

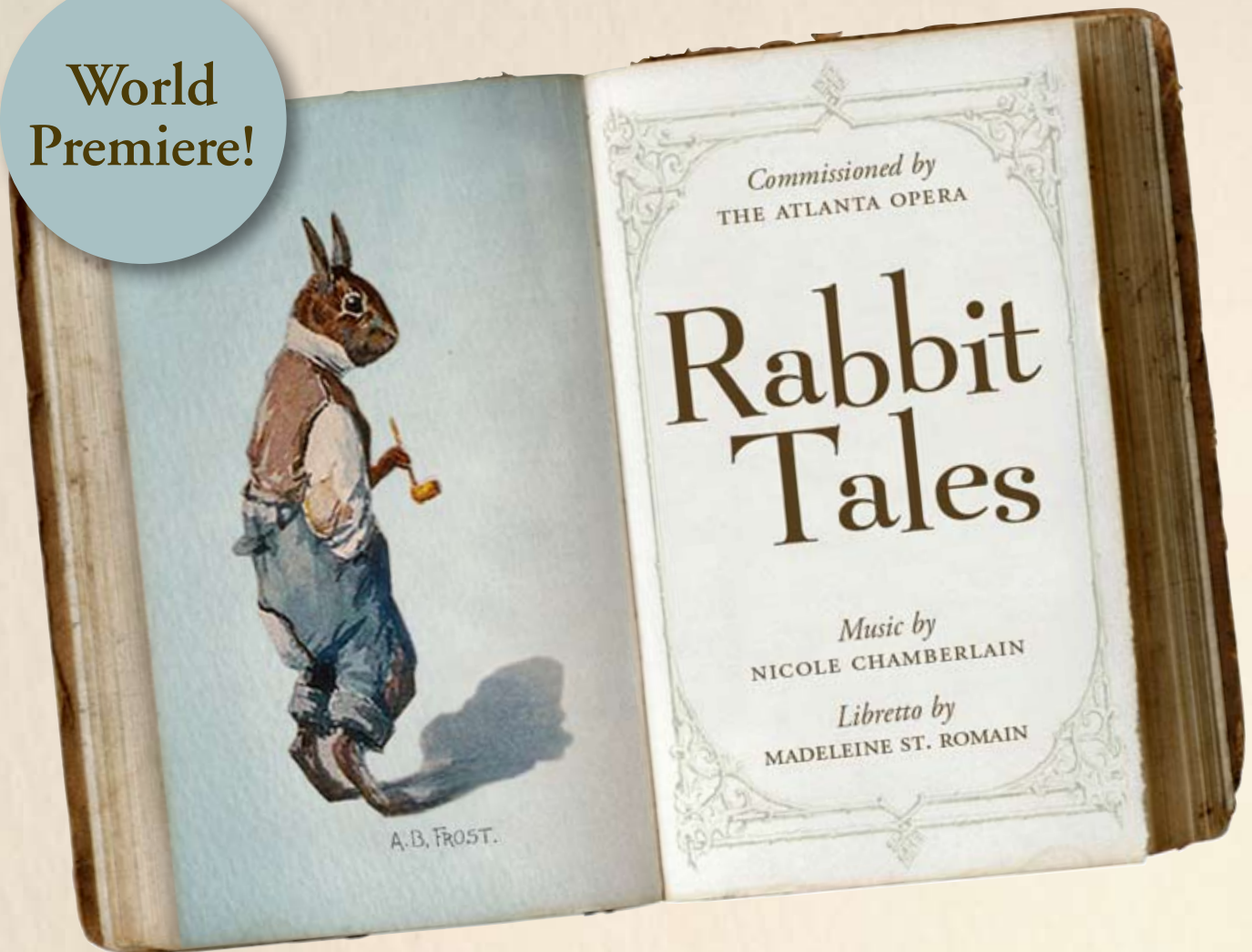


THE ATLANTA OPERA

DENNIS HANTHORN - *Zurich General Director*

PRESENTS

World
Premiere!



*The first opera ever commissioned by
The Atlanta Opera!*

Opera Guide

Cast and Sponsors

The Atlanta Opera presents...

Rabbit Tales

A children's opera commissioned by The Atlanta Opera

Text by Madeleine St. Romain

Music by Nicole Chamberlain

Cast and Crew

Teenchy Duck

Sister Fox

Br'er Rabbit

King Lion

Accompanist

Stage Director

Music Director

Set Design

Costume Design

Opera Guide

Zurich General Director

Director of Education

Artistic Administrator

Production Manager

Elexa Bancroft, *soprano*

Elizabeth Claxton, *soprano*

Wesley Morgan, *tenor*

Wade Thomas, *baritone*

Catherine Schaefer

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Dallas Duncan Franklin, *Designer*

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Welcome!

Hello! Thank you for inviting The Atlanta Opera into your school to perform for your students!

The Atlanta Opera Studio was founded in 1980 in an effort to teach students throughout the state of Georgia about opera through live performances and workshops. Thousands of students have been introduced to the art form through the Atlanta Opera Studio Touring Production. It is our intention for students to gain introductory knowledge about opera through the performance experience and accompanying educational materials.

We are particularly excited about this opera, *Rabbit Tales*, our first-ever opera commission. The idea for the opera stemmed from a visit to The Wren's Nest house museum, the home of author Joel Chandler Harris. Children and adults alike have been enjoying Harris' classic Br'er Rabbit stories for more than 100 years. These trickster tales seemed the perfect subject matter for an opera. The idea that children can learn about folk tales from around the world through the multi-sensory experience of an opera performance was perfect! The stories for the opera are taken from African, Native American and Cajun folklore. Written and composed by an Atlanta-based composer and librettist, *Rabbit Tales* has significant regional ties.

This guide has been developed to acquaint you and your students with *Rabbit Tales*, as well as to familiarize students with the world of opera (vocabulary, history, etc.) Our goal is to provide you with an innovative, multidisciplinary approach to teaching required skills and curriculum, including Georgia Performance Standards and National Arts Standards. Where applicable, you will find the corresponding standard(s) in parenthesis at the end of each activity or lesson.

What you can expect from The Atlanta Opera's performance of *Rabbit Tales*:

- We will be performing a one-hour opera in English for your students.
- Our show requires attentive silence from the audience, but there is also opportunity for audience participation.
- The opera may take place in your school gymnasium or cafeteria rather than an auditorium, so students may be seated on the floor.
- You and your students will be invited to ask questions at the end of the performance.

Thank you again for allowing us to share this experience with you. We value your feedback and will take it into account in planning future educational programs. We look forward to hearing from you, your students, administration, and/or parents following the performance.

Sincerely,

The Atlanta Opera Education Department

The Atlanta Opera Center
1575 Northside Drive
Building 300, Suite 350
Atlanta, GA 30318

Preparing Your Students for the Performance

Opera stereotypes can make the art form seem intimidating for some. Breaking down these stereotypes and preparing your students for the performance can make it a more enjoyable experience for everyone. Here are some suggestions of things that you can do before The Atlanta Opera comes to your school:

TEACH YOUR STUDENTS ABOUT OPERA

- Find out what they know about opera. Make a class list of things your students expect to see and hear at the opera. (ELA3R3) See page 14 for suggested activities.
- Introduce basic concepts like aria, overture, and recitative. See page 6 for a list of musical terms.
- Let the students hear what a “trained” voice sounds like. It’s likely that your students have not heard a professional operatic voice before, and this will sound different than pop voices they hear on the radio. A list of suggested listening is included on pages 14 and 28.

TEACH YOUR STUDENTS ABOUT RABBIT TALES

- Introduce the story of *Rabbit Tales* by reading the synopsis of the opera on page 1
- Get to know the stories. *Rabbit Tales* is based on the Br’er Rabbit stories, Native American, African and Cajun stories. Check out some of the suggested activities on page 15. A bibliography of original sources can be found on page 13.
- Listen to some of the suggested musical selections on page 14. These selections were selected by the composer to illustrate the style and musical influence of *Rabbit Tales*.
- Students will have a chance to be a part of the *Rabbit Tales* ensemble during the performance. Use the chicken templates found in the appendix to make chicken masks or headdresses to wear to the performance. Use the shaker craft activities in the appendix to make simple instruments the children can play at points during the performance. Feel free to use other instruments at your school for this purpose as well (shakers, tambourines, etc).

Georgia Performance Standards Connections

Lessons included in the Opera Guide for *Rabbit Tales* are designed to correlate with Georgia Performance Standards for elementary grades in English Language Arts & Reading, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Fine Arts, and Health. Specific standards addressed are listed with each corresponding activity or lesson.

English Language Arts & Reading

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Social Studies

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Fine Arts

Music

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Synopsis

Teenchy Duck – A very young and intrepid person; She has just left home to seek her fortune.

Sister Fox – A friend of Br'er Rabbit and Teenchy Duck; She cannot eat anyone to whom she has been properly introduced, even if the new acquaintance is a duck!

Br'er Rabbit – A tricky fellow, but willing to do a favor for a friend.

King Lion – A greedy braggart; he holds no regards for other's feelings.

SCENE I – The Gold Mesh Purse

It is a hot and sunny day. Br'er Rabbit is fishing in the river. Teenchy Duck enters with her big satchel. She has left her impoverished parents and younger siblings at home and is off to seek her fortune. She is tired and hot, she has been walking a long way down the hot road dragging her satchel. Br'er Rabbit suggests that she take a swim in the river to get the dust off her feathers and cool off. She readily agrees and jumps into the refreshing water. While she is swimming, Teenchy Duck finds a gold mesh purse at the bottom of the river, full of gold and silver money and jewelry, that has obviously been lost by someone. She is very excited because she thinks that perhaps her parent's financial troubles will be over with the newfound riches. Meanwhile, King Lion and Sister Fox have entered the scene.

King Lion convinces himself that he owns the purse and claims it, saying that it is his and he lost it. Full of the glow of successful acquisition, he heads for home.

Sister Fox and Br'er Rabbit figure out that the purse actually belonged to Teenchy Duck's Aunt Tawny Duck. Sister Fox agrees to go after King Lion with Teenchy to get the purse back. Before they leave, Br'er Rabbit asks Teenchy Duck for a bottle he can fill with river water.

SCENE II- The People in the Big House

Teenchy Duck and Sister Fox head down the road in search of King Lion to reclaim the gold mesh purse. To pass the time, Teenchy Duck asks Sister Fox to tell a rabbit story. Br'er Rabbit has caught up with them on the road at this point, and joins in the storytelling...

Sister Fox and Br'er Rabbit tell the story of people in the big house who had all kinds of riches and fancy things, including fire. Of all the fancy things, Sister Fox and Br'er Rabbit wanted fire the most. They tell of how they built a big pile of hollow logs and Rabbit covered his fingers in sap before going to a party at the big house. At the party, Rabbit danced all over the house collecting hot coals with his sticky hands. Then he ran to the wood pile outside, spreading fire as he jumped through the logs. When the pile eventually burned down, there were coals for everyone. And that is how they all got the first fire.

The story passed the time on the road, and soon enough the three characters approach King Lion's gates. Br'er Rabbit gives Teenchy Duck the bottle of river water he saved, and then hides by the woods as Sister Fox and Teenchy Duck go to reclaim the purse.

SCENE III – The Sharp-Toothed People

Sister Fox is hidden in Teenchy Duck's satchel when Teenchy calls to King Lion to give her the gold mesh purse back. King Lion refuses, and pushes Teenchy Duck into his henhouse telling her that she needs to learn a lesson. Sister Fox helps Teenchy escape from the chicken coop and all of the hens escape in the process.

Synopsis (continued)

When King Lion sees Teenchy has escaped from the chicken coop, furiously he pushes her back in and sets fire to the coop. Teenchy puts the fire out with the bottle of river water Br'er Rabbit gave her.

King Lion lowers her into his well for the night so that she can think about how sorry she is for making a mess of chicken coop and land.

Meanwhile, on the edge of the forest, Br'er Rabbit starts to tell the story of a village of sharp toothed people who, in the olden days, claimed all of the river for themselves. The king of the sharp toothed people was a lion, and he was the scariest of all. Rabbit wanted to claim one side of the river, and so he plotted a scheme to trick the lion king. He gathered eggs from the chickens, and hid in the grass as he waited for the lion to come to the river for water. When the lion came to the river, Rabbit rang a bell to startle and upset Lion. Rabbit threw eggs at Lion, telling him they were gifts from the river. Lion, egg all over his eyes and head, thinks he has been wounded. He stumbles into a bees nest and is stung by bees. Lion gives up, telling Rabbit that he is leaving the river.

When King Lion (who has fallen into the role of Lion in the story) says he is leaving, Br'er Rabbit, Sister Fox and Teenchy Duck call him on it and insist that he give back the gold mesh purse. King Lion is embarrassed when the three of them, along with all of his chickens, taunt him and call him a disgrace. King Lion gives in, somewhat grudgingly, and returns the gold mesh purse to Teenchy Duck and asks Sister Fox to tell one more rabbit story.

SCENE IV – Honey Butter

Rabbit, Fox, Lion and Duck were working in their gardens one sunny day. They all brought their lunch with them, but Lion had the most delicious lunch of fresh baked biscuits and honey. Lion teases the others, taunting them with description of his delicious honey. As the group works busily in the garden, Rabbit runs off, telling the others he has to go because his cousin had a baby and he had to give her a name. He sneaks around and eats some honey and then returns to work. Rabbit repeats this trick several times. Eventually it's time for lunch, and when the group goes to get their lunch pails they discover the honey jar – empty by this time, thanks to Rabbit.

When King Lion discovers that Rabbit has eaten all of the honey in the story, he is incensed. Sister Fox points out to him that Lion made Rabbit's tricks easy to excuse by not sharing the entirely imaginary story honey. King Lion learns then that none of the others (Teenchy Duck, Sister Fox, or Br'er Rabbit) have had anything to eat since early morning. He truly realizes at last what a difficult day he has given his friends and offers to share his varied array of delicious pies. The friends eat and sing together, celebrating their reconciliation. And pie.

