio, the music teacher. The Count hides behind the same chair as Cherubino, who has now moved to the other side and covered himself with a blanket. Basilio gossips about the goings-on in the castle including Cherubino's infatuation with the Countess. The Count becomes angry and reveals himself as well as discovering Cherubino. Aware that the boy has overheard his own indiscretions, he vents his anger on Cherubino

by forcing him into the army, for which he must leave immediately. Figaro arrives carrying Susanna's wedding veil and accompanied by villagers who sing the Count's praises. Figaro asks the Count to give Susanna her wedding veil as a symbol of purity. Almaviva says he would prefer to postpone the ceremony until he can celebrate the occasion appropriately. After the villagers leave, both Figaro and Susanna try to persuade the Count to allow Cherubino to stay, but to no avail. Figaro then tells Cherubino about the rigors of military life (*Non piu andrai*).

Act II— In the bedroom of the Countess

The Countess mourns her husband's lack of interest towards her (*Porgi, amor*). Susanna and Figaro enter and tell the Countess that the Count is trying to seduce Susanna. They devise a plan. The Count will be given a note that says that the Countess is having an affair. While the Count is investigating, Figaro and Susanna will be married quickly. At the same time, they will disguise Cherubino as Susanna and will arrange a secret meeting with the Count.

Cherubino arrives and begins trying on his disguise. He sings *Voi che sapete*, a love song to the Countess. His



commission falls out of his uniform and the Countess notices there is no official seal on it.

The Count arrives and Cherubino hides in the dressing rooms and Susanna hides behind a screen. The Count is suspicious (as he's just received the anonymous letter regarding the Countess' supposed infidelity). Upon hearing a noise, the Count demands to know who is hiding in the dressing room. When the Countess refuses to tell him, he compels her to accompany him to find a hammer to break down the door. Cherubino jumps out of the window leaving Susanna to take his place.

The Countess tells Almaviva that it is Cherubino who is in her dressing room. The Count demands that the door be opened, to which Susanna calmly enters the room. The Count searches for Cherubino. Finding no one, Almaviva begs for forgiveness. Antonio, the gardener, bursts in, complaining that someone has just jumped out of the window and spoiled his flowers.

Susanna and the Countess try to convince the Count that Antonio is drunk again, but it is Figaro who assumes the blame, saying that it was he who jumped from the window. Antonio produces some papers that Figaro claims were given him by Cherubino to have officially sealed. Marcellina enters with Dr. Bartolo and Basilio to demand justice. Figaro must marry Marcellina or repay his debt. The Count must investigate.

Act III—A hall in the castle

The Count reflects on the current situation when Susanna enters. She says she's prepared to meet him later this evening in the garden if he will give her the dowry he had promised. With the dowry, Susanna will be able to pay off Marcellina and marry Figaro. Susanna leaves and meets Figaro and assures him they will win their case. The Count overhears and becomes infuriated that his servants enjoy a happiness that he does not.

Figaro, Marcellina and Dr. Bartolo join the Count and his notary, Don Curzio, for the judgement; Figaro must marry Marcellina or repay his debt. Figaro protests that he needs the consent of his parents, from whom he was stolen as an infant. Marcellina realizes that Figaro is her long lost son by Dr. Bartolo. As Marcellina and Figaro embrace, it is decided that the wedding will be a double one; Marcellina will marry Dr. Bartolo and Figaro will marry Susanna.

Meanwhile, the Countess is still mourning the loss of her husband's affections. Susanna enters and tells the Countess of the outcome of Figaro's case as well as writing a note for Almaviva to wait in the pine grove. They seal the letter with a pin.

Barbarina and the disguised Cherubino along with other village girls arrive with flowers for the Countess. The Count enters with Antonio, who reveals that Cherubino was indeed the one who jumped out of the balcony window into his flower bed. The Count wants to punish Cherubino, yet Barbarina pleads that instead, Cherubino be made her husband. After all, the Count promised her "everything she wanted" in exchange for her affections. The Count agrees.

Figaro enters and the wedding march begins. At the wedding celebration, Susanna passes the note to Almaviva who pricks his finger on the pin. Figaro noticed that the Count had received a love letter and is amused by the pin prick. The Count promises a splendid entertainment for the evening.

Act IV—The garden of the castle

Figaro and Marcellina happen upon Barbarina who is search for the pin that the Count asked her to return to Susanna.

Figaro realizes that it was Susanna who sent the Count the love letter and gives Barbarina one of Marcellina's pins to find out the location of the planned tryst. Figaro complains to Marcellina about Susanna's supposed infidelity and while Marcellina tries to explain that all is not as it seems, Figaro plans revenge. Both leave.

Barbarina returns as she has a date with Cherubino but is frightened by a noise and runs into one of the pavilions. Figaro returns with Bartolo and Basilio as witnesses to his wife's infidelity. Figaro tells them to hide until he gives the signal and then Figaro moves to another part of the garden still defying the jealousy of men and not to trust women.

Marcellina, Susanna and the Countess enter. Susanna and the Countess have switched clothing. Susanna, aware that Figaro is listening, sings about her approaching happiness with her lover. The Countess (now disguised as Susanna) awaits the planned tryst with the Count, however Cherubino happens upon her and begins flirting. The Count enters and begins seducing "Susanna." The real Susanna (disguised as the Countess) is confronted by Figaro who tells her that the Count is with his Susanna. She asks Figaro to be quiet, but forgets to disguise her voice. The truth begins to dawn on Figaro who then pleads passionate love to the "Countess". A furious Susanna slaps Figaro who tells her that he knew she was in disguise all along. Continuing the prank, Figaro and the "Countess" lously confess their love and the Count rushes in to catch the two lovers. Basilio, Bartolo, Don Curzio and Antonio all rush in to investigate the ruckus and the Count denounces his faithless wife. All beg the Count to forgive his wife but he refuses until the real Countess reveals herself. Almaviva realizes that he has fallen prey to a prank and begs forgiveness. The Countess forgives him and all celebrate the end of a crazy day.



BIOGRAPHY OF THE COMPOSER WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756–1791)



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Possibly the greatest genius in Western musical history, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was born in Salzburg, Austria on January 27, 1756 to Leopold Mozart and his wife, Anna Maria Pertl. Leopold was a successful composer, violinist and assistant concertmaster at the Salzburg court.

Wolfgang began composing minuets at the age of 5 and symphonies at 9. When he was 6, he and his older sister, Maria Anna (nicknamed "Nannerl"), performed a series of concerts for European royal courts in major European cities. Both children played the keyboard, but Wolfgang became a violin virtuoso as well.