Meet the Composer and Librettist



Meet the Composer

Nicole Chamberlain is a composer and flutist from Savannah, Georgia. She graduated from the University of Georgia with degrees in Music Composition and Digital Media. After college, Nicole worked for a number of years as a web designer and animator before she was able to make a living as a musician. Currently, Nicole teaches students how to write music and play the flute, while also performing with other ensembles and writing music for other musicians to perform. Nicole not only writes opera, but also composes for orchestra, smaller chamber ensembles, musicals, and film. Nicole lives in Atlanta with her husband, guitarist and composer Brian Chamberlain, but visits her parents often in Savannah, Georgia.



Meet the Librettist

Madeleine St. Romain is a writer and multidisciplinary artist. With composer Robert Boury, she has written 3 family operas, *Cedar Tree and River Water*, *Grandmother Spider Steals the Sun*, and *Seastruck*. Madeleine's visual art has been shown in Eyedrum, Radial Art Space, and the Dalton Gallery. She has performed with Women on Fire and the Acme Theatre Company in venues throughout the southeast. Madeleine was born in New Orleans and now lives in Atlanta with her husband, musician Jeff Tyson, their cat Scintilla, and a lot of books.

Meet the Cast



ELEXA BANCROFT, SOPRANO

Teenchy Duck

Elexa grew up in Tallahassee, Florida. She studied music at Florida State University and also at the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore, Maryland. Elexa's first performance ever was the role of Wendy in *Peter Pan*, and she got to fly! Elexa has four little kitties with big personalities who love to have their pictures taken. Elexa's favorite place is Disney World and she is a huge fan of all things Harry Potter.



ELIZABETH CLAXTON, SOPRANO

Sister Fox

Elizabeth is from Dublin, Georgia. She studied music at Shorter University in Rome, Georgia and the Royal Academy of Music in London. She has performed in operas in Europe and the United States (New Jersey and Georgia). Some of her favorites are *Die Fledermaus* and *Don Giovanni*. In addition to singing, Elizabeth has played the piano, violin, flute and bassoon. Elizabeth's favorite color is green and she has a Westie named Dmitri who likes to sing with her when she practices.



WESLEY MORGAN, TENOR

Br'er Rabbit

Wesley grew up in Sarasota, Florida. He received his Master of Music degree in vocal performance from Georgia State University, where he sang the title role in *Candide*. He has performed in productions with the St. Petersburg Opera, Capitol City Opera, El Paso Opera, Atlanta Lyric Theater, and Greenville Light Opera Works. He has performed in Atlanta Opera mainstage productions of *Cold Sassy Tree* and *Die Zauberflöte*. He has also performed in numerous Studio Tour productions for The Atlanta Opera. In addition to singing, Wesley plays the piano and enjoys listening to jazz, hip hop and musical theater. In his spare time, he enjoys mountain biking and playing with his pet armadillo, Thor.



WADE THOMAS, BARITONE

King Lion

Wade grew up in Calhoun, Georgia and studied music at Samford University and the Ohio State University. He has performed with The Atlanta Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Opera Omaha, and Lincoln Center. Some of Wade's favorite operas are *Rigoletto* and *Turandot*. Wade played the trumpet when he was in school, and he likes to listen to hip-hop and country music in addition to opera. Wade's favorite movie is "The Color Purple" and his favorite books are the Harry Potter series.

Meet the Cast (continued)



CATHERINE SCHAEFER, ACCOMPANIST

Catherine grew up in Spokane, Washington and attended college at Duquesne University and graduate school at the University of Houston. Some of Catherine's favorite places she has worked and performed are Halifax, Nova Scotia, and Sugar Land Opera in Texas. Catherine's first opera experience was performing in the children's chorus for *La bohème* at the Spokane Opera. She plays the violin, sings in choirs, and plays the guitar for fun. In her spare time she likes to read books and watch movies, cook, and anything outdoors.

Glossary of Opera Terms

Actors: Performers who have dialogue or action on stage, but do not sing

Aria: A song in which a character usually share their inner thoughts or feelings, in English it translates to “air”

Baritone: A male voice between the tenor and bass

Bravo: This Italian word is used by audience members to shout to the singers if they think they have done good job

Bass: The lowest male singing voice

Cast: All the singers and actors who appear on stage

Chorus: A group of singers who mostly sing together; sometimes this group contains actors and dancers who do not sing, but who are part of the group as a whole

Comprimarios: From the Italian, meaning “next to the first”, a singer who performs a small character role in an opera

Conductor: The individual who determines the musical direction of the singers and orchestra during the performances by using specific patterns of movement with his or her hands and a baton



Contralto: The lowest female voice part

Duet: A song sung by two singers or voices

Ensemble: Literally “together”; a piece of music to be performed by multiple musicians; also refers to the group performing such a piece

Finale: The final musical number in an opera, often involving multiple soloists and chorus
Finale of *The Elixir of Love* (2009)



The Atlanta Opera's The Elixir of Love, 2009. Photo: Tim Wilkerson

Glossary of Opera Terms (continued)

Libretto: The words or text of an opera

Mezzo-Soprano: Female voice between the soprano and contralto

Operetta: literally “little opera” (in Italian); usually a light comic opera, combining sung and spoken text

Overture: An orchestral piece that may be played at the very beginning of the opera before any action takes place on stage

Principals: A singer who portrays a primary character in an opera

Quartet: A song sung by four singers or voices

Recitative: A part of the opera in which the singers talk to each other

Score: A notated piece of music showing each vocal or instrumental part on its own staff

Soprano: The highest singing voice in women and children

Supernumerary: A performer who appears in a non-singing/non-speaking role, like an “extra” in a movie

Tenor: A high adult male voice

Trio: A song sung by three singers or voices



Supernumeraries in *The Atlanta Opera's The Flying Dutchman*, 2009. Photo: Tim Wilkerson

Glossary of Words from *Rabbit Tales*

Concessions: something done or agreed to usually grudgingly in order to reach an agreement or improve a situation (*King Lion must make some concessions in order for his poultry to come back.*)

Debonair: suave: urbane: nonchalant (*Fox and Rabbit went all debonair to the party in the big house.*)

Desolate: showing the effects of abandonment and neglect (*What desolate fruitless hunting for the lost gold mesh purse.*)

Extortionist: the act or practice of extorting especially money or other property (*King Lion calls Teenchy Duck an extortionist, claiming she stole his gold mesh purse.*)

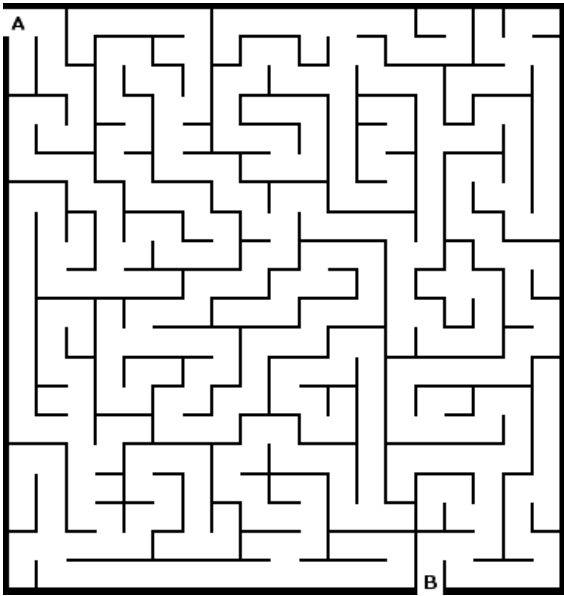
Incident: an occurrence of an action or situation that is a separate unit of experience (*Sister Fox was not instrumental in any unfortunate incident such as attacking ducks.*)

Inclined: having inclination, disposition, or tendency (*King Lion says he will only let Teenchy up out of the well when he is inclined to do so.*)

Infamy: evil reputation brought about by something grossly criminal, shocking, or brutal (*King Lion wants to show that he and Br'er Rabbit are alike in infamy. They are both tricksters.*)

Inveigle: to win over by wiles: entice (*Sister Fox, Teenchy Duck and Br'er Rabbit want to show King Lion just what it's like to lose something, so they attempt to inveigle him into a rabbit story.*)

Mazy: resembling a maze (*They collected hollow logs to make fire and snaked them together in a mazy pile.*)



Negotiation: the action or process of negotiating or being negotiated —often used in plural (*King Lion's poultry may not come back after leaving unless there is some serious negotiation made.*)

Nuisance: one that is annoying, unpleasant, or obnoxious (*King Lion thinks Teenchy Duck is a nuisance.*)

Oozing: to move slowly or imperceptibly (*There is something oozing down King Lion's neck.*)

Pitch: (noun) resin obtained from various conifers and often used medicinally (*Rabbit covered his paws with pine pitch to make them sticky.*)

Glossary of Words from *Rabbit Tales* (cont.)

Preen: to groom with the bill especially by rearranging the barbs and barbules of the feathers and by distributing oil from the uropygial gland (*Teenchy Duck preens her feathers to look her best.*)



Raft: an aggregation of animals (as waterfowl) resting on the water (*Teenchy Duck leaves a raft of new ducklings at home with her parents*)



Satchel: A small bag for books or clothing, often having a shoulder strap. (*Teenchy Duck carries Sister Fox down the dusty road in her satchel*)

Savory: Piquant, pungent, or salty to the taste; not sweet (*The Rabbit Tales characters enjoy savory cheese and spinach pie.*)

Scampered: to run nimbly and usually playfully about (*Br'er Rabbit scampered down the road toward home.*)

Scheme: to form plans (*Rabbit needed to plan and scheme to find a way to get back at King Lion.*)

Scorching: intense heat or mental anguish (*It's a scorching afternoon on the dusty road.*)

Scudding: to move or run swiftly especially as if driven forward (*The sky is full of scudding clouds.*)

Sidled: To advance in an unobtrusive, furtive, or coy way (*Rabbit sidled back the place where the lunches were to sneak some honey.*)

Snake: (verb) to wind in the manner of a snake (*They snaked the hollow logs together.*)

Glossary of Words from *Rabbit Tales* (cont.)

Succulent: Highly interesting or enjoyable; delectable (*The Rabbit Tales* characters enjoy succulent lemon chiffon pie.)



Unhindered: not slowed or blocked or interfered with (There is nowhere Rabbit can walk unhindered because Lion claims all the land by the river.)

Venom: poisonous matter normally secreted by some animals (as snakes, scorpions, or bees) and transmitted to prey or an enemy chiefly by biting or stinging (The bees sting King Lion and fill him with venom.)

Where did Br'er Rabbit Come From?



Where did Br'er Rabbit come from?

The Br'er Rabbit stories can be traced back to trickster figures in Africa, particularly the hare that figures prominently in the storytelling traditions in Western, Central and Southern Africa. These tales continue to be part of the traditional folklore of numerous peoples throughout those regions. In the Akan traditions of West Africa, the trickster is usually the spider (as in the Anansi stories), though the plots of spider tales are often identical to those of rabbit stories.

Rabbit and Hare myths abound among Algonquin Indians in Eastern North America, particularly under the name Nanabozho. The Great Hare is generally regarded as the supreme deity among tribes in eastern Canada. To say that a story only originates from one culture and not another can only be true when a group of people exist in complete isolation from others.

Br'er Rabbit is a central figure in the Uncle Remus stories of the Joel Chandler Harris. He is a trickster character who succeeds by his wits rather than by brawn, tweaking authority figures and bending social mores as he sees fit. The Br'er Rabbit stories have been linked to both African and Cherokee cultures, however the majority of the Br'er Rabbit stories originated in Africa. The stories were told and retold by enslaved Africans and the tales evolved with the changing times and circumstances. The stories spread quickly on southern plantations and piqued the interest of several writers, like Robert Roosevelt, an author and United States Congressman, and Alcée Fortier, a professor at Tulane University in New Orleans.

Joel Chandler Harris' versions, however, were easily the most successful. Having spent four years working on a plantation as a young man, Harris himself grew up amongst the stories and storytellers. His keen ear, combined with great wit, meticulous research, and a fortuitous position at the *Atlanta Constitution*, allowed the stories to flourish around the globe.

Harris created the Uncle Remus character to narrate the tales. Based on a few of the slaves that Harris looked up to as a young man, Uncle Remus became one of the first fully developed African American characters in American literature. Br'er Rabbit and his influence have been a part of our culture ever since. From Beatrix Potter to Bugs Bunny, from *Song of the South* to *8 Mile*, from Ralph Ellison to Toni Morrison, the Br'er Rabbit stories have captivated the minds of children and adults all over the world for well over a century.



Joel Chandler Harris

Who was Joel Chandler Harris?

Joel Chandler Harris recreated the Br'er Rabbit tales in print between 1876 and 1908. He was born in Eatonton, Georgia in 1845, where he went to school and worked as an apprentice at *The Countryman* newspaper on a plantation as a young teenager. As a young adult, he and his wife lived in Savannah, where Harris was associate editor of the *Savannah Morning News*. The couple left Savannah in 1876 to avoid a yellow fever epidemic, and Harris accepted a position from Henry W. Grady at the *Atlanta Constitution*. It was not long after this that he began writing the Uncle Remus stories as a

Where did Br'er Rabbit Come From? (cont.)



Joel Chandler Harris

serial in the newspaper. His first book, *Uncle Remus: His Songs and Sayings*, was published in 1880. Harris rented a house in Atlanta's West End from the *Atlanta Constitution*. (It was sort of like faculty housing at a university.) He was eventually able to purchase the home with advances of royalties from his publisher. The home was called the Wren's Nest, and this is where Harris spent most of his time writing both for the newspaper and for his next book, *Nights with Uncle Remus*, as well as stories for magazines. Harris was a significant voice for the New South and a staunch advocate for regional and racial reconciliation. He and his wife had a total of nine children, six of whom surviving past childhood. At the time of his death in 1908, Joel Chandler Harris' popularity as a writer was surpassed only by that of his friend and admirer, Mark Twain.