Johann Christian Bach
(1735—1782)

In 1792, the Mozart children played at the court in Vienna for the Empress Maria Theresa and her husband, Emperor Francis I. From 1763-66, the Mozart children displayed their talents to audiences in Germany, Paris, the court in Versailles, and London. It was in London where Wolfgang wrote his first symphonies and began his friendship with Johann Christian Bach, son of Johann Sebastian Bach, who became a great musical influence on the young composer. In Paris, the young Mozart published his first works, four sonatas for clavier with accompanying violin (1764). In 1768 he composed his first opera, LA FINTA SEMPLICE, which had its premiere in Salzburg. In 1769-70, Leopold and Wolfgang undertook a tour throughout Italy culminating in a new opera, MITRIDATE, RE DI PONTO, composed for Milan. In subsequent trips to Italy, Wolfgang composed two more operas for Milan, ASCANIO IN ALBA (1771) and LUCIO SILLA (1772).

In 1772, Archbishop von Schrattenbach died and was succeeded by Hieronymus von Colloredo. The latter, while initially fond of the Mozarts, later became irritated by Wolfgang's prolonged absences and stubborn ways. So in 1772, von Colloredo retained Wolfgang as concertmaster that provided a token salary. In his capacity as concertmaster, Wolfgang composed a large number of sacred and secular works. Wishing to secure a better position outside of Salzburg, he was granted a leave in 1777 for a trip to France. He traveled with his mother and by 1778, had composed the PARIS SYMPHONY. But he could not find a permanent position. While in Paris, his mother died.

Upon his return to Salzburg, he was given the position of court organist (1779) and produced a splendid series of church works including the CORONATION MASS. He was commissioned to compose a new opera for Munich, IDOMENO (1781), proving that he was also a master of opera seria. von Colloredo summoned Wolfgang to Vienna in 1781 but was ultimately dismissed after a series of arguments.

Staying in Vienna, Wolfgang was commissioned to compose THE ABDUCTION FROM THE SERAGLIO (1782). His success garnered the attention of Emperor Joseph II who encouraged Wolfgang and later hired him as his court composer. In 1782, Wolfgang married Constanze Weber, a German, much to his father's dismay. The young couple visited Salzburg in 1783 and while there, Wolfgang's Kyrie and Gloria from his MASS IN C MINOR were performed (THE MASS IN C MINOR was originally composed in Vienna and was never completed). In 1786 came Wolfgang's greatest successes (at least during his lifetime) with the opera LE NOZZE DI FIGARO (The Marriage of Figaro) composed for the Vienna Opera, as well as his piano concerts and string quartets dedicated to his "dear friend" Josef Haydn. LE NOZZE DI FIGARO was the first of three collaborations with Italian poet Lorenzo da Ponte.



Constanze Mozart
(née Weber)

Wolfgang's fame began to disappear after FIGARO. The nobility and court grew increasingly nervous about his revolution ideas as seen in FIGARO. He sank into debt and was assisted by a fellow Freemason, Michael Puchberg (Wolfgang was a member of the Masons since 1784 and remained an outspoken member until his death). His next TWO great operatic successes were DON GIOVANNI (1787), composed for Prague where it seemed that Wolfgang's art was particularly appreciated and COSI FAN TUTTE (1790). Both operas paired Wolfgang with FIGARO librettist, Lorenzo da Ponte. Wolfgang's final op-

era, THE MAGIC FLUTE was completed in 1791 and was produced by a suburban theater in Vienna.

The Mozarts' finances continued to plague them although Wolfgang completed his last three symphonies (E flat, G minor and the Jupiter in C) in less than 7 weeks during the summer of 1788. These symphonies were preceded by a series of string quintets, including the two in C and G minor (1787).

In 1791, Wolfgang was commissioned to compose a requiem. He was ill at the time, not an unusual state for the composer as he had never known good health. He was never able to complete the requiem. He died on December 5, 1791. There has been much speculation about the circumstances and causes of his death. Everything from poisoning (see Amadeus section) to kidney failure to food poisoning to tuberculosis has been suggested as reasons for Wolfgang's death. The latest research by Dr. Richard Zegers suggests that Mozart died from "a streptococcal infection leading to an acute nephritic syndrome caused by post-streptococcal glomerulonephritis." The abstract is listed in the [Annals of Internal Medicine](#). Essentially, Wolfgang died from an advanced case of strep throat that led to kidney failure. Of course there are still many who will argue for other causes and even going to far as to claim that Mozart's death was faked.

Mozart was buried in an unmarked grave at the cemetery of Saint Marx, a Viennese suburb. Much has been made of this as well but at the time, such burial was required for all Viennese except those of noble or aristocratic birth.

Wolfgang excelled in every form in which he composed. His contemporaries found the restless ambivalence and complicated emotional content of his music difficult to understand. Accustomed to the light, superficial style of rococo music, his aristocratic audiences could not accept the music's complexity and depth. Along with Haydn, Mozart perfected the grand forms of symphony, opera, string quartets, and concertos that marked the classical period in music. In his operas, Mozart's uncanny psychological insight is unique in musical history. His music informed the work of the later Haydn as well as the next generation of composers, most notably Ludwig von Beethoven. The brilliance of his work continued until the end, although darker themes of poignancy and isolation grew more marked in his final years. His compositions continue to this day to exert a particular fascination for musicians and music lovers alike.

AMADEUS

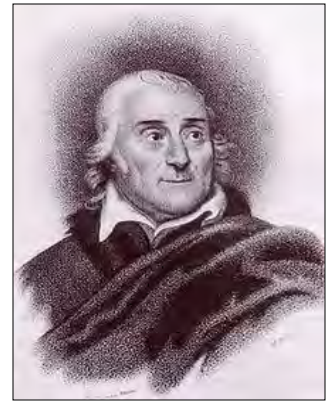
AMADEUS, Peter Shaffer's play and movie, gives a good pictures of Vienna and its people at the end of the 18th century, even though the movie was filmed in Prague and some of the incidents portrayed never actually happened. According to Shaffer, he deliberately made changes and re-arranged incidents to make the drama stronger. There is no evidence that Salieri interfered with Mozart's life or was in any way involved in his death. He certainly was not the one who transcribed the REQUIEM at Mozart's deathbed. While Wolfgang's father, Leopold, had an enormous impact on his son, Wolfgang's obsession with his father was largely invented for the play.