Folktales tales from around the world

Folktales are stories or legends forming part of an oral tradition. Folktales are more frequently told than read and are passed down from one generation to another. They change over time, taking on the characteristics of the time and place in which they are told, and sometimes take on the personality of the storyteller. Folktales speak to universal and timeless themes and function to validate certain aspects of culture.

Rabbit Tales draws from African-American, Native American, and Cajun folktales. Specific sources for the opera are listed below.

Teenchy-Tiny Duck and Mr. Rabbit Nibbles Up the Butter:

Harris, J.C. (1955). *The Complete Tales of Uncle Remus*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Br'er Rabbit Eats the Butter:

Lester, J., Pinkney, J., & Harris, J.C. (2006). *The Tales of Uncle Remus: The Adventures of Brer Rabbit* (Puffin Modern Classics ed.). New York: Puffin Books.

The Theft of Honey:

Reneaux, J.J. (1992). *Cajun Folktales*. Little Rock: August House Publishers.

The Big Barrel of Butter:

Ancelet, B.J. (1994). *Cajun and Creole Folktales: The French Oral Tradition of South Louisiana*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.

All the Little Animals (Gbaya story):

Abrahams, R.D. (1983). *African Folktales*. New York: Pantheon Books.

The Theft of Fire (Hitchiti story):

Lankford, G.E. (1998). *Native American Legends: The Southeast*. August House Publishers, Inc.

The Theft of Fire (Yuchi story):

Bierhorst, J. (2002). *The Mythology of North America*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Where did Br'er Rabbit Come From? (cont.)

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Bierhorst, J. (2002). *The Mythology of North America*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Harris, J.C. (1955). *The Complete Tales of Uncle Remus*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Lankford, G.E. (1998). *Native American Legends: The Southeast*. August House Publishers, Inc.

Lester, J., Pinkney, J., & Harris, J.C. (2006). *The Tales of Uncle Remus: The Adventures of Brer Rabbit* (Puffin Modern Classics ed.). New York: Puffin Books.

Reneaux, J.J. (1992). *Cajun Folktales*. Little Rock: August House Publishers.



Musical Influences & Quotes from *Rabbit Tales*

Composer Nicole Chamberlain drew inspiration from many sources during the planning and composition process for *Rabbit Tales*. In fact, students may recognize some famous opera quotes during the performances. Specifically, audiences may be familiar with the following:

Das Rheingold by Richard Wagner – The composer uses the “water theme” at the opening of *Das Rheingold* in “It’s a Fine Day”. The E-flat arpeggio sets the scene for Teenchy Duck to cool off from her trek and take a swim in the river. This motif is also used as a water theme throughout *Rabbit Tales*.

Die Zauberflöte by W.A. Mozart - “Der Hölle Rache kocht in meinem Herzen”, the Queen of the Night Aria, is quoted in *Rabbit Tales* by King Lion’s poultry as “Queen of the Chickens”.



The Queen of the Night Aria from The Atlanta Opera's The Magic Flute, 2010. Photo: Tim Wilkerson

Other pieces that are not quoted directly but certainly stylistically by the composer are listed below. Nicole suggests that listening to some of the pieces listed here may prepare children for the sounds of *Rabbit Tales*.

Porgy and Bess by George Gershwin

“Knoxville: Summer of 1915” by Samuel Barber

“Our Town” by Aaron Copland

Nicole also uses tonalities, rhythms and melodic lines in the style of Native American hymns, Zydeco, Blues, Jazz and West African music in this opera.

Suggested Pre-Performance Activities

Find out what preconceptions your students may have about opera before you tell them anything about it. Here are some ideas:

- Split the students into groups and have them act out a 1-minute scene that includes all their ideas of what they think opera is (fat ladies and all – make no restrictions here). Do the same activity after they have watched the performance. (TAES 3)
- Divide the bulletin board into two sections. On one half, have the students post descriptive words related to opera (don't limit them to “nice” words). After watching the performance, collect a second list and post these words on the other half. (MESGM.7-10, ELA2R3, ELA3R2, ELA4R3, ELA5R3, ELA2LSV1, ELA4LSV1, ELA5LSV1)



Have the students draw pictures of what they think a typical opera singer looks like. Go to a few of the famous opera websites listed on page 28 and look at their photographs. Get students' reactions to what opera stars really look like. (VAKMC.1 - VA5MC.1, VAKMC.2 – VA5MC.2, VAKPR.1-4 – VA5PR.1-4)

Discuss some characteristics of opera. (MESGM7, MESGM9-10, ELAKLSV1, ELA1LSV1, ELA2LSV1, ELA3LSV1, ELA4LSV1, ELA5LSV1)

For example:

- Sometimes it takes longer to express an idea since the words are sung instead of spoken
- When several characters are singing at the same time (this is called an ensemble), they can each sing about different things. This wouldn't be possible if all the characters were speaking instead of singing.
- The action often stops so that a character can express how he/she is feeling by singing an aria. Shakespeare did this with soliloquies (“To be or not to be...”).
- It's okay if you can't understand every word that is sung (i.e., if it's in a different language) because the music will help set the context of the story.



Kiera Duffy in *The Atlanta Opera's Cosi fan tutte*, 2011 Photo: Tim Wilkerson

Introduce opera vocabulary. Refer to the “Glossary of Opera Terms” on page 6. Talk with the students about which of these they may hear and/or see during the performance. Are any of these words familiar in other settings? Are there root words, prefixes or suffixes that are familiar or lend an idea to the meaning of the term? (ELAKR5, ELA5R3, ELA1R5, ELA2R3, ELA3R2, ELA4R3, ELAKLSV1 – ELA5LSV1)

Start with the story. In simple terms, an opera is just a story that is sung. Before the performance, read them the plot synopsis of *Rabbit Tales* (pg. 1). Then brainstorm with the students: What would be a good topic for an opera? Think about movies, books, fairy tales, historical events, and everyday situations. What kind of music would accompany different topics... fast/slow, loud/soft, smooth/jumpy? (MESGM7, MESGM9-10, ELAKLSV1, ELA1LSV1, ELA2LSV1, ELA3LSV1, ELA4LSV1, ELA5LSV1, ELA2R4, ELA4R1, ELA1R6, ELA3R3)

Suggested Pre-Performance Activities (cont.)

Introduce *Rabbit Tales* vocabulary. Use the “Glossary of Words from *Rabbit Tales* Terms” on page 8. Review the list of vocabulary terms with the students prior to the performance of *Rabbit Tales*. Are any of these words familiar in other settings? Are there root words, prefixes or suffixes that are familiar or lend an idea to the meaning of the term? Ask the students to use each term in a sentence. Have the students use a dictionary to find other definitions and thesaurus to find synonyms and antonyms. Ask the students to alphabetize the list of vocabulary terms. Ask the students to sequence the words in order of how they appear throughout the story. (ELAKR5, ELA5R3, ELA1R5, ELA2R3, ELA3R2, ELA4R3, ELAKLSV1 – ELA5LSV1)

Listen to the suggested samples on page 14. Have the students listen to the differences between operatic music and other types of music they are familiar with such as pop, rap, country, jazz, or musical theater. Discuss the differences in vocal quality, range of dynamics, dramatic intensity, instrumentation, etc. See page 24 for a comparison of trained and untrained voices. (MKGM.6, MKGM.7, MKGM.8, M1GM.6-8, M2GM.6-8, M3GM.6-8, M4GM.6-8, M5GM.6-8)

Ask the students who their favorite singers are. Discuss whether or not they sound like trained classical singers, explaining why or why not. See pg. 25 for a comparison of trained and untrained voices. (MESGM7-8)

Talk about the people required to produce an opera. There are four groups of people necessary for an operatic performance to happen: creators, producers, performers and observers. Discuss the roles of different people involved in an opera production. Talk about what would happen if even one of these groups didn't do their job. (MESGM9)

Write a press release with details about the *Rabbit Tales* performance at your school. Make sure to include essential press release elements including the name of your school, contact person, a brief narrative description of the project, specific details about the event (who, what, where, when), any logistical details such as parking or check-in procedures, sponsor information (if applicable), and basic information about your school. A sample Atlanta Opera press release is included on page 46. (ELA4W1-4, ELA5W1-4)

Play a popular song the students will recognize. Discuss how changing certain elements of the music (tempo, instrumentation, vocal timbre, text) would alter the overall effect of the song. (MKGM.6-7, M1GM.6-7, M2GM.6-7, M3GM.6-7, M4GM.6-7, M5GM.6-7)

Write an original song. Within small groups, give each student a specific role in the composition/performance process: librettist (words), composer (melody), vocalist, instrumentalist, etc. Start by writing a short rhyming verse. Then add a simple melody. Next add accompaniment, and then perform it. Have students create their own instruments using simple objects available to them. The group should aim to perform a song which gives each member a different identity. Experiment with different timbres and tempi, see how changes affect the song. (MKGM.4-5, M1GM.1-2, M1GM.4-5, M2GM.1-2, M2GM.4-5, M3GM.1-2, M3GM.4-5, M4GM.1-3, M4GM.4-5, M5GM.1-3, M5GM.4-5)

Discuss how opera is like a play (they both have a story, characters, costumes, audiences and words) and how it is different (opera has singers, music throughout arias, duets, ensembles, etc). Similar comparisons can be made with movies, television, musical theater and ballet. (MESGM9)

Suggested Pre-Performance Activities (cont.)



Put on a play. Go through the production process from start to finish. Hold auditions, post a cast list, create simple costumes, build a set, rehearse lines, stage the action, and perform! (TAESK-1.1-7, TAES2-3.1-7, TAES4-5.1-7)

Discuss the viewpoint from which *Rabbit Tales* is told. Divide students into groups, and have them write their own story from the perspective of one of the characters from the opera. Allow students to perform their plays for one another. List the inconsistencies between each version and discuss how a situation can seem different when looked at from someone else’s perspective. (TAESK-5.1-10, TAES2-5.11, ELA5LSV1, ELA5W1, ELA5R1, ELA4R1, ELA4W1, ELA4LSV1, ELA3W1)

Look at the importance of setting. Sometimes a director may take artistic license and decide s/he wants their production of an opera to be set in a non-traditional time and place. For example, s/he might set the fairy tale Hansel and Gretel in a modern-day high school. The Mom and Dad would be the children’s favorite teachers, while the witch might be an evil substitute. Instead of a forest, Hansel and Gretel could wander through the basement of the school. *Rabbit Tales* takes place in the late 19th century near a river. Pick an unlikely time and place for the story like the year 2100 on Mars. How would a time/location change affect the way the actors would portray their characters? Think about their speech patterns, the way they walk and carry themselves, their costumes and their interactions with one another. Discuss the differences. Have students pick their own location and sketch out their ideas for sets and costumes. (ELA5LSV1, ELA5W1, ELA5R1, ELA4R1, ELA4W1, ELA4LSV1, ELA3W1)



The Elixir of Love



The Elixir of Love

Map out a storyboard. After reading the synopsis of *Rabbit Tales*, have the students create a storyboard to illustrate the sequence of events and what they think the opera might look like. Have the students share their storyboards in small groups. See page 45 for an example of storyboard director Park Cofield used in the development of *Rabbit Tales*. (ELAKR1, ELAKR6, ELAKW1, ELAKW2, ELAKLSV1, ELA1R6, ELA1W2, ELA1LSV1, ELA2R4, ELA2W1, ELA2W2, ELA2LSV1)

Design a poster to promote the opera. The Atlanta Opera marketing department designs all the printed materials for a production. Create posters or programs for the upcoming production of *Rabbit Tales* that might represent the “look” of the show and draw people to attend. Display the posters in your school to let people know about the performance. Send samples to The Atlanta Opera! (VAKMC.3, VAKPR.6, VAKCO.12, VA1MC.2, VA1MC.3, VA1PR.6, VA1CO.12, VA2MC.3, VA2PR.6, VA2CO.12, VA3PR.6, VA3CO.12, VA4PR.6)

Suggested Pre-Performance Activities (cont.)

Make a *Rabbit Tales*-themed head dress or instrument. Students in the audience will be invited to participate during the performance of *Rabbit Tales*. There will be an opportunity for students to act as the “chicken chorus” from their seats and also to provide musical accompaniment during several selections. Lead the students in a craft activity prior to the performance using the templates found on page 49 of the appendix or feel free to create your own mask or instrument craft! Feel free to provide the students with percussion instruments such as shakers, tambourines, small drums, etc. for the performance if they are available at your school.

Select activities originally created and reprinted with permission by Nashville Opera’s Education Department, Stuart Holt – Director of Education and Outreach

Opera at a Glance

WHAT IS OPERA?

Opera is a dramatic story told through song. It is considered by many to be the most complete art form, combining all of the elements of art, words, music, drama and dance. The earliest Italian operas were called several things, such as “favola in musica” (fable in music) and “dramma per musica” (drama by means of music). This last title is very close to the dictionary definition, and is the correct basis for any discussion about opera.

The unique thing in opera is the use of music to convey an entire story/plot. This is based on the feeling that music can communicate people’s reactions and emotions better than words (read or spoken) or pictures. Opera takes any type of dramatic story and tried to make it more exciting and more believable with the help of music. Many famous stories have been made into operas, including *Cinderella*, *Hansel and Gretel*, and *Romeo and Juliet*.

HOW DID OPERA GET STARTED?

The concept of opera was developing many years before the first opera was written. Its beginning can be traced to the ancient Greeks. They fused poetry and music, creating plays that incorporate song, spoken language and dance, accompanied by string or wind instruments.



Bernini's *Apollo and Daphne*

In the 1100s the early Christian church set religious stories to music, a style known as liturgical drama. The first true opera, *Daphne*, was composed by Jacopo Peri (1561-1633). It told the story of a Greek myth. The first great composer of opera was Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643). Some of his operas are still performed today.

HOW IS OPERA DIFFERENT AROUND THE WORLD?

Italy was the first country where opera became popular. It was the homeland of Jacopo Peri and Claudio Monteverdi. In time this exciting form of entertainment spread to the rest of Europe. France and Germany joined Italy as the principal opera producers. Eventually opera came to reflect the stories and musical styles of each of these countries.

The Italians have always been famous for their love of singing, and so in Italian Opera there has always been great emphasis placed on the singer and the beautiful sounds of the human voice. It wasn't until the late 19TH century and early 20TH century with the later works of Verdi and the operas of Puccini was a balance achieved between the role of the orchestra and that of the singer, and the combining of these two forces, to give a more effective presentation of the story.

The French have favored the pictorial side of drama, and this has led to a continuing emphasis on the visual spectacle, especially with dancing. An example of this: the Paris opera in the 19TH century would not accept a work for performance if it did not contain a major ballet. Verdi, an Italian composer, had to add ballets to all of his works to get them performed in Paris.



Giuseppe Verdi

Opera at a Glance (cont.)

The Germans have always sought to extract from both the Italian and French traditions, and go beyond both in an attempt to present more than just a story. In fact, one of the greatest German opera composers, Richard Wagner, chose legends or myths for most of his opera plots so that he could communicate ideas as well as just a story.

ELEMENTS OF OPERA

A **score** is the blueprint to an opera. It consists of the words, music, stage directions, and often performance notes for the entire show. An opera score is often divided into sections. It begins with the **overture**, followed by one to five **acts**, and one or more **intermissions**. Each act may be divided into scenes. The scenes are comprised of **recitatives**, **arias**, **duets**, larger **ensembles**, and **choruses**.

OPERA

Overture

Musical introduction played by the orchestra that often consists of excerpts from the opera.

Act

A group of scenes with a common theme, such as a specific time or place. Most operas consist of 1-5 acts.

Recitative

Speechlike singing that advances the plot & fills the spaces between arias and choruses.

Chorus

A musical piece sung by a group of people. The chorus may sing on stage or off stage.

Duet

A musical piece sung by 2 people.

Trio

A musical piece sung by 3 people.

Aria

A piece sung by one person. Arias allow singers to “show off” while reflecting on their emotions.

Intermission

A break between acts. This allows the audience to stretch and the performers to rest. Singing is hard work!

Check out the excerpt of *Rabbit Tales* score on the next page.

RABBIT TALES

1402

TD
neigh - bors Pleas - ant con - ver - sa - tion To - night there's pie

SF
neigh - bors Pleas - ant con - ver - sa - tion To - night there's pie

BR
neigh - bors Pleas - ant con - ver - sa - tion To - night there's pie

KL
neigh - bors Pleas - ant con - ver - sa - tion To - night there's pie

1406

TD
for ev'-ry-one For to - night our trou - bles are all done! *f* Good

SF
for ev'-ry-one For to - night our trou - bles are all done! *f* Good

BR
for ev'-ry-one For to - night our trou - bles are all done! Good

KL
for ev'-ry-one For to - night our trou - bles are all done! *f* Good

Opera at a Glance (cont.)

DIFFERENT STYLES OF OPERA

Bel Canto

This Italian phrase means “beautiful singing”. These operas grew from a style of singing emphasizing long phrases, breath control and flexibility in singing both loudly and softly. Because the voice is considered the most expressive element, the words are often secondary. Gaetano Donizetti composed in this style.



The Atlanta Opera's Cinderella, 2008. Photo: Tim Wilkerson

Opera Buffa

Comic opera, always sung in Italian. The jokesters in these operas are always the working class, such as maids, peasants, or servants, who keep busy getting the best of their employers. Gioachino Rossini composed in this style.

Opera Seria

Serious opera. These stories are often tragic, and typically involve heroes and kings or ancient myths and gods. Some of Handel's operas are in this style.



The Atlanta Opera's The Magic Flute, 2010. Photo: Tim Wilkerson

Singspiel

Singspiel evolved in German speaking countries out of the comic opera tradition. It includes elements of comic opera, spoken dialogue interjected among the sung phrases, and, often, an exotic or fanciful theme. Mozart's *The Magic Flute* is an example of this style.

Grand Opera

Spectacular opera. It is performed with elaborate sets and costumes. Many people are needed to make it happen. Grand opera involves royalty, heroism, an elaborate ballet scene, and is often long. Composer Giacomo Meyerbeer wrote opera in this style.

Music Drama

A style of opera that is created by a single artist who writes both the text and the music to advance the drama. This style fuses many art forms, and makes each one as important as the others. Composer Richard Wagner defined this style.

Operatic Voices

CHARACTERISTICS OF A TRAINED VOICE

Singing in Europe and America is now generally divided into two categories: classical and popular. What most people think of as operatic or classical singing developed in Europe hundreds of years ago. This style flourished during the seventeenth century as opera became a popular form of entertainment and operatic music increased in complexity. The most recognizable characteristics of a classically trained voice are:

- an extensive range (the ability to sing both high and low)
- varying degrees of volume (loud and soft)
- resonance in the chest and sinus cavities (produces a hooty, full or round sound)
- an ability to project or fill a large space without amplification

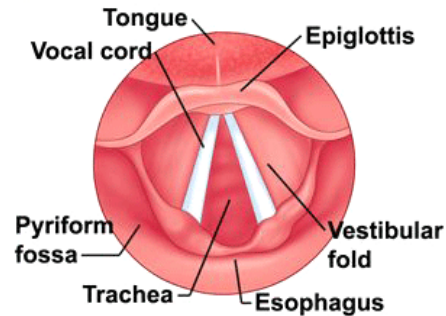
TRAINING

Very few people are born with the capability to sing this way. Classical singers take voice lessons about once a week and practice every day for many years in order to develop a beautiful operatic sound. In fact, most trained voices are not mature enough to perform leading roles on a big stage until they're at least 28 years old. Compare that with the most popular singers on the radio today...Britney Spears was 15 when her first album was released!

TWO TINY MUSCLES

Science tells us that all sound is made by two things vibrating together. The same concept applies when we talk or sing. The sounds we make are really just the vibration of two little muscles called the vocal chords. The vocal chords are held in the larynx, which is sometimes called the voicebox or (in boys) the Adam's Apple. These two little folds of tissue vary in length but are typically between 1 and 2 inches long. When you want to say something, your

brain tells your vocal chords to pull together until they're touching lightly. Then, air pushes through them, and the vocal chords begin to vibrate, opening and closing very quickly. This vibration creates



a sound. The pitches you sing are dependent on the speed at which the chords vibrate. A faster vibration creates a higher pitch. The length of the chords also affects the pitch of the voice. Longer chords equal a lower voice.

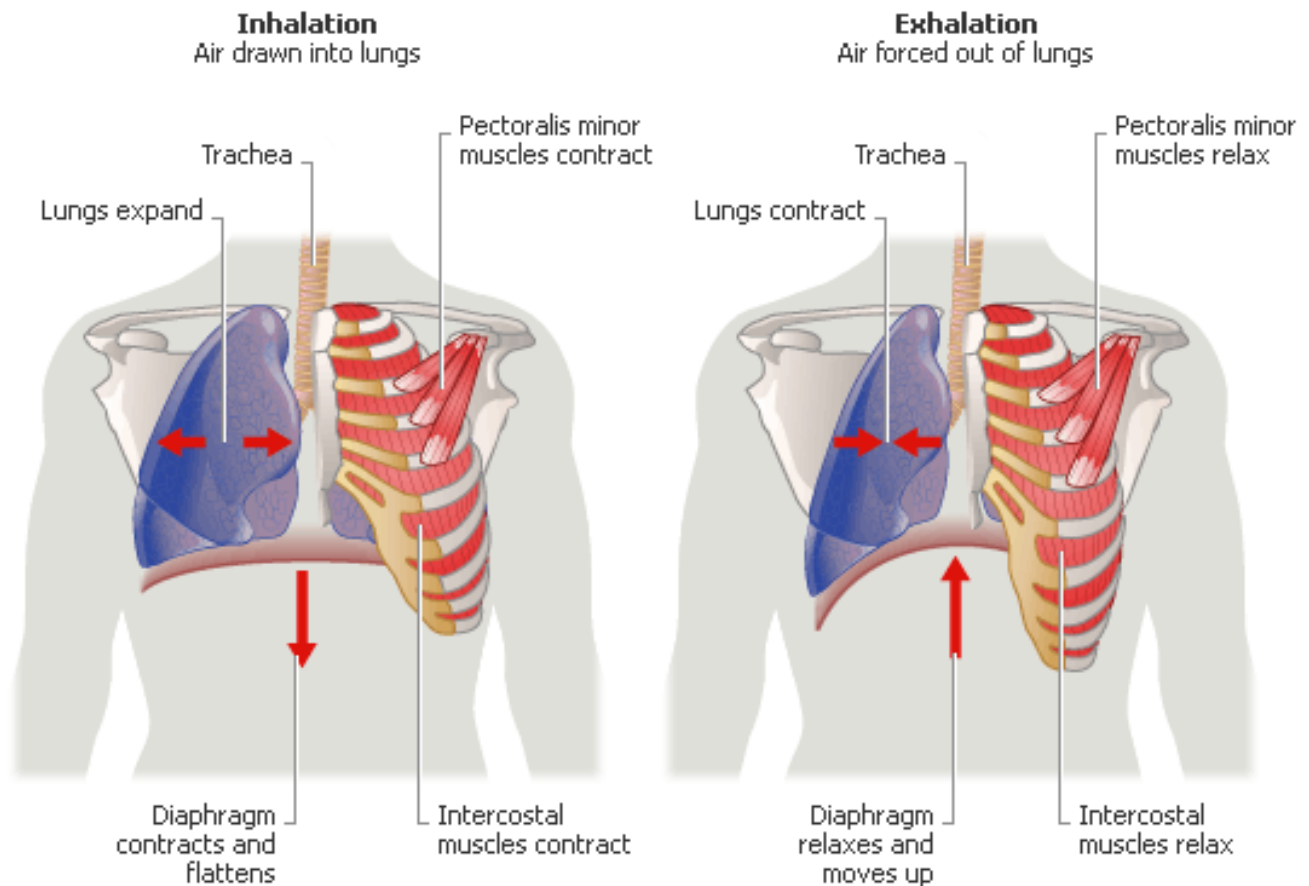
THE REST OF THE BODY

The vocal chords are only a small component of a larger machine which creates a beautiful singing voice. That machine is the entire body, from the tip of the toes to the top of the head. In order to sing with ease, every muscle needs to be relaxed (but not lazy!). If even one muscle is tense, it can throw off the entire machine, which is immediately obvious in a singer's vocal quality.

BREATHING/SUPPORT

In order to sing long phrases with a lot of volume and a good tone, singers must breathe in a specific manner, making use of the whole torso area (lungs, ribs, diaphragm and viscera). As they breathe in, each part of this network does its job: the lungs fill up, which forces the ribs to expand and the diaphragm (a flat muscle below the lungs) to move down. As the diaphragm descends, the viscera (stomach, intestines and other organs) are forced down and out. Singers describe this feeling as fatness

Operatic Voices (cont.)

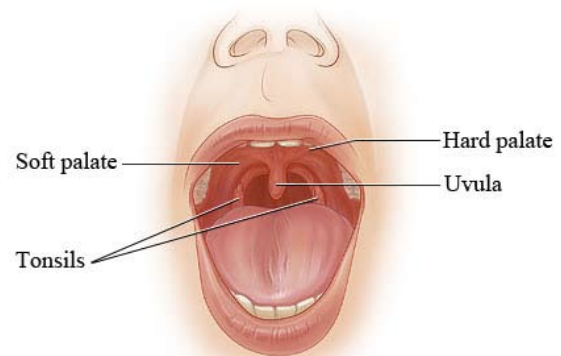


in the low stomach or filling an inner-tube around their waist. Expelling the air, or singing, is essentially a slow and controlled movement of those muscles. If all of the air escapes from the lungs quickly, the tone of the voice will sound breathy and will lack intensity. Successful opera singers must be able to isolate the diaphragm and ribs, controlling the rate at which they return to their original positions. This allows for a consistent stream of air that travels from the lungs, through the larynx and out of the mouth.

RESONANCE

One of the most obvious characteristics of an operatic voice is a full, resonant tone. Singers achieve this by lifting their soft palate. This is a part of the mouth that most people don't ever think about and it can be difficult to isolate. Here are some simple

exercises to feel where it is and hear the resonance in your voice when you lift it: Start to yawn. Feel that lifting sensation in the back of your mouth? That is the soft palate going up. With a relaxed mouth, slide your tongue along the roof of your mouth, from your teeth back toward your throat. You should feel your tongue go up, then down



Operatic Voices (cont.)

(that's your hard palate), then back up again. That soft, fleshy area at the very back is your soft palate. Say the word "who" like you would say it in normal conversation. Now, say "hoooo" like a hoot owl. Can you hear the difference?

Say the sentence "How do you do?" as if you were an old British woman. Lifting the soft palate is the foundation for the resonance in a singer's voice.

With a lot of practice, a singer can lift his or her palate as soon as they begin to sing, without even thinking about it.

VIBRATO

Proper breathing and full resonance are essential for producing a clear vocal tone with an even vibrato (the Italian word meaning to vibrate). Vibrato can be described as a wiggle in the voice or, technically, a consistent variation in the pitch of a tone. While many pop singers try to remove this element of singing for the sake of style, vibrato in an opera singer's voice is a must. It increases the warmth and resonance of the tone and also allows for accurate tuning.