ANTONIO SALIERI

Antonio Salieri was born in the Republic of Venice in 1750 although he spent much of his adult life working for the Hapsburg Court in Austria. A protégé of Gluck, Salieri became an influential composer to his contemporaries and a master of opera. From 1774 to 1792, he was the Director of Italian Opera for the Hapsburg Court and in 1788 was also Imperial Kapellmeister until 1824. He was commissioned by other opera houses throughout Europe and was a much sought after teacher. His pupils included Schubert, Beethoven and Liszt. During his lifetime, Salieri composed more than 40 operas with TARARE (1787) as his most famous. But by the early 19th century, Salieri's works grew out of favor and he stopped composing opera in 1804. By 1824, he was suffering from dementia and died in 1825 in Vienna. His works were revived thanks in part to the play and film AMADEUS. There is even a Salieri Opera Festival in his hometown of Legnano celebrating the composer. There has never been any solid evidence of a rivalry between Salieri and Mozart.



BIOGRAPHY OF THE LIBRETTIST LORENZO DA PONTE (1749–1838)



Lorenzo da Ponte

Lorenzo da Ponte (born Emanuele Conegliano) was born in 1749 in Vittoria Veneto (a suburb of Venice) to a tanner, Geremia Conegliano, and his wife, Rachele. When he was five, his mother died and by age 11, Emanuele could scarcely read or write. When Emanuele was 14, his father converted the family to Catholicism in order to marry Orsola Paietta. It was at 14 that Emanuele changed his name to Lorenzo da Ponte after the Bishop of Ceneda who had baptized him. He entered the Seminary and eventually became an ordained priest. He was fluent in Latin although he could barely read his native Italian. Fortunately, one of the priests encouraged him to study Dante, Petrarch and other Italian poets and so began Lorenzo's love of Italian literature.

As a child, Lorenzo stole leather from his father and sold it to a shoemaker to buy books. When he got caught, instead of punishing him, the Bishop gave him money to buy more books. Unfortunately, Lorenzo would often have to sell his books to help his family—this would be a pattern for the rest of his life.

When he was 21, Lorenzo was made a teacher at another seminary and at 24, he was ordained. He set off for Venice where music and gambling reigned supreme. At the time, Venice had seven opera houses and the carnival season lasted for six months.

Lorenzo began writing poetry which eventually got him into so much trouble with the Venetian Senate that he was put on trial, his poems confiscated and he was dismissed from his teaching position. He was also forbidden to teach anywhere in the Venetian Republic. But he remained a priest and stayed in Venice, having several affairs, one with a married woman. His indiscretions finally caught up with him and he was banished from Venice for 15 years.



Joseph II

Lorenzo traveled to Vienna, Austria and carried with him a letter of introduction to Antonio Salieri, the Director of the Italian Opera and Court Composer. Joseph II was the Emperor of Austria and a great patron of the arts and Vienna was considered the cultural capital of the world. Joseph II was a very enlightened monarch and carried out his philosophy by encouraging religious tolerance (providing limited freedom of worship), abolishing serfdom and replacing Latin with German as the official language of the state. He also abolished the death penalty and relaxed censorship.

Joseph loved the theater and had some music talent so during his travels, he would seek out new singers, scores and libretti for his court. He also wanted to reform theater and opera, so he often reviewed singers' salaries, holidays and living arrangements. Joseph attended rehearsals and made suggestions, which leads to his most comments regarding Mozart's *THE ABDUCTION FROM THE SERAGLIO* has having "too many notes". When Lorenzo met the Emperor, Joseph asked him how many plays he had written to which Lorenzo replied "none". Joseph appointed him to the post of Poet to the Italian Theatre. Along with a generous salary plus royalties, Lorenzo was to write new libretti as well as adapt the work of others. The first composer he worked with was Antonio Salieri.

Lorenzo developed abscesses in his mouth and it was recommended that he treat them with nitric acid! The abscesses disappointed, but so did his teeth and soon he was completely toothless.

da Ponte wrote the libretti for three of Mozart's operas; *LE NOZZE DI FIGARO*, *DON GIOVANNI* and *COSI' FAN TUTTE*. As a general rule, Mozart did not like rhyming in libretti, however Lorenzo was able to write in rhymes that fit naturally into Mozart's music.

When Joseph II died in 1790, da Ponte fell out of favor with the new Emperor, Leopold, and argued with Salieri. He left Vienna for Trieste where he met John Krahl and became friendly with Krahl's daughter, Ann Celestine (aka Nancy). They married in 1792 and moved to London where Lorenzo worked as a teacher of Italian, a bookseller and librettist for an Italian opera company. Upon their arrival in London, the da Pontes had only a few coins, a gold watch and a ring to their name. Their fortunes would go up and down during their entire marriage. Having no luck in London with their dwindling income, Nancy decided to take their children to America to visit her family. They were only supposed to stay for one year. Lorenzo, fearing that he would never see them again, decided to head for America as well. This decision was also likely prompted by the fact that he was again bankrupt and needed to avoid his creditors.

With little money and a violin, Lorenzo headed to America. He was to spend the remaining 33 years of his life in the United States. While in a bookstore in New Jersey, Lorenzo met Clement Clarke Moore (author of *THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS*). Moore helped da Ponte find well-to-do pupils for Italian lessons. da Ponte founded the Manhattan Academy for Young Gentlemen in his home where boys could learn Italian, French, Latin, writing, grammar and geography. His wife taught French, Italian, drawing and music at the Manhattan Academy for Young Ladies.

da Ponte and his family eventually moved to Pennsylvania where he was a grocer, distiller, milliner, seller of medicines and a teamster. Again, his financial problems made them return to New York where he became an American citizen (1828) and was appointed the first professor to teach Italian literature at Columbia College (now Columbia University). He was the first to teach Dante in America and contributed thousands of Italian books to the collections of Columbia University, The Library of Congress and the New York Public Library.

da Ponte died in August 1838 and was buried in New York's Roman Catholic cemetery. He had sown some wild oats as a young man, but thereafter lived a rather conventional life with his wife and was a loving father to his children who married into New York's best families. In his memoirs, de Ponte claimed to have imported over 26,000 volumes of Italian books and taught Italian to 2,500 students. For more information on Lorenzo da Ponte, here is a wonderful article by The Guardian's [Anthony Holden](#).

**AUTHOR, AUTHOR!
PIERRE BEAUMARCHAIS
(1732–1799)**



Pierre-Augustin Caron de
Beaumarchais

Like Lorenzo da Ponte, Pierre Beaumarchais' life was equally exciting and diverse. His many jobs included musician (he was the harp tutor to Louis XV's daughters), clockmaker (he invented a very precise clock system), song writer, jurist, businessman, editor, merchant, ship owner, secret agent, weapons seller, diplomat, architect and engineer.

Born in Paris in 1732, Beaumarchais learned clock-making from his father's workshop. By 1753, he had invented a lever system for clocks and the following year was received by the King. At 23, he began an affair with a married woman and eventually takes over her husband's business when he dies (Pierre did marry her in 1756 but she died the following year). In 1761, Pierre acquired the title of "secretary-councilor to the King", giving himself nobility. In 1764, he was sent to Spain as a spy and through this, Pierre became involved in the American Revolution as a weapons dealer. Payment for this service wasn't received until after his death, and even then had to be granted through Congress to his heirs in 1835. In 1770, he married Genevieve Leveque and had a child. By 1772, he was quarreling with the Duke of Chaulne and was arrested and subsequently imprisoned (1773). The year after his imprisonment, he met Marie-Thérèse de Willer-Mawlaz whom he lived with for twelve years before marrying her in 1786.

His two most successful comedies were *LE BARBIER DE SEVILLE* (1775) and *LE MARIAGE DE FIGARO* (1784) along with the final play of the trilogy *LA MÈRE COUPABLE* (1792). All three plays were sources for operas from *IL BARBIERE DE SEVILLE* (*THE BARBER OF SEVILLE*) by Paisiello (1782) and Rossini (1816), Mozart's *LE NOZZE DI FIGARO*—1786 (*THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO*) and John Corigliano's *THE GHOSTS OF VERSAILLES* (1991) based on *LA MÈRE COUPABLE*. When presented with the script for *LE MARIAGE DE FIGARO*, King Louis XVI stated "This is detestable, it will never be played!" Louis felt that Figaro was disrespectful as a lower-class citizen because of the way he treated his superiors in the play and that the foundations of European social structure would be in jeopardy should the play ever be produced. Eventually the King allowed the play to be given publicly on April 27, 1784, but not without its share of cuts and subtractions. The play was a huge success.

Beaumarchais spent time in exile, mostly in Germany, but returned to Paris in 1796 where he eventually died in 1799 from a stroke. Beaumarchais lived during a remarkable time in history. Both America and France fought wars for independence from monarchies, Mozart and Beethoven were composing, George Washington became the first American President, the poet Andrea Chenier was executed and King Gustav III of Sweden was assassinated (the latter two events became operas).

Where in the World?

Seville, Spain has been the inspiration and setting for several operas. Both Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* and Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro* as well as Bizet's *Carmen* take place in this lovely Andalusian city.

Andalucia is a mountainous region in the far south of Spain, rich in minerals and an important



center for the production of olives, grapes, oranges and lemons. The regional capital is Seville, one of the largest cities in Spain, with traces around the city of the 500 years of Moorish occupation. Seville is the romantic heart of the country, the city of *Carmen* and *Don Juan*. Its cathedral is the largest Gothic building in the world and has a superb collection of art and stonework. Christopher Columbus and St Ferdinand are buried here. Also in Seville is the great Arab bell tower, Giralda, and the Torre del Oro cathedral. Holy Week in Seville is one of the most interesting festivals in the country. Holy Week is followed closely by the April Fair, during which couples parade the fairground mounted on Andalusian horses, and dressed in traditional



flamenco costumes. Drinking, eating, song and dance continue for the whole week and the fairground is awash with color.

Andalusia opens out onto two seas, the Mediterranean and the Atlantic. This region is separated from the Central Plateau by the Sierra Morena mountain chain, which made communications with the rest of Spain difficult but accessibility from the coastline was easy. This region connects the Mediterranean and Atlantic, sits between Europe and Africa and has rich, fertile lands. Over the centuries, it has become a mixture of ethnic groups and cultures as well as an inspiration for writers, composers and artists.

With this melting pot of culture and location, the Andalusia region has been at the forefront of trade and inter-continental travelers as well as a crossing point for various conquerors. There are eight administrative regions within Andalusia with Seville as the capital (it is also the third largest city in Spain).





The flag of Spain



The royal crest

Viva Espana!

A Brief Look at Spanish History

One of the features of Spanish history is the waves of different peoples who spread all over the Peninsula. The first to appear were the Iberians, a Libyan people, who came from the south. Later came the Celts and from the merging of the two there arose a new race, the Celtiberians, who, divided into several tribes (Cantabrians, Asturians, Lusitanians). The next to arrive, attracted by mining wealth, were the Phoenicians, who founded a number of trading posts along the coast, the most important being that of Cadiz. After this came Greek settlers, who founded several towns, including Rosas, Ampurias and Sagunto. The Phoenicians, in their struggle against the Greeks, called on the Carthaginians, who took possession of most of Spain. It was at this time that Rome raised a border dispute in defense of the areas of Greek influence, and began the Second Punic War. After the Roman victory, Spain continued under Roman rule for the next six hundred years.

Rome left in Spain four powerful social elements: the Latin language, Roman law, the municipality and the Christian religion. After the fall of the Roman Empire, the Suevi, Vandals and Alans entered Spain, but they were defeated by the Visigoths who, by the end of the 6th century, has occupied virtually the whole of the Peninsula.

At the beginning of the 8th century the Arabs entered from the south. They conquered the country swiftly except for a small area in the North. The period of Muslim influence is divided into the Emirate (711 to 756), the Caliphate (756-1031) and the Reinos de Taifas (1031 to 1492).

In 1469, the marriage of Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon, prepared the way for the union of two kingdoms and marked the opening of a period of growing success for Spain. In 1492, they regained the Arab stronghold of Granada and sponsored the famous voyage to America under the command of Christopher Columbus. The Canary Islands became part of Spanish territory (1495) and Navarre was incorporated into the Kingdom. The next two centuries, the 16th and the 17th, witnessed the construction and highpoint of the Spanish Empire, which became the world's foremost power.

The War of Succession to the Spanish Crown (1701-1714) marked the end of the dynasty of the Hapsburgs and the coming of the Bourbons. The Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 formalized the British occupation of the Rock of Gibraltar,



giving rise to a colonial situation which continues today as the only dispute between Spain and the United Kingdom.

In 1808 Joseph Bonaparte was installed on the Spanish throne, although the resistance of the Spanish people resulted in the restoration of the Bourbons in Fernando VII. In 1873, Amadeo of Savoy ended his reign with his abdication, and the First Republic was born. However, in 1875 the monarch was restored and Alfonso XII was proclaimed King of Spain. He was succeeded in 1886 by his son Alfonso XIII, although his mother Queen Maria Cristina of Habsburg acted as regent until 1902, when he was crowned king.



Isabella of Castile



Christopher Columbus

In the elections of April 12th, 1931, it became clear that in all the large towns of Spain the candidates who supported the Monarchy had been defeated. The size of the Republican's vote in cities such as Madrid and Barcelona was enormous. In the country districts the Monarchy gained enough seats to secure for them a majority in the nation as a whole. But it was well known that in the country the 'caciques' were still powerful enough to prevent a fair vote.