REGISTERS OF THE VOICE

Head voice

Without getting too technical, the head voice is the higher register, which is achieved by tapping into the resonance in the sinus cavities. It's called the head voice because you literally feel like your voice is coming out of your head rather than your throat or chest.

Chest voice

This is where the natural speaking voice falls. If you put your hand on your chest and yell "Hey!" you can feel that this register resonates in the chest rather than the head. Broadway and pop singers use it almost exclusively, but female opera singers generally avoid it unless they are singing really low notes. Even then, it must have the same fullness as the head voice. Men sing mostly in this voice.

Falsetto

This register applies to male voices only. Falsetto happens when the vocal chords do not vibrate fully, which creates a high, feminine sound. It is frequently used by male characters when they are imitating females.

A COMPARISON: TRAINED VS. UNTRAINED

Since we've already covered the characteristics of a trained voice, it may be interesting to see how they differ from those of an untrained voice. (Remember, it's important to be able to compare the differences between two things without implying that one is superior to the other; an operatic voice is great for opera, but would sound silly in a pop song where an untrained voice is more appropriate.) Singers of pop music, rock and roll, R&B, folk and country are often referred to as commercial. While their styles vary considerably, the way they use their voices seems to be relatively consistent.

Training

First of all, commercial singers don't historically train like classical singers do. Many of the most successful non-classical singers of today are known more for their unique style, natural talent and personality than for their technical mastery of the voice.

Breathing / Support

Unlike classical singers, commercial singers usually breathe just as they would when they're speaking normally. A long phrase might warrant a big breath, but studying the placement and movement of one's internal organs is not usually done by pop singers.

Resonance

Most commercial singers are not concerned with creating a resonant tone. In fact, a pop song sung with a lot of resonance would probably sound pretty silly to most people.

Projection / Volume

Essentially all commercial singers depend upon mi-

Operatic Voices (cont.)

crophones to be heard in a large performance space. This enables the singers to deliver their message in either a loud, dramatic style, or in an intimate, conversational style, with little physical effort. Opera singers, however, depend on the acoustics of the performance space and their ability to project their voices naturally to be heard. Microphones are rarely used in operatic performances.

Voice Types

All classical singers fall into one of the categories listed below. A singer cannot choose his/her voice-type it is something they are born with. Composers usually assign a voice type to a character based on his/her personality or age. Read these descriptions for specific examples.

FEMALE VOICES

Soprano

This is the highest female voice and has a range similar to a violin. In opera, the soprano most often plays the young girl or the heroine (sometimes called the Prima Donna), since a high bright voice traditionally suggests femininity, virtue and innocence. The normal range of a soprano is two octaves up from middle C, sometimes with extra top notes. Most women are sopranos.

Mezzo-Soprano

Also called a *mezzo*, this is the middle female voice and has a range similar to an oboe. A *mezzo's* sound is often darker and warmer than a soprano's. In opera, composers generally use a *mezzo* to portray older women, villainesses, seductive heroines, and sometimes even young boys (like Hansel). This is a special operatic convention called a trouser role or a pants role. The *mezzo's* normal range is from the A below middle C to the A two octaves above it.

Contralto

This is the lowest female voice and has a range similar to a clarinet. Contraltos usually sing the roles

of older females or special character parts such as witches and old gypsies. The range is two octaves from F below middle C to the top line of the treble clef. A true contralto is very rare, some believe they don't exist at all!

MALE VOICES

Countertenor

This is the highest male voice, which was mainly used in very early opera and oratorio (a genre of classical vocal music similar to opera but generally based on a religious topic and accompanied by a choir). The voice of a countertenor sounds very much like a mezzo-soprano's voice and they often sing the same repertoire. Like the contralto, true countertenors are very rare.

Tenor

This is usually the highest male voice in an opera. It is similar to a trumpet in range, tone, color, and acoustical ring. The tenor typically plays the hero or the love interest in an opera. His voice ranges from the C below middle C to the C above.

Baritone

This is the middle male voice and is close to a French horn in range and tone color. In opera buffa (comedy opera), the baritone is often the ring-leader of the comedy, but in opera seria (serious or tragic opera), he is usually the villain. The range is from the G that is an octave and a half below middle C to G above.

Bass

This is the lowest male voice and is similar to a trombone or bassoon in range and color.

Low voices usually suggest age and wisdom in serious opera. In comic opera they are generally used for old characters who are foolish or laughable. The range is roughly two octaves down from the F above middle C.

Operatic Voices (cont.)

VOICE TYPES BASED ON SIZE AND QUALITY

Voices are also categorized according to size and quality. There are small, medium, medium-large and large voices in opera. The quality of a voice can be defined using the following terms:

Soubrette

A soprano of very light vocal weight, comparatively small range, and has the looks of a young girl. Soubrette roles are often flirtatious and witty, and outsmart the rich and powerful by the end of the opera. Many soubrette roles have names that end in -ina: Despina (Mozart's *Così fan tutte*), Adina (Donizetti's *The Elixir of Love*), and Zerlina (Mozart's *Don Giovanni*) are soubrettes.

Character

Singers with an exceedingly unique and not always beautiful sound can make a fine living singing character roles. While they don't get the biggest paycheck, they do tend to get all the laughs. This classification is reserved for the lower voices (*mezzo*, tenor, baritone, and bass). Examples are the Witch (Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel*) and the stuttering lawyer Don Curzio (Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*).

Coloratura

Female singers described as coloraturas have great vocal agility, stunning high notes, and the ability to sing complicated vocal ornamentation. The Queen of the Night (Mozart's *The Magic Flute*) is a coloratura soprano. Rosina (Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*) was written for a coloratura *mezzo*.

Lyric

The word lyric generally describes a singer who specializes in long phrases and a beautiful tone. They can be broken down further into light-lyric, full-lyric and just plain old lyric. These titles can precede the general voice type of soprano, tenor and so on. While there are no hard and fast rules, there are a few widely accepted distinctions, which are outlined below.

- A light-lyric soprano like Pamina (Mozart's *The Magic Flute*) should have a bigger voice than a

soubrette but still possess a youthful quality. A full-lyric soprano (Mimi in Puccini's *La Bohème*) has a more mature sound and can be heard over a bigger orchestra. Full-lyric sopranos are typically the highest paid of all the voice types.

- A light-lyric *mezzo* is the equivalent of the soubrette and generally plays young boys like Hansel (Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel*). The long phrases mentioned above are traded for agility and charm. A lyric *mezzo* (no full distinction here) is usually an old woman or a temptress (Bizet's *Carmen* is the quintessential lyric *mezzo*).
- Most tenors fall into the lyric category and don't call themselves light or full. However, operatic roles for tenors are separated further. Tamino (Mozart's *The Magic Flute*) must be sung by a youthful tenor with a light voice, thus earning the distinction of a light-lyric tenor role. Puccini's Cavaradossi (*Tosca*) is decidedly heavier than Tamino but is still considered lyric by most people.
- There are light baritones, but they fall into the lyric pot with the rest of the bunch. Baritones are baritones, unless they're really loud.

Dramatic

This describes the heaviest voices in any category except for bass. Dramatic singers are capable of sustained declamation and a great deal of power, even over the largest operatic orchestra of about 80 instruments. Puccini's *Turandot* is sung by a dramatic soprano. Most of Verdi's lead characters require a dramatic voice (e.g., *Otello*). It can be dangerous to stand too close to one of these singers.

Helden

A German prefix meaning heroic, applied to a large voice capable of performing the most demanding roles, usually used in reference to roles written by Richard Wagner. Brünnhilde (the character most often associated with braids and a horned helmet) is a *helden-soprano* role.



Operatic Voices (cont.)

FAMOUS OPERA SINGERS

Listed with each singer is an example of one album in case you would like to build your library. Some of their websites are included too.

Sopranos

Renée Fleming, American full-lyric. Formerly a jazz singer. Won a Grammy award for *The Beautiful Voice* Decca label. www.renee-fleming.com

Deborah Voigt, American dramatic. Obsessions: Wagner and Strauss Arias and Scenes EMI Classics label. www.deborahvoigt.com

Natalie Dessay, French coloratura. Vocalises EMI Classics label. <http://www.emiclassics.com/artists/biogs/dessay.html>

Maria Callas, Greek opera singer, impossible to categorize. Sang both soprano and mezzo roles. *Maria Callas: The Voice of the Century* EMI Classics label. www.callas.it

Other sopranos to consider: *Renata Scottò*, *Diana Soviero*, *Anna Netrebko*, *Mirella Freni*, *Birgit Nilsson*, *Angela Gheorghiu*, *Joan Sutherland*, *Kiri TeKanawa*.

Mezzo-Sopranos

Susan Graham, American light-lyric. Il tenero momento: Mozart and Gluck Arias Erato label. www.susangraham.com

Olga Borodina [bor o dée nuh], Russian dramatic. *Olga Borodina: Arias* Philips label. www.deccaclassics.com/artists/borodina

Marilyn Horne, American singer also difficult to categorize. *Rossini Heroes and Heroines* Decca label. www.marilynhornefdn.org

Dolora Zajick, American dramatic mezzo. *The Art of the Dramatic Mezzo-Soprano* - Telarc label. www.dolorazajick.com

Other mezzo-sopranos to consider: *Frederica von Stade*, *Denyce Graves*, *Lorraine Hunt Lieberson*, *Ewa Podles*, *Cecila Bartoli*

Contraltos

Marian Anderson, American contralto. Made history in 1955 as the first African-American female to sing at the Met. Also sang on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in 1939 for an integrated audience of 75,000. *Marian Anderson* RCA Victor label. www.mariananderson.org

Countertenors

Andreas Scholl, English. *Andreas Scholl: Heroes* Decca label. www.andreasschollsociety.org

David Daniels, American. *Handel Operatic Arias* Veritas label. www.danielssings.com

Derek Lee Ragin, American. *Handel Cantatas and Sonatas* Channel Classics label. www.colbertartists.com/ArtistBio.asp?ID=9

Other counter-tenors to consider: *Brian Asawa*, *David Walker*, *Bejun Mehta*

Tenors

Luciano Pavarotti, Italian. *The Pavarotti Edition: Vols 1-10* Decca label. www.lucianopavarotti.com

Franco Corelli, Spanish. *The Very Best of Franco Corelli* EMI Classics label.

Rolando Villazon, Spanish. *Anna Netrebko & Rolando Villazón Duets* Deutsche Grammophone label. www.rolandovillazon

Juan Diego Florez, Argentinean. *Great Tenor Arias* Decca label. www.deccaclassics.com/artists/florez/

Other tenors to consider: *Fritz Wunderlich*, *Enrico Caruso*, *Plácido Domingo*, *Roberto Alagna*, *Mario del Monaco*, *Jose Carreras*

Baritones

Bryn Terfel [tûr fuhl], Welsh bass-baritone. *Opera Arias* Deutsche Grammophone label. www.deutschegrammophon.com/artistmicrosite/?ART_ID=TERBR

Operatic Voices (cont.)

Dmitri Hvorostovsky [vor oh stáhv skee], Russian lyric. Verdi Arias Delos label.
www.hvorostovsky.com (fan site)

Thomas Hampson, American lyric. The Very Best of Thomas Hampson EMI Classics label.
www.hampsong.com

Other baritones to consider: *Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau*, *Rodney Gilfry*, *Thomas Quastoff*,
Thomas Allen, *Robert Merrill*, *Sherrill Milnes*

Basses

Samuel Ramey, American. A Date with the Devil.
Naxos label. www.samuelramey.com

Nicolai Ghiaurov, Bulgarian. Great Scenes from Verdi Operas Decca label. <http://www.deccaclassics.com/artists/ghiaurov/biog.html>

James Morris, American.
Opera Arias Capitol Records label.
<http://www.ffaire.com/wagner/morris.html>

Other basses to consider: *Kurt Moll*, *Robert Milne*,
Rene Pape, *Ezio Pinza*

CREDITS: TEXT

*Originally created and reprinted with permission by
Nashville Opera's Education Department, Stuart Holt
– Education Director*

The Life Cycle of a Production

Each season, The Atlanta Opera presents four mainstage productions at the Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre. The Atlanta Opera season runs similarly to an academic calendar, opening in the fall and closing in the spring. This 2011-2012 season, The Atlanta Opera will present *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *The Golden Ticket*, and *Don Giovanni*.



Make-up artist preparing a singer for a performance.

The Atlanta Opera presents four **performances** of each of these **productions**. We also invite students to attend special dress rehearsals. Each production is led by a **director**, and a **conductor**. The director is in charge of the staging for the production, and directs the acting of the singers. The conductor works closely with the singers and coach in rehearsals, and also prepares the **orchestra**. He or she conducts the orchestra in the pit and soloists and chorus on stage during performances. The **coach** and **chorus master** prepare and rehearse with the singers before they sing with the whole orchestra. The chorus begins rehearsing several months before the production. Most of The Atlanta Opera chorus members live in the Atlanta area and have other jobs in addition to performing with the Opera. The principal singers, director, and conductor, come from all over the world. They come to Atlanta about three weeks before the first performance to begin rehearsing. Most of the rehearsals are held in our rehearsal hall, and not the actual theatre.



The conductor leads the orchestra and the singers from in front of the stage.

The conductor begins orchestra rehearsals about a week and half before opening night. They have four rehearsals with the conductor, and then the singers are added into the mix. The size of the orchestra will vary with each production, depending on what the composer has written for. Many of the orchestra members live in the metro Atlanta area and have other jobs playing or teaching, or something non-music related at all. Some of the orchestra members travel to Atlanta from other parts of the country specifically to play in the orchestra for our productions.