By the evening of the day following the elections, great crowds were gathering in the streets of Madrid. The king's most trusted friends advised him to leave the capital without delay, to prevent bloodshed. As a result, Alfonso XIII left Spain and the Second Republic was established in April 14th. During its five-year lifetime, the Second Republic was presented with all kinds of political, economic and social conflicts, which split opinions into two sides. Finally, on July 18th 1936, a military rising began which turned into a tragic civil war which did not end until three years later.

On October 1st, 1936, General Franco took over as Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. The Spanish State would continue as a dictatorship for the next forty years, with all other political parties being outlawed, except for the National Movement. Franco died in 1975, bringing to an end a period of Spanish history and opening the way to the restoration of the monarchy with the rise to the throne of the present King of Spain, Juan Carlos I de Borbon y Borbon.



King Juan Carlos and Queen Sofia



The Royal Family of Spain

Other Spanish delights; Flamenco, Bullfighting and Zarzuela

In addition to its colorful history, Spain is also known for flamenco dancing, bullfighting and zarzuela (Spanish music theater). All three have a long, illustrious history and have contributed greatly to both Spanish and world culture.

Flamenco; the music of gypsies

Until the 19th century, much of flamenco's history was passed down orally rather than written so the origins are not precise. The history of flamenco is a study of invasions and their effects on the music of the Iberian Peninsula, for flamenco was formed from the fusion of the folk music of southern Spain with the music that the gypsies created from that same musical environment. We often associate the flamenco with gypsies and while the gypsies were a powerful influence, many other cultures contributed to the style and music. The Greeks, Moors, Arabs, and Christians all contributed to flamenco to create the dance and music we are familiar with today.

Gypsies were expert metal workers and had a tradition of music and dance. While it is true that these gypsies, or gitanos, were very different from the people who had originally left India, they had preserved some of their language and their tendencies in the dance,



particularly the arm and hand movements and the footwork common to kathak dance of northern India. It is clear that the gypsies did not bring anything to Spain that resembled flamenco, for flamenco is found only in the southern region of Spain, primarily in Andalusia; nothing similar exists among the gypsies in other parts of the world. The gypsies loved Andalusia and absorbed, preserved and transformed the music of the region until it emerged as a unique art form- the cante and baile (dance) gitano. In Andalusia, the gypsies also found kindred spirits in the Jews and Moriscos (Moors). The bond of these people was increased when laws were passed that resulted in severe persecution of the gypsies. Between 1449 and 1783, at least eleven major sets of laws were passed that attempted to prevent the gypsies from living their traditional lifestyle; under threat of punishment that included death, gypsies were ordered to settle down and to abandon their wandering ways, their traditional dress, their occupations, and even their language. The Moriscos were also in the process of being expelled from Spain, so the two persecuted peoples found themselves with much in common. Jewish music must have also exerted some influence because there are similarities between some Hebrew chants and certain flamenco songs.



became one of the largest slave markets on the Iberian Peninsula. There are still black families living in Andalucia that date back to those times, and Black African music may have had

some effect on Andalusian music. More certain is the role played by the discovery of the Americas. Most ships sailed from the ports on Spain's southern coast, from towns like Huelva, Sanlucar, Cadiz, and Malaga. Sailors came to these ports from all over Spain, bringing with them the music of their home regions. Andalusian music, flexible and open to outside influence, incorporated and transformed this music into new forms. Then when Spaniards returning to these same ports brought with them music from Latin America, it also became incorporated into the Andalusian tradition. This is another source of African influence, since Black culture played a large role in the formation of certain types of Latin music.

There was also the use of verbal encouragement of performers; at some point, the Allah of the Arabs became the ole of flamenco (usually pronounced "oh- LAY" at the bullfight, but "OH-lay" in flamenco circles).

Olè Bullfighting in Seville

The history of the Real Maestranza de Caballería de Sevilla goes back to the time immediately following the city's conquest from the Moors in 1248 by King Ferdinand III, the Saint. The Knights attending the King in this campaign founded a Fraternity or Order of Chivalry dedicated to St. Hermenegild, for the purpose of practising the use of arms and equestrian pursuits in order to be prepared for action (not unlike the Musketeers in France and the Knights of the Round Table in England).



Bullfighting posters from Seville, Spain



The initial object of this order of chivalry was disappearing, so that a new institution was necessary in order to maintain its spirit. In 1670, Charles II founded the Real Cuerpo de Maestranza de Caballería de Sevilla (Royal Corps of the Order of Chivalry of Seville). Instructing noblemen in horsemanship by riding with short stirrups and bent knees was extremely useful in the formation of officers for the army and their preparation for war in the King's service. From the very first, the Real Maestranza de Caballería organized public events in the city's principal squares, such as bullfights and several types of tournaments on horseback, as well as riding schools for different occasions: visits from royalty, anniversaries and religious feasts. During the 18th and 19th centuries, the Real Maestranza bred mares and colts for its stud which became one of the best in Andalusia. This institution also pioneered equestrian sports in Seville.



The season traditionally begins on Easter Sunday, continuing for up to 16 to 18 days. There are also bullfights around the feast of Corpus Christi; on August 15 - feast of the Assumption as well as Virgen de los Reyes, patroness of Seville; the last week-end in September, feast of St. Michael and on October 12, the feast of Virgen del Pilar when the season officially comes to an end. Furthermore, there are novilladas (bullfights with young bulls) and picadors during all Sundays in May, June and September. In July and August there may well be some further novilladas with picadors sponsored by the Real Maestranza which has established several prizes for the best performances.

Zarzuela The Spanish Opera

In 1657 at the Royal Palace of El Pardo, King Philip IV of Spain, Queen Mariana and their court attended the first performance of a new comedy by Pedro Calderón de la Barca, with music by Juan de Hidalgo. *El Laurel de Apolo* marked the birth of a new musical genre which was to become known as **La Zarzuela** - after one of the King's hunting lodges, situated in a remote countryside thick with *zarzas* or brambles.



The Palace of Zarzuela

La Zarzuela was often visited by clowns and actors from the city of Madrid, and perhaps the piece Calderón and Hidalgo provided, running the theatrical gamut from classical opera to low slapstick and popular song reminded the court of a typical *La Zarzuela* entertainment.