*Sets for *Porgy & Bess* came from the University of Kentucky.*

The Atlanta Opera owns some sets, but many of the set we use are rented from other opera companies. Other opera companies also rent the sets that we own. Many of the costumes that you see on stage have also been rented from other opera companies. The Atlanta Opera Costume Shop alters the costumes to fit our singers. Sometimes they do have to make costumes if there aren't enough, or if there is nothing that fits, etc. Once the sets are in place, the cast begins rehearsing at the theatre. The Opera production staff works with staff at the theatre to get all of the lighting and technical aspects of the production together. The orchestra comes together with the singers in a special rehearsal called sitzprobe. There are no costumes during the sitzprobe, this is mainly to hear the voices with the orchestra. There is a piano dress rehearsal, when the singers rehearse in full costume for the first time so they can get used to wearing them. Finally, all of the pieces are put together for two full dress rehearsals leading up to opening night. The production is performed four times over a period of a week and half before everything is broken down, the singers and artistic staff move on to their next job, and the sets and costumes move on to the next city.

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Other Jobs in the Performing Arts: An overview of The Atlanta Opera

It takes many people working together to create opera productions like these described. The Atlanta Opera is managed by a General Director and Managing Director who work with several different departments to run the company.

PRODUCTION DEPARTMENT

Artistic Administrator

The Artistic Administrator works very closely with the General Director. Together, they decide which operas the company will present, which sets and costumes they want to use, which singers should sing each role, etc. They watch operas all over the United States and sometimes in other countries, to hear singers and see the work of different opera companies. The Artistic Administrator and General Director also hold auditions for singers several times each year. The Artistic Administrator oversees all aspects of the production, including stage crew, musicians, conductor, director, etc.

Production Manager

The Production Manager is in charge of all of the technical aspects of the production including lights, sound equipment, video, supertitles, etc. He or she works very closely with the staff at the theatre. In the off season, the Production Manager plans carefully for each production for the following seasons.

Company Manager

The Company Manager takes care of travel and housing arrangements for all of the singers, seasonal production crew, etc. Many times the Company Manager works with the artist's agents to make arrangements, and is the main contact for the artists when they are in Atlanta. The Company Manager also organizes orchestra and chorus auditions and manages contracts for the orchestra and chorus.

Principal Coach and Accompanist

The Principal Coach and Accompanist works with singers cast in principal roles and musicians in the orchestra to prepare them for rehearsals with the conductor and the ultimate performances. This person accompanies and coaches singers, and also performs with the orchestra. The Principal Coach and Accompanist accompanies singers during all rehearsals prior to the orchestra's arrival. The orchestra begins rehearsing about two weeks prior to the first performance.

There are many other people that work seasonally in production department to make performances happen:

Costume Shop Staff, Chorus Master, Stage Managers, Props Masters, Stage Director and Assistant Director, etc.

DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

The Development Department staff works hard to raise money for the company. Revenue from ticket sales account for less than half of The Atlanta Opera expenses, the rest of the income for the company is donated by individual donors, corporations, foundations, and sources of public funding. The development department staff works together to fundraise for the company. They also plan special events to thank donors and cultivate relationships. Fundraising is done through one-on-one visits with individuals, hosting parties and special events, attending meetings with business people, and writing grants. The Development Department for The Atlanta Opera is led by a **Director of Development** who works with business and other community organizations to

Other Jobs in the Performing Arts: An overview of The Atlanta Opera (cont.)

funding. There are several people who manage gifts from individuals including the **Annual Fund Manager** and **Major Gifts Officers**. The **Foundation & Grants Manager** writes grants and proposals, and the all of the department works together to organize special events, parties and receptions. An **Event Manager** plans lots of parties and special events for donors and friends of the opera.

MARKETING DEPARTMENT

The Marketing Department is responsible for selling tickets and season subscriptions to the opera. The **Marketing Director** works closely with the **Marketing Manager** to identify creative ways to attract people to the opera and move ticket sales. The **Creative Services Manager** is a graphic designer and designs all the printed material for the company. This includes brochures, ads, posters, the ARIA program book, invitations, education guides, etc. These three individuals also manage the company's website, www.atlantaopera.org. The **Communications Manager** works closely with the media to communicate the message of The Atlanta Opera. He or she schedules and conducts interviews, photo shoots, television ads, and all things public relations. The **Box Office Staff** sells tickets for the Opera. They sell tickets over the phone, in person at the Box Office, and online.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

The Education Department designs programs to teach kids and adults about opera. The Atlanta Opera has education programs for families and young children, in-school programs, field trips, programs in the community, as well as programs for training and professional development. The **Director of Education** works closely with the marketing and production departments to make sure people have the opportunity to learn about opera and the performing arts. The Director of Education and the **Education Assistant** are responsible for putting together education guides, designing and schedules programs, and working to develop new opera audiences.

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT

The Director of Finance manages all the finances for the company. This person works with the **Accounting Manager** and **Controller** to track all income and expenses. This department also manages the company's huge database of ticket buyers and donors. Together, this team also manages the administrative operations of the company including human resources, facilities, etc.

Uncovering the Plot

Every story has a plot. The events that happen in a story must go in a particular order to make sense.

DIRECTIONS

Draw a picture for each of the plot scenes described below. Then cut out each square and arrange them in the proper order to tell the plot of *Rabbit Tales*. You may wish to glue the squares onto another piece of paper to create your own comic strip.

<p>King Lion lowers Teenchy Duck into the well.</p>	<p>Sister Fox, Teenchy Duck, Br'er Rabbit and King Lion eat pie.</p>
<p>Br'er Rabbit sneaks mouthfuls of honey from King Lion's stash.</p>	<p>Teenchy Duck finds a gold mesh purse in the river.</p>

Become an Opera Critic

You are the opera critic. Think about the performance you just saw of *Rabbit Tales* and write your thoughts like you might see in the newspaper or an online review. Remember that a critic reports both the positive and negative features of a production. You might want to focus on one part of the opera that you particularly liked or disliked. Keep in mind that reviews express the opinions of the person who writes the review and different people will often have different ideas about the same performance! Below are some tips to get you started.

FOUR TIPS FOR WRITING A REVIEW

1. **Create a catchy first sentence.** You want to get the readers' attention, so the opening, or "lead" sentence, is very important. This can be a difficult part of writing a review. Ask yourself: How can I sum up my opinion in one sentence? What would catch my attention if I were reading this review?
2. **Clearly state what performance you saw.** Tell who gave the performance, the name of the opera, where the performance took place, and the date of the performances. Ask yourself: What if people want to come see this performance? What details do the readers need?
3. **Tell why the performance was wonderful, all right, or bad.** Be sure to say WHY you feel the performance was good. It is easy to say what you think. It is more difficult to say why you think it. For most beginning reviewers, the "why step" is the most difficult. Ask yourself: What did I like/not like about the performance? How was the singing? Were the costumes nice? Was it too loud? Too soft? How did the instrumentalist(s) sound? Readers like to know the reasons for your opinions. Don't forget to tell them how you developed your opinions about the performance.
4. **Talk about individual performances.** Toward the end of the review, you may write about the details of singers' performances. Ask yourself: Did Lisa sing well? Did Frank play his character convincingly? Whose performance stood out?

EXPANDING SENTENCES

A critic needs to write sentences that really describe how she feels about a performance. Practice writing descriptive, interesting sentences on this page. All English sentences have two basic parts: a **subject** and a **predicate**. The subject is the noun that is the "doer" in the sentence. The predicate is the verb that tells what the subject is doing. For example:

Margo is playing.

"Margo" is the doer of the sentence, so she is the subject. "Playing" is the predicate because it tells Margo (the subject) is doing. This sentence gives some information but it could give more details.

Ask yourself: Where is she playing? What is she playing? How is she playing? What other details can I give?

Then change the sentence to answer the questions:

Even though it is raining heavily, Margo is skillfully playing soccer on the wet, muddy field.

Adding details and descriptions gives the reader more information. It also creates a more interesting sentence.

Become an Opera Critic (cont.)

You try it! Change the following sentences so that they give more information. Use details and descriptions to make them more interesting.

The costume glittered. _____

She sang a song. _____

The boy danced on the stage. _____

The audience cheered. _____

Read the sample opera critique of The Atlanta Opera's 2007 production of *Hansel and Gretel* on page 47, as reviewed by opera critic Stephanie Adrian for *Opera News*.

Share your critique with us! The Atlanta Opera wants to know what you thought of our performance. If you would like to share your review with us, please send it on!

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The Science of Sound

Your Sense of Sound: Energy and Equipment

Sound is important to human beings because it helps us to communicate with each other. Your sense of sound also helps you to enjoy music like opera. Musicians use sounds to communicate thoughts or feelings. But what is sound exactly? How do we hear it?

THE ENERGY: HOW SOUND IS MADE

Sound is vibrating air. Sounds can vibrate in different patterns. These patterns are called sound waves. The different patterns change the sound we hear. Listen to traffic on a busy street. Noise like this is disorganized sound. Now listen to a piece of music. Music is sound and silence that is organized into patterns.

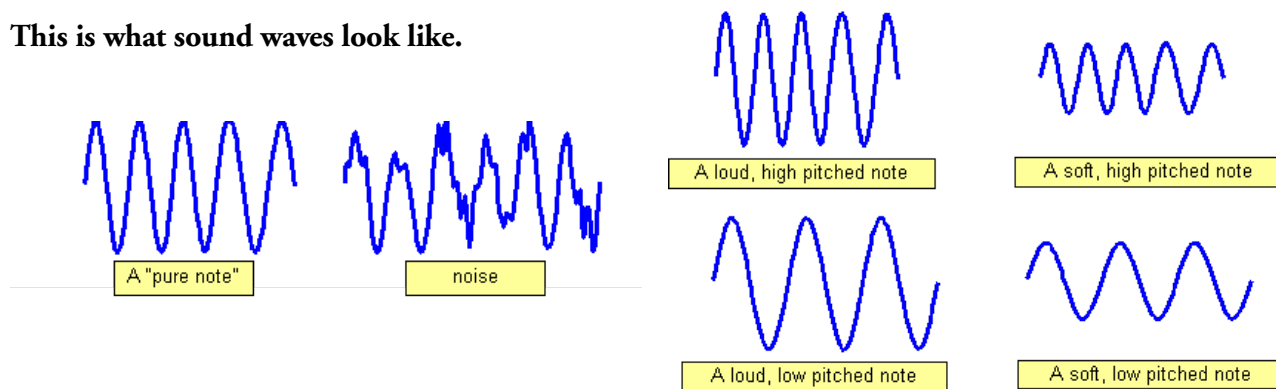
Think about it!

How are the sounds of traffic and music different? How does each sound make you feel? Can traffic sound like music? Can music sound like traffic?

Sound waves can vibrate many times in one second. The number of times a sound wave vibrates in one second is called its frequency. The frequency tells how high or low the sound will be. This is called pitch. High-pitched notes vibrate at a fast rate, so they have a fast frequency. Low-pitched notes have a slow frequency. In opera, the highest pitches are usually sung by women. Very low pitches are sung by men.

Just as the speed of the sound wave determines the pitch, the shape of the wave determines how loud or soft the sound will be. This is called volume.

This is what sound waves look like.



Try this!

Stretch a rubber band between your thumb and forefinger on one hand. Pluck it a few times. Can you see and feel the vibrations? What happens if you pluck the rubber band harder? Softer? Change the shape of the rubber band by making it longer and thinner. What do you hear?

The Equipment: How Sound is Heard

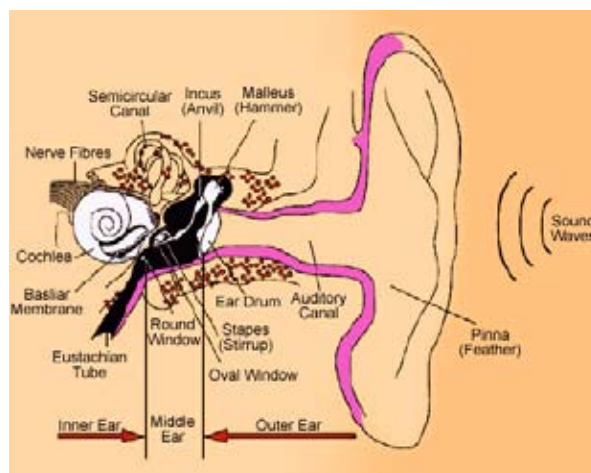
Now that we understand how sounds are created, you want to know how you hear those sounds, right? Your ear has an important job. It collects sounds, interprets sounds, and sends the sound signals to your brain. Human beings, like most mammals, have two ears to do all this work.

Your ear has three different sections:

- 1). Outer ear
- 2). Middle ear
- 3). Inner ear

Each of these sections has a different role to play in collecting and interpreting sound.

The Science of Sound (cont.)



The Outer Ear

This is the only part of your ear that you can see. Your outer ear has two jobs: to collect the sound and protect the rest of the ear. Invisible sound waves travel through the air and enter the outer ear through the canal. The canal is the opening in your ear. The outer ear also makes earwax.

Did you know? Earwax (they yellowish stuff that forms in your ears) is your friend! It protects the rest of the parts of your ear from getting dirt in them.

The Middle Ear

After sound waves travel through the canal, they reach your middle ear. The middle ear turns the sound waves into vibrations before it sends them to the inner ear. Sound passes through your eardrum and three tiny bones called ossicles. Each ossicle has a name. They are the hammer, the anvil, and the stirrup. The eardrum is a thin piece of skin attached to the hammer. The hammer is attached to the anvil and the anvil is attached to the stirrup. When these three tiny bones vibrate, sound is passed on to the inner ear.

Did you know? The ossicles are the three smallest bones in your body. The stirrup is the tiniest of all!

The Inner Ear

Once vibrations enter your inner ear, they travel to the cochlea. The cochlea is a small, curled tube. It is shaped like a snail's shell. It is filled with liquid and lined with millions of tiny hairs. Vibrations cause the liquid and the hairs to move. Then the hairs change the sound into nerve signals for your brain. The brain interprets the nerve signals and tells you what sound you are hearing.