Calderón was the greatest playwright of the day and Hidalgo was the best Spanish composer. They ushered in a new and developed form of Baroque entertainment in which witty libretti were matched by music of high quality and extraordinary diversity. In 1786 Luigi Boccherini wrote a *zarzuela* for the palace of *La Puerta de la Vaga* in Madrid - *La Clementina* a masterpiece of Spanish lyric theatre,



Barbieri

to a libretto by the poet Ramón de la Cruz. Clearly, the *zarzuela* was worthy of the highest talents in the land. Barbieri, regarded as the founding father of the 19th century movement, wrote pieces which remind us of Rossini, Donizetti, Viennese operetta and even Gilbert and Sullivan (compare, for example, the troop of policemen in

El barbarillo de Lavapiés with their roughly contemporary colleagues in *The Pirates of Penzance*). With Barbieri, as with his great contemporaries such as Bretón, Chapí, Chueca and Caballero, musical originality was not as high a

priority as vitality, theatricality and sophisticated style. These composers were at their best when they seemed to be "taking it easy". Their individual flavor comes across more strongly in the *zarzuelas* than in their more "serious" concert, church and operatic works. If there is a single reason for this, it lies in one fact - Madrid. The spirit, sights and sounds of the capital pervade nearly all the great *zarzuelas*, large or small, from this classic period and of many from the 20th century. Even the composers who came from outside the city or the country were influeed by its heady atmosphere, *madrileños* heart and soul just as much as the "natives" like Chueca or the great writer Perez de Galdós. Many of the very best *zarzuelas* take their life from their *madrileño* setting, including Bretón's classic *La verbena de la paloma* and Chapí's equally beloved *La Revoltosa*.

The first half of the 20th century saw the repertoire enriched by a huge quantity of work. Some of the most popular composers include Vives, Sorozábal, Torroba. If the 20th century sees a diversification of the range of the *zarzuela*, tragic verismo shockers like *Las golondrinas* by Usandizaga, jostling with exotic operetta (Luna's *El niño judío*) and small-town musical



(Guerrero's *Los Gavilanes*) the most enduring works of the 1920's and 30's - Vives' *Doña Francisquita* and Torroba's *Luisa Fernanda* - are firmly rooted in the *madrileño* tradition, with its *tonadillas*, *fandangos* and *habaneras*.

The quality of the libretti remains constant. *Doña Francisquita* for instance is based on an update of a Lope de Vega play, by the leading writing team of the day, Federico Romero and Guillermo Fernández Shaw. With the onset of the Spanish Civil War, the *zarzuela* was more or less played out and all but disappeared. Only Sorozábal kept the form alive into the 1950's, and his last productions, *Black, el payaso* and *Don Manolito*, seem to resemble the music theater team of Rogers and Hart. The legacy of nearly one hundred years and thousands of works remains incomparably rich.



The mosque of Cordoba (Cordova) Spain

OPERA PROJECTS

GRADES 4 THROUGH 12

SETS AND COSTUMES

Draw some sample sets and costumes for opera that you just saw. Then take a different story you are familiar with and draw sets, costumes and do a character analysis on the main characters. Also decide where characters might have a song (aria), what would the aria be about, how would it reflect the mood of the characters, etc.

KEEP A JOURNAL

See section on Journey Into the Music of Your Life

CREATE YOUR OWN OPERA COMPANY

Create an opera company within your class. Various jobs include the Managing Director, Public Relations, Marketing, Education & Outreach, Business Manager and Box Office. Also included in the production side of an opera are set & costume designers, make-up artists, lighting director and technicians, set crew, musical and dramatic directors, conductor, orchestra, chorus and principle singers. For more information on all these jobs, check out Arizona Opera Education's program "Opera Look-in".

UPDATE A STORY OR PLAY

The next step in creating the company would be a decision on what to produce. One of the simplest ways to create an opera is to take a novel or play and update it. For example, Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* has been made into both an opera and a musical (*Romeo et Juliette* by Gounod and *West Side Story* by Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim). Another way to create cross-curricular learning would be to take a story or novel that is being studied in your English class and create an opera out of the story line (i.e. *Silas Marner*, *Hamlet*, *Huckleberry Finn*, etc.)

ROLE PLAY WITHIN YOUR NEW OPERA

Now that the company has been created and a story chosen, someone needs to change the story into a libretto. This works well with a small team of students and it's highly recommended to only try **one scene** rather than re-writing an entire novel or play. If you feel capable, certainly writing the scene as a real opera libretto (i.e. every word is sung rather than spoken) would be ideal. However, if this is overwhelming, writing one song that might summarize the high points of the scene would be sufficient.

Then you and your classmates can act out your scene with music (if possible) and include all the aspects of production mentioned in the "Create Your Own Opera Company" section.

This is a terrific semester long project that will give you the opportunity to participate in a performing arts environment and also gain an appreciation of what all goes into creating any live theatre productions.

A JOURNEY INTO THE MUSIC OF YOUR LIFE

A journal (or diary) is a very useful tool which many artists use to keep track of their creative thoughts, ideas, inspirations, dreams and day-to-day reflections. As part of your process in learning about opera, begin creating a journal specifically relating to your thoughts and ideas. Below are some ideas to consider and perhaps discuss in class.

Prelude

Name some places where you often find yourself singing. Why do you sing there? Are you singing alone or with other people? How do the people around you react to your singing?

Now, explore other types of music that you hear around you everyday. Shut your eyes for a minute or two and listen. What do you hear?

Try this. Turn on the television in your home, take some paper and a pen/pencil with you and sit in a completely different room so that you can hear, but not see the television. See if you can tell just by the music what show is coming on. Is it a drama? Science fiction? Mystery? Comedy? How can you tell? What sounds/instruments does the composer use to help identify the music with any characters in the program?

Exposition

Since many operas are created from books, what are the differences between an opera and a book? What book do you think would create an interesting opera? Why? What would you have to do to transform a book into an opera?

Development

Operas are also based on original stories. Where do you think you could find ideas for a new opera? Has anything ever happened to you that you think would make a good opera? Are there people in your life that would make good characters in an opera? What qualities do they have that make them funny? sad? angry?

Recap

Now that you've thought about all the ideas raised above, it's time to put them all together. Go back through your journal and read your ideas. Does anything strike you as being a good idea for an opera? Start collecting images, colors, textures that inspire you, much as it would a set or costume designer. Create a collage of images using old magazines, newspapers, fabrics, old photographs, leaves, etc. that tells the story of your opera.

Write a script to go along with your collage. What's your opera about? Is it a happy story? sad? funny? Who are the characters? What do they look like? wear? think? Incorporate all your ideas into this original story for an opera.

Visual Arts in Spain

The works and the artists

Spain has provided the world with flamenco, bullfighting, a sense of exploration, Christopher Columbus, zarzuela and a host of painters including El Greco, Goya and Picasso .

El Greco (1541-1614)

El Greco was a Greek-born artist whose emotional style expressed the passion of Counter-Reformation Spain. The intensity of El Greco's paintings -- resulting from their unnaturally long figures and strong contrasts of color and light -- has invited a kind of mythmaking about his life and art. Following his death, El Greco's work fell into obscurity and, after its rediscovery in the last century, was often misunderstood. El Greco has been called a prophet of modern art, a mystic, and even a man whose sight was distorted by astigmatism, all misconceptions that have clouded understanding of his distinctive but deliberate style.