The Balancing Act

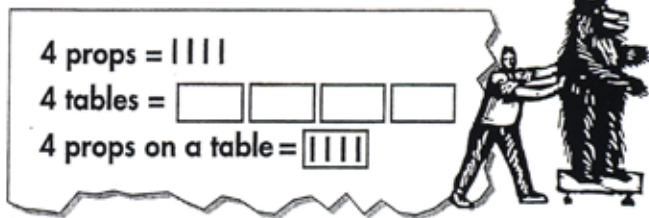
Your ears do more than just hear... they also help keep you standing upright! Three small loops are located directly above the cochlea. The loops are called the semi-circular canals. They help us maintain our balance. The semi-circular canals tell your brain the position of your head – is it looking up? Turned to the left? Your brain determines where your head is and then keeps the rest of your body in line.

Try this! Fill a cup halfway with water. Move the cup around a bit, then stop. Notice how the water keeps swishing around even after the cup is still. Sometimes this happens in your semi-circular canals when you spin around very fast. The fluid that continues to move around in your ear is what makes you feel dizzy!

Title:	The Science of Sound
Grade Levels:	2-5
Georgia Performance Standard:	S1CSI, S1CS4, S1PI, S2CSI, S2CS4, S3CSI, S3CS4, S4CSI, S4CS4, S4P, S5CSI, S5CS4

Opera Word Problems

Math word problems can be challenging! Drawing a simple diagram will help you “see” how to solve a problem.



Keep your math art simple!

1. There are 36 instruments in the orchestra. Of these instruments, 14 are strings, 10 are woodwinds, 8 are brass, and the rest are percussion. How many instruments in the orchestra are percussion?

Try using math art:

Strings	Woodwinds	Brass	Percussion
---------	-----------	-------	------------

The answer is _____.

2. The props manager of the opera *The Golden Ticket* is buying props. Chocolate bars are sold in packages of six. If each of the five main characters needs three chocolate bars, how many packages must the props manager buy?

The answer is _____.

3. The make-up artist has one hour left to finish preparing the singers. If there are five singers left, how much time can the make-up artist spend on each singer?

The answer is _____.

4. Use the bar graph to answer these questions:

A. How many more tickets were sold to *Porgy & Bess* than *La bohème*?

The answer is _____.

B. What was the average attendance for all three performances?

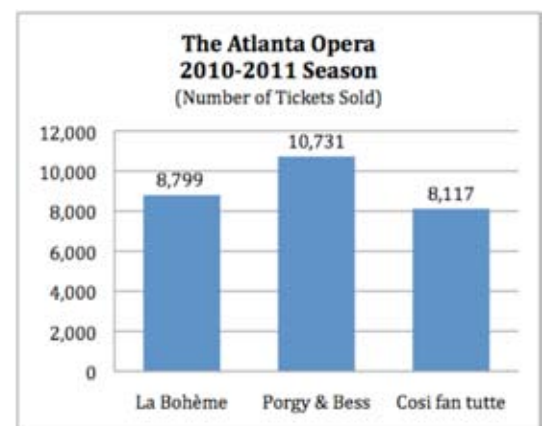
The answer is _____.

C. $\frac{1}{4}$ of the tickets for *La bohème* sold for \$30 each.

$\frac{1}{2}$ off the tickets for *Così fan tutte* sold for \$30 each.

Altogether, how many \$30 tickets were sold for the two productions?

The answer is _____.





An Emotional Journey

In the boxes below, write what emotions you think each character might be feeling at specific points in the story. How would you feel in these situations? (HE2.1, HE2.4, ELA3R3, ELA4R1, ELA5R1) Here are some examples:

- Angry**
- Confused**
- Excited**
- Regretful**
- Scared**
- Nervous**
- Embarrassed**
- Hurt**
- Triumphant**
- Jealous**
- Confused**
- Hopeless**
- Proud**
- Anxious**

Teenchy Duck Sister Fox Br'er Rabbit King Lion

When Teenchy Duck finds the gold mesh purse

--	--	--	--

When King Lion claims the purse is his

--	--	--	--

When Sister Fox and Br'er Rabbit saw that others had fire

--	--

When King Lion puts Teenchy Duck in the chicken coop

--	--	--	--

When the chicken coop is set on fire

--	--	--	--

When King Lion leaves the river and returns the purse

--	--	--	--

When everyone discovers the empty honey jar

--	--	--	--

Rabbit Image (public domain): <http://www.clarkart.edu/museum/exhibitions-past-detail.cfm?EID=12>

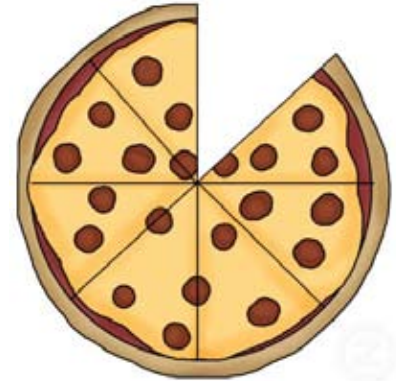
In the End... There's Always Pie!

As the characters in *Rabbit Tales* learn in the opera, it doesn't matter what everyone's differences are. There will always be disagreements, but that doesn't mean everyone can't appreciate the others' company and celebrate with pie! The characters sing about every type of pie imaginable – apple, cherry, chocolate, chess, custard, and even pizza pie. We wanted to know what kind of pie *Rabbit Tales* librettist Madeleine St. Romain and composer Nicole Chamberlain like best, and here are the recipes!

MADELEINE'S SAVORY PIZZA PIE

Crust Ingredients:

- 1 package of yeast
- 1 1/4 cups warm water
- 1 teaspoon of honey
- 3 cups of whole wheat flour
- 1 tablespoon olive oil



Crust Directions:

Combine the yeast and honey in a large bowl. Add the warm water and let the yeast beasties have a pleasant time for about 5 minutes. Flour your hands and gradually work in the remaining flour, kneading it until the resulting mixture is firm, cohesive, and is no longer sticky. Do not add any more flour once the dough is at this point. Pour on the olive oil to coat the dough, but don't mix it in yet. Cover the bowl and put it in a warm place for an hour. Then take the dough and knead it enough to work in the oil and start stretching it to fit on your pizza pan. Let it rest for 5 minutes.

Sauce Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup tomato paste
- 2 cups tomato purée
- 1 teaspoon oregano
- 1/4 teaspoon thyme
- 2 cloves of finely chopped garlic
- 1/2 teaspoon marjoram
- 1 teaspoon basil
- pepper to taste

Sauce Directions:

Heat all of the sauce ingredients until thick. If it is too thin, add more tomato paste.

Pizza Directions:

Spread the sauce onto your pizza crust (or you can just brush the crust with olive oil if you don't want to use a tomato sauce). Top with whatever seems tastiest and sprinkle on some cheese. (Madeleine's favorite toppings are olives and fresh basil with Parmesan and Provolone cheeses.) Bake at 415°F for 20 minutes.

In the End... There's Always Pie! (cont.)

NICOLE'S FAVORITE BLUEBERRY PIE

Ingredients:

- 3/4 cup white sugar
- 3 tablespoons cornstarch
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 4 cups fresh blueberries
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 pre-made pastry for a 9-inch double crust pie



Directions:

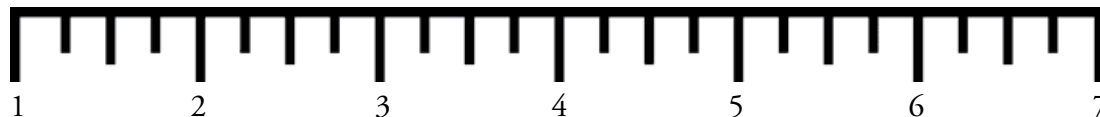
Mix sugar, cornstarch, salt and cinnamon. Sprinkle this mixture over the fresh blueberries. Line the pie pan with one pie crust, and pour the blueberry mixture into the crust. Dot the top with butter. Cut the remaining pie crust into 1/2 to 3/4 inch wide strips, and make a lattice top over the top of the pie. Crimp and flute the edges. Bake at 425°F for 50 minutes or until the crust is golden brown. Enjoy!

<http://allrecipes.com/Recipe/blueberry-pie/detail.aspx>

MAKE IT EDUCATIONAL!

Baking a pie with your class is not only a fun activity, but it is also a great opportunity to talk about math, science, and health. The following are suggested activities and word problems that your students can investigate and solve in relation to these recipes.

- Are 1/2 cup of tomato paste and 2 cups of tomato purée equal? Which one is more? Which is less? (MKM1)
- You are having some friends over for dinner at your house Friday night and want to make 2 pizzas. If you double the recipe to make 2 pizzas, how much of each ingredient do you now need? (M3N3, S3CS2, S4CS2, S5CS2)
- Your family is eating pizza tonight for dinner. To make sure everyone has a piece, you cut the pizza into 8 slices. Your family eats 3/4 of the pizza. How many slices are left? (M3N5, S3CS2, S4CS2, S5CS2)
- Find a magnifying glass. Look closely at each of the ingredients. Compare how they look. What is different about the oregano in comparison to the yeast? (SKCS3, S1CS3, S2CS3)
- Estimate how many inches the pizza pan measures across its widest part. Then measure it with a ruler. How close was your estimate to the actual number of inches? (S1CS2, S2CS2)



- Watch the sauce as it heats up. Does it get thicker or thinner? Does the color change at all? What happens if you add more tomato paste? Measure the temperature of the sauce as it is warming. (S1CS4, S2CS4, S2CS7, S3P1) Cooking and baking requires you to be aware of your surroundings. What type of safety precautions should you take when making these recipes? (S3CS3, S4CS3, S5CS1)
- Draw a picture of a meal that includes one of these pies. What other types of food should you include so that the meal represents a balanced meal? (HE2.7)

Extension Activities

LANGUAGE ARTS

Find your voice. Joel Chandler Harris gave voice to African American folklore during the 19th century. Lead a discussion with students exploring what folklore is. Have students come up with a one page long, folklore piece about their community and/or culture. (ELA2W1, ELA3W1, SS2H1)

Read a Br'er Rabbit story aloud or individually. Lead children in a discussion of the stories, and/or have them write a response/review. (ELA3R1, ELA3W2)

Extra! Read all about it! Joel Chandler Harris wrote a newspaper column called "Affairs of Georgia." Have the students pretend like they are writing a column about what is going on right now in Georgia and brainstorm ideas and come up with an article together. (ELA2W1, ELA3W1, SS2H1)



SOCIAL STUDIES

HISTORY

Take a step back in time. Joel Chandler Harris lived during the time of the Civil War, and wrote for a confederate newspaper. Discuss with students the positions of the state of Georgia during the war, the role the state played, and what issues were specifically relevant or important to Georgians at that time. (SS5H1)

What was Georgia like in the 18th and 19th centuries? Joel Chandler Harris, a significant figure in Georgia state history, lived a very different everyday life than we do. Discuss the day to day life of Joel Chandler Harris with the students. Ask them to write a comparison on how their day to day life differs from someone living during the author's time. (SS2H1)

What's in a name? Joel Chandler Harris worked alongside another major figure in Atlanta in the 19th century, Henry W. Grady at the *Atlanta Constitution* newspaper, now called the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* (AJC). Discuss with students that many places in and around Atlanta are named after Henry Grady: Grady memorial Hospital, and Grady County. Ask students what other places or things in Atlanta are named after important figures in Georgia history. (SS2H1)

GEOGRAPHY



Find a map of the United States. Pinpoint the cities where each of the cast members were born and where they went to school. Mark the city where you live. Do you live in the same town as any of the cast members? Have you visited any of these other cities or states? (SSKG3, SS1G2)

Where in the world? Look on a globe to find the locations around the world where each of the cast members have performed. Which location is the greatest distance from Georgia? (SSKG2, SS1G2, SS1G3)

Extension Activities (cont.)



More mapping. Teenchy Duck comes across a river early in her journey. Find a map of your city or neighborhood. What river is closest to your home? To your school? (SS1G3)

WHO ARE THE YUCHI? (SOCIAL STUDIES)

In *Rabbit Tales*, Sister Fox and Br'er Rabbit wish they could have their own fire. This story is based on a Yuchi folktale, "The Theft of Fire."

Do some basic research on the Yuchi Native American tribe. When and where did they live? Large Yuchi towns were located on major rivers throughout Georgia. Locate the Savannah River, Chattahoochee River, Flint River, and Oconee River. (SS2G1)

How did western expansion affect the Yuchi? Which early American explorers encountered the Yuchi in their travels? How was life different for them at the turn of the century when they were relocated to reservations? How would you feel about moving to a new town? (SS4H1, SS4H2, SS5H3)

Discuss the Yuchi culture. How did they make a living? Who whom did they trade? Compare them with other tribes in the same region, such as the Creek or Cherokee tribes. (SS4H1, SS2H2, SS2G2)

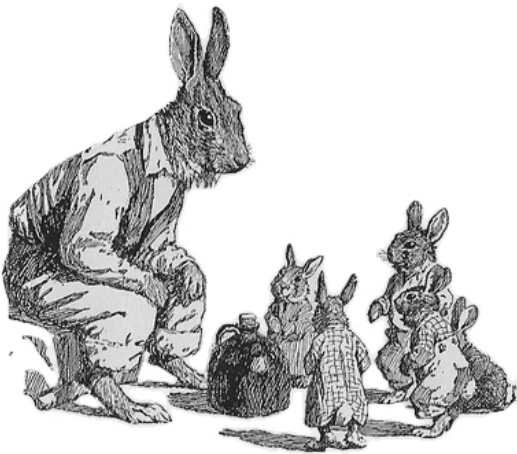


Painting of a Yuchi tribe participating in a war dance.

Extension Activities (cont.)