Francisco Jose de Goya y Lucientes (1746 - 1828)

From 1775 to 1792 Goya painted cartoons (designs) for the royal tapestry factory in Madrid. This was the most important period in his artistic development. As a tapestry designer, Goya did his first genre paintings, or scenes from everyday life. The experience helped him become a keen observer of human behaviour. He was also influenced by neoclassicism, and his study of the works of Velazquez in the royal collection resulted in a looser, more spontaneous painting technique. He became established as a portrait painter to the Spanish aristocracy and was elected to the Royal Academy of San Fernando in 1780, named painter to the king in 1786, and made a court painter in 1789. A serious illness in 1792 left Goya permanently deaf. Isolated from others by his deafness, he became increasingly occupied with the fantasies and inventions of his imagination and with critical and satirical observations of mankind. He evolved a bold, free new style close to caricature. His portraits became penetrating characterizations, revealing their subjects as Goya saw them. In his religious frescoes

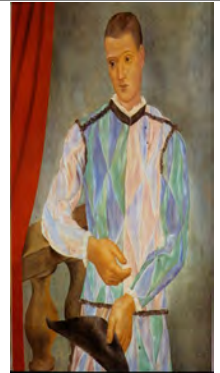
he employed a broad, free style and an earthy realism unprecedented in religious art. During the Napoleonic invasion and the Spanish war of independence from 1808 to 1814, Goya expressed his horror of armed conflict in *The Disasters of War*, a series of starkly realistic etchings on the atrocities of war. They were not published until 1863, long after Goya's death.

Eventually, Goya went into voluntary exile in France. He settled in Bordeaux, continuing to work until his death there on April 16, 1828. Today many of his best paintings hang in Madrid's Prado art museum.



Pablo Picasso (1881 - 1973)

The son of a drawing instructor, Picasso learned the secrets of this technique early on and, before long, had mastered it perfectly. When he was 10 years old, his family moved to La Coruña, where Picasso studied at the Fine Arts School. By the time he arrived in Barcelona (1895), Picasso already drew exceptionally well, was a good painter and his art and creativity found the definitive style they needed. In 1900, he went to Paris with his friend Casagemas, and became familiar with impressionist works. The eventual suicide of his friend Casagemas had a profound impact on the young Picasso. Under these circumstances, he began the works of his so-called "blue period", which he would fully develop upon his return to Barcelona in 1903-1904. Around 1913, Picasso began to include collages in his cubist works which allowed him to give his work new textures. Three years later, he participated in Serge Diaghilev's Russian Ballet, which opened in Barcelona in 1917 for an extended stay. This contact with the theater world, as well as a trip to Italy, brought him back to figurative painting with a new interest in characters from the Italian comedy. During the Spanish civil war (1936-1939), the artist took the side of the Spanish Republic, which appointed him director of the Prado Museum. His indignation at the brutal bombing of Guernica inspired the large mural (1937) he painted in honor of the city. During the 40s, he began to make ceramics, which later turned to an interest in sculpture from scraps, which he began making in the 50's. Pablo Picasso continued producing all types of works using all types of bases and techniques. His incessant creativity characterized him, making him one of the great geniuses of our time.



LOOK INTO OPERA!

Everyone knows that the primary focus of opera music is on the singers and there are many singers that we're familiar with thanks to public television and radio stations. But did you ever wonder about all those people behind-the-scenes that you don't see? In this section, we'll take a look at not only singers and their voice types, but also all the people behind-the-scenes that help make opera happen.

Let's begin with the singers. They're the ones you see on stage with the costumes, wigs and make-up. Here is a list of the vocal types as well as typical roles/operas in which you might see these types of singers.

Female voices

There are several types of female voices starting with the highest and lightest voice which is the **coloratura soprano**. This voice sings very high and can sing very fast notes and trills. The coloratura is featured as Lucia in *Lucia di Lammermoor* and Marie in *The Daughter of the Regiment*. This voice is most often associated with the bel canto (beautiful singing) school of composition. The chief composers of this style were Gioacchino Rossini, Vincenzo Bellini, and Gaetano Donizetti. Famous coloratura sopranos include Natalie Dessay, Sumi Jo and Ruth Ann Swensen.



Natalie Dessay

The next female voice is the **lyric soprano**. This voice is slightly lower than a coloratura with a deeper quality. This soprano is featured as Aida in *Aida*, Mimi in *La Boheme*, Minnie in *The Girl of the Golden West* and Elisabeth in *Don Carlo*. There are many famous women in this category including Maria Callas, Leontyne Price and Renee Fleming. Still lower is the **coloratura mezzo-soprano**. Like the soprano, the coloratura mezzo can sing very fast notes and trills, only lower than the soprano. This coloratura mezzo-soprano is featured as Cenerentola in *La Cenerentola* and Rosina in *The Barber of Seville*. Famous coloratura mezzo-sopranos include Cecilia Bartoli and Vivica Genaux.



Renee Fleming



Vivica Genaux

Even lower is the **mezzo-soprano** ("mezzo" means middle in Italian). The mezzo-soprano has a darker quality to her voice and sings lower female roles like Carmen in *Carmen* and is often portrayed as a friend or older woman like Marcellina in *The Marriage of Figaro* or Madame Larina in *Eugene Onegin*. Current famous mezzo sopranos are Denyce Graves and Elīna Garanča. The lowest female voice is the **contralto**. This is a very deep rich voice that can sing very low notes. The best known role for the contralto is Ulrica in *The Masked Ball*. One of the most famous contraltos was Marion Anderson.



Elīna Garanča



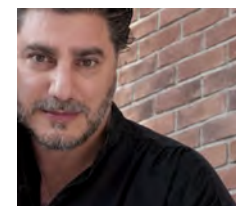
Denyce Graves

Male voices

There are also several types of male voice starting with the highest which is the **countertenor**. This voice type can sing very high and often sings in a "falsetto" voice. Many of Handel's operas such as *Orlando* or *Giulio Cesare* (Julius Caesar) feature this voice type. There are very few countertenors singing currently, so sometimes these roles are sung by women. The next male voice is the **tenor**. This is the voice type that is usually the hero in most operas and has a lot of high notes. Roles featuring the tenor include Don Jose in *Carmen*, Count Almaviva in *The Barber of Seville* and Tonio in *The Daughter of the Regiment*. Famous current tenors include Placido Domingo, Jose Carreras, Roberto Alagna, Ramon Vargas and Jose Cura.