CULTURAL FOLKTALES (LANGUAGE ARTS)

Make cultural connections. Different cultures often have folktales that feature similar storylines and morals. Think about the stories in *Rabbit Tales*. Which cultures do these stories come from? Is the same story told in another culture? Are they told in the same manner or different? Compare and contrast the cultures by looking at their location, way of life, and time period. (ELA2R4, ELA3R3, ELA4R1, SS2H2, SS2G2)



Rabbit Tales Folktales:

Teenchy-Tiny Duck (Southern U.S.)

Br'er Rabbit Eats the Butter (Southern U.S.)

The Theft of Honey (Cajun)

The Big Barrel of Butter (Cajun/Creole)

All the Little Animals (African – Gbaya)

The Theft of Fire (Native American – Hitchiti and Yuchi)

Pair up and share! Find a partner in your class. Talk about the folktales you learned as a kid. Tell your favorite story to your partner and listen to their favorite. Are any of your stories similar? If so, are they different in any way? (ELAKR6, ELA1R6, ELA2LSV1, ELA3LSV1, ELA4R1, ELA4LSV1, ELA5LSV1)

MATHEMATICS

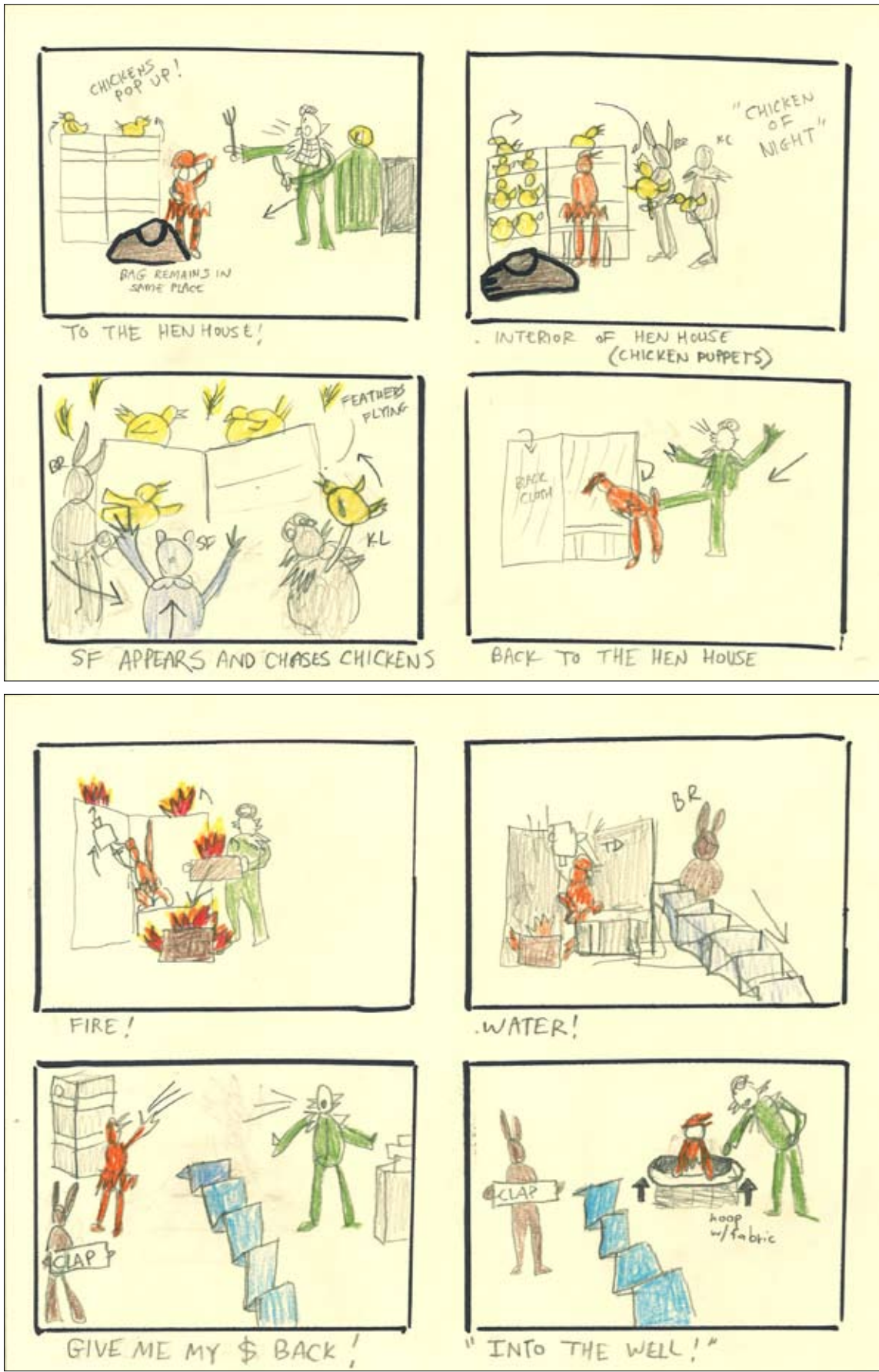
Practice budgeting basics. Use the sample production budget found in the appendix as an example to calculate the cost of one mainstage opera production. Operas vary in size and scope. How would this budget change for an opera with a very small or extremely large chorus? What about a production that did not use any dancers? How does this change with more or fewer principal or secondary singers? Are there ways to produce a less expensive production? How much would it cost to produce three or four productions of similar size for an entire opera season? (M3N1, M3N2, M3N3, M3N4, M3D1, M3P1, M3P3, M3P4, M3P5, M4N3, M4N4, M4N7, M4P1, M4P3, M4P4, M4P5, M5P1, M5P3, M5P4, M5P5)

VISUAL ARTS



Use your design skills. The Atlanta Opera made a poster to advertise the *Rabbit Tales* opera. Have students design their own poster for *Rabbit Tales* that will entice people to come see the show. (VAK-5PR1.2.3)

Story Board Samples



Sample Press Release



DENNIS HANTHORN - Zurich General Director

IO-II NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ATLANTA OPERA FAMILY DAY TO BE HELD AT THE ATLANTA OPERA CENTER

ATLANTA, GA -- The Atlanta Opera will present its popular Opera Family Day on Saturday, April 30, 2011 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at The Atlanta Opera Center. Designed for children in preschool and early elementary school, this day will open their eyes to the magic and wonder of opera and music. There will be craft activities, operatic performances, an interactive costume shop, stage combat demonstrations, an instrument petting zoo, a kid-friendly foodie activity offered by The Cook's Warehouse, and much more. The whole family will enjoy exploring the wonderful world of opera!

WHAT? The Atlanta Opera's Family Day

WHEN? Saturday, April 30, 2011
 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
 Performances at 11:15 a.m. and 1:15 p.m.

WHERE? The Atlanta Opera Center
 1575 Northside Drive NW
 Building 300, Suite 350
 Atlanta, GA 30318

COST? \$7 per person at the door
 (Children 2 and under admitted free)

Admission includes all activities and performances. Food will be available for purchase. Free parking is available on-site. For further information or to register in advance, call 404-881-8801.

* * *

Sponsors

Generous support for Atlanta Opera Family Day is provided by Publix Super Markets Charities.

About The Atlanta Opera

Founded in 1979, The Atlanta Opera is one of the finest regional opera companies in the nation, drawing audiences from the entire metropolitan Atlanta area as well as from the Southeast region. Led by Zurich General Director Dennis Hanthorn, The Atlanta Opera strives to expand the experience of its patrons with memorable and exciting opera performances reflecting the highest musical and theatrical standards, while supporting community and educational programs. The company also works to attract the finest international, national, and regional singers, conductors, stage directors and designers. Each season The Atlanta Opera presents three productions with four performances each at the Cobb Energy Centre.

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Sample Opera Critique

Hansel and Gretel

ATLANTA

Atlanta Opera

11/10/07

Atlanta Opera presented a scrumptious version of Engelbert

Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel* - designed and directed by puppeteer Basil Twist - on November 10 at the Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre. A brand new coproduction with Houston Grand Opera, the show was first seen and heard last December in Houston as a chamber opera, with the orchestra reduced to only eight players. In Atlanta, we heard the full orchestration played by sixty-seven musicians under the direction of former Atlanta Symphony Orchestra music director Yoel Levi.

Levi caught our attention from the start in the prelude that Humperdinck called *Children's Life*. While the Atlanta Opera Orchestra seemingly never gives a bad performance these days, it became clear that the man on the podium was shaping the music with an advanced level of artistry. The delicacy of phrasing and extreme attention to dynamics allowed the audience to hear emerging motives and inner voices in the sumptuous orchestration.

Basil Twist's version of *Hansel and Gretel* is a gift to opera that gives even the most mature operagoer a childlike sense of delight. This stylized version incorporates marionettes, bunraku puppetry, opera singers on stilts, and one mezzo on a hydrolic lift, outfitted within a fourteen-foot-tall Witch puppet built by the Jim Henson Company. (Dressed in red and purple satin, this is surely is the most voluptuous puppet that has ever been created.) Jessie Raven's voice and characterization were thrilling as she glided across the stage, thighs and bosom undulating.

Jennifer Aylmer as Gretel and Kirstin Chávez as Hansel gave endearing performances in this highly physical production, but their eventful choreography didn't hinder their singing in the least. Aylmer's soprano spins and gleams, a terrific complement to Chávez's limpid, velvet mezzo. They were thoroughly convincing as brother and sister as well, alternating between affection for each other and mutual annoyance.

Set changes became a significant aspect of the action that carried us through the fairy tale: there was never a moment when something wasn't happening onstage. After Peter sang of the Witch,

an ominous-looking green bird flew into a forest of ever-shifting trees covered with glistening, multi-hued moss. In Twist's version of the ballet-pantomime, fourteen ethereal marionette angels hover above Hansel and Gretel, representing God's watchful care of the children. (Ludwig Bechstein would have approved of this breathtaking vision, with the gauzy forms appearing one by one.)

Canadian baritone Phillip Addis performed the role of the father with terrific diction and a pleasing timbre. A lucky chorus member, Kristen Brannan, stepped in for Maria Clark to sing the Sandman and Dew Fairy arias, and chorus master Jennifer Langley adeptly prepared the children's chorus for a cheerful finale. □

STEPHANIE ADRIAN

This report originally appeared in the February 2008 issue of OPERA NEWS. Reprinted with permission.

Sample Production Budget

The Cost of an Opera

Sets and Costumes

Rental of costumes	\$12,000
Shipping for costumes	\$300
Costume mistress fee	\$2,500
Fee for wig and make-up artists	\$3,500
Rental of wigs and make-up	\$3,500
Shipping of all wigs	\$200
Rental of scenery	\$12,000
Shipping of scenery	\$7,000

Performers

Airfare for singers, conductor and lighting designer°	\$350 x 8 = \$2,800
Performance fee for one principal singer°	\$10,000 x 3 = \$30,000
Performance fee for one secondary singers	\$2,000 x 3 = \$6,000
Parking for one principal and secondary singers°	\$25 x 6 = \$150
Rental car for two principal or secondary singers°	\$200 x 3 = \$600
Costume dresser for principal singers°	\$250 x 3 = \$750
Housing for one principal or secondary singer°	\$900 x 6 = \$5,400
Performance fee for one chorus member°	\$375 x 40 = \$15,000
Performance fee for one supernumerary°	\$100 x 20 = \$2,000
Performance fee for ballet dancers	\$2,000
Rehearsal accompanist fee	\$3,000
Per-performance fee for conductor	\$4,000
Performance fee for orchestra	\$50,000

°There are an average of 3 principals, 3 secondary singers 40 chorus members, and 20 supers in one production

Production Crew

Director's fee	\$5,000
Choreographer's fee	\$500
Fee for lighting engineer	\$1,500
Prop Master's fee	\$1,800
Stage crew	\$20,000

Facility and Technical

Cost of lighting and special effects	\$600
Rental or purchase of props	\$1,000
Translation and operation of supertitles	\$2,000
Rental of performance space for one day	\$1,000
Rental of orchestra music	\$700
Fee for ushers	\$1,800

Total Cost for one Operatic Production:

\$ 198,600

Chicken Craft Template



Chicken Craft Template



Chicken Craft Template



Rabbit Tales Shaker Craft

At various points throughout the *Rabbit Tales* performance, students will have the opportunity to make music with the singers using shakers that they can make themselves! At the point in the opera when it is time for the children to participate with their shakers, the singers will give the audience a big cue, and everyone will make music together. Below are some craft ideas for different types of shakers the students can make before *Rabbit Tales* comes to your school. This is a fun, creative, and easy way to teach students about instruments, rhythm, and being a part of the “orchestra” of an opera!

RABBIT TALES SHAKER CRAFT OPTION 1:

Materials needed:

1. One cardboard paper towel roll
2. Clear packing tape, or colorful craft tape
3. 8.5” x 11” sheet of construction paper
4. Glue
5. Decorating materials like paper cut-outs, crayons, markers, puffy paint, glitter glue, pompoms
6. Rice or rice-shaped cereal

Instructions:

1. Decorate a sheet of construction paper with your own creative design. Wrap around the paper towel tube and secure with tape or glue.
2. On another piece of construction paper or thin cardboard, trace a circle around the open end of the paper towel tube, twice. Ask an adult to cut around these circles to make the end caps of your sound shaker.
3. Securely tape a circle onto one end of the paper towel roll.
4. Fill tube about halfway with rice or cereal. Securely tape the second paper circle into place to cover the open end of the sound shaker.
5. Shake it up!



Rabbit Tales Shaker Craft (cont.)



RABBIT TALES SHAKER CRAFT OPTION 2:

Materials needed:

1. Paper plate
2. Stapler
3. Beans or Rice
4. Decorations (e.g. streamers, paint or tissue paper)

Instructions:

1. Fold the paper plate in half
2. Staple the paper plate together $3/4$ of the way
3. Pour in beans
4. Staple the paper plate together rest of way
5. Decorate as desired
6. Have fun!