Roberto Alagna



Jose Cura



Nathan Gunn in Pittsburgh Opera's Billy Budd

Even lower is the **baritone** which has a deeper, richer quality than the tenor. The baritone can be a lead voice as in *Don Giovanni* or *Boris Godunov* but more often is a friend or authority figure as Rodrigue in *Don Carlo* or Figaro in *The Barber of Seville*. Current famous baritones include Nathan Gunn, Thomas Hampson and Bryn Terfel. The **bass-baritone** is in between the baritone and the bass with a deep, dark quality. *Boris Godunov* can be sung by a bass-baritone. One of the most famous bass-baritones is Samuel Ramey. The lowest male voice is the **bass** (or basso). This is very deep, rich and low. The bass is often an authority figure or even sometimes the villain. Bass roles include Mefistofele (the devil) in *Mefistofele*, Don Basilio in *The Barber of Seville*, Rigoletto in *Rigoletto* and The Commendatore in *Don Giovanni*. One of the most famous basses is James Morris.



Bryn Terfel



Samuel Ramey



Riccardo Muti

The Orchestra

Down in the "pit", sits the **orchestra** and the **conductor**. The orchestra can range from 12 - 120 musicians depending on the opera. Early operas were often written for smaller orchestras - we call that a chamber orchestra. Grand opera (a term for 19th and some 20th century operas) usually have a large orchestra which include lots of strings, woodwinds, brass, percussion and sometimes pianos, harpsichords and/or celestes. The conductor is in charge once the performance begins. He/she keeps the orchestra and the singers together and can determine speed, loudness/softness and starting/stopping the piece. Famous opera conductors include James Levine and Riccardo Muti.

The Chorus



San Francisco Opera's chorus in CARMEN

The chorus is a group of people singing on stage who are not the principals but just as important. The chorus actually dates back to ancient Greece when there would be a "Greek chorus" on stage to re-state plot points or repeat something one of the main characters said during the play. The chorus is rehearsed by a chorus master and members of the chorus can be professional singers, but most have other jobs that they do when they're not singing in an opera production. The chorus can number from as few as 12 to as many as 120 depending on the opera. There are also people on stage who do not sing but play small roles sometimes as waiters/waitresses, spear holders, party guests, etc. These people are called **supernumeraries** or "supers".

The Stage Director

The Stage Director works with the cast during the rehearsal period and tells people where to stand, how to move, how to use props, what the look of the show should be, what motivates various characters, etc. The stage director and the conductor work closely together to make sure that the cast is comfortable with both the music and the dramatic elements of the work. Famous stage directors include Francesca Zambello, Franco Zeffirelli, and Robert Wilson.



Francesca Zambello

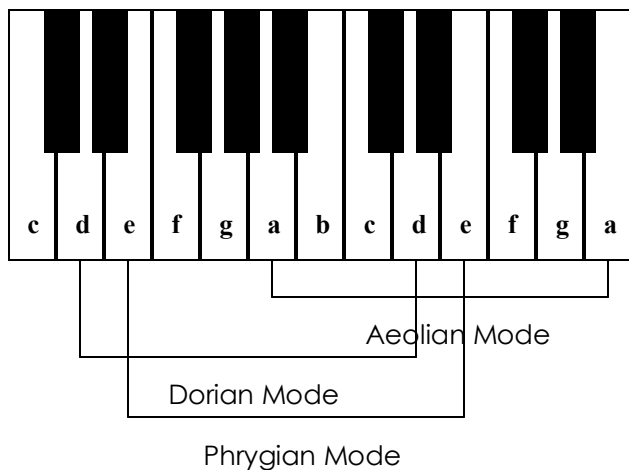
Le Nozze di Figaro Activities and Production

Elements of LE NOZZE DI FIGARO include a setting in Seville, Spain, a composer from Austria, a librettist from Italy, based on a play by a French writer. See if you can locate Spain, Austria, Italy and France on a map as well as some of the other countries, cities and states that Mozart, da Ponte and Beaumarchais either lived in or traveled to—Salzburg & Vienna (Austria), Germany, Paris (France), London (United Kingdom), Milan & Venice (Italy), Prague (Czechoslovakia), Holland, New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania (United States).

Le Nozze di Figaro Activities and Production (cont.)

Create your own Flamenco song

Compose your own Flamenco music. On the piano, find all of the white keys and play from e to e. This is the Phrygian Mode and most Flamenco music is based on this mode. Other modes include the Dorian Mode (from d to d) and the Aolian Mode (from a to a).



What to look for in **LE NOZZE DI FIGARO**

Some famous arias and duets in Figaro include:

Non so piu—sung by Cherubino about how much he trembles every time he sees a lady. Cherubino is a “pants” role since the character is male but is usually sung by a female (mezzo-soprano).

Non piu andrai—sung by Figaro to Cherubino about the new life he will find serving in the military.

Voi che sapete—sung by Cherubino to the Countess Almaviva as a love song.

Sull'aria—a duet between Countess Almaviva and Susanna while they compose a letter to the Countess' imaginary lover.

Deh vieni—sung by Susanna disguised as the Countess to fool both Figaro and Almaviva. This is often referred to as the Rose Aria because of the last line “Come my beloved and I will wreath thy brow with roses.”

Learn some Italian!

Here are some words to listen for:

Amore (ah-MOH-ray)	Love
Andiamo (ahn-dee-AH-moh)	Let's go
Aprite (ah-PREE-tay)	Open up
Chiave (kee-AH-vay)	Key
Come (KOH-may)	How
Cosa sento? (KOH-sah Sayn-toh)	What do I hear?
Dove (DOH-vay)	Then, so
Farfallone (fahr-fahl-LOH-nay)	Butterfly
Giardino (geeahr-DEE-noh)	Garden
Giorno (GEEORH-noh)	Day
L'oiseau (lwah-zoh)	Bird
Madre (MAH-dray)	Mother
Padre (PAH-dray)	Father
Per carita (PEHR kah-ree-TAH)	Please. Have pity!
Perche (pehr-KAY)	Why? or Because
Perdono (pehr-DOH-noh)	Pardon
Spilla (SPEEL-lah)	Pin
Venite (vay-NEE-tay)	Come

Where did they come from?

Opera singers come from all over the world. See if you can figure out which singer comes from which country (answers at the bottom)

Singers	Countries
a) Placido Domingo	1) United States
b) Riccardo Muti	2) Spain
c) Jose Carreras	3) Italy
d) Jerry Hadley	4) Australia
e) Jussi Bjorling	5) Sweden
f) Jon Vickers	6) Canada
g) Denyce Graves	7) Norway
h) Kiri te Kanawa	8) Wales
i) Kirsten Flagstad	9) New Zealand
j) Joan Sutherland	
k) Bryn Terfel	

a)2; b)3; c)2; d)1; e)5; f)6; g)1; h)9; i)7; j)4; k)8