

THE ATLANTA OPERA
STUDIO TOUR PRESENTS

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HANSEL & GRETEL



EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

HANSEL & GRETEL

FIRST PERFORMANCE

Dec. 23, 1893 at the Weimar Hoftheater,
Weimar, Germany

COMPOSER

Engelbert Humperdinck

LIBRETTIST

Adelheid Wette

ENGLISH ADAPTATION

Brenna Corner

PRODUCTION DIRECTOR

Brenna Corner

MUSIC DIRECTOR

Rolando Salazar

SCENIC & CO-PUPPET DESIGNER

James F. Rotondo, III

COSTUME & CO-PUPPET DESIGNER

Joanna Schmink

PROPS COORDINATOR

Kelsey Bailey



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

This educator guide has been developed to help you and your students explore *Hansel and Gretel*, as well as to familiarize students with the world of opera (vocabulary, history, etc.). The guide approaches these subjects via a wide range of disciplines, including English Language Arts, Science, Music, Theater and

Social Studies. Our goal is to provide you with an innovative, multidisciplinary approach to teaching required skills and curriculum, including connections to the Georgia Standards of Excellence.

In using this guide, we hope you will feel free to adapt pages or activities to best meet the needs of your students. A simple activity may be a perfect launching pad for a higher-level lesson, and a complex lesson may contain key points onto which younger students can latch. Please make this guide your own!

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 education programs. We look forward to hearing from you, your students, administration, and/or parents following the performance.

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THE ATLANTA OPERA'S HANSEL AND GRETEL

- We will be performing a 45-minute opera in English for your students.
- Our show requires attentive listening from the audience.
- 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.

Choose 15-20 students to join The Atlanta Opera Studio Tour performers onstage! Download the Student Participation PDF Handbook for more information.
<https://www.atlantaopera.org/education/#studiotour>

NEW THIS SEASON!

CAST & SYNOPSIS

WHO'S WHO? WHAT'S IT ABOUT?



Background set rendering for *Hansel and Gretel* for the Atlanta Opera Studio Tour. (sketch: James F. Rotondo, III, 2019.)

CHARACTER CAST

GRETEL The older sister

AMY SMITHWICK soprano

HANSEL The younger Brother

JESSICA WAX mezzo-soprano

FATHER Hansel and Gretel's father

SANDMAN A fairy creature who lives in the forest and sings lullabies

SAMUEL FERREIRA baritone

THE WITCH A misunderstood magical person who lives in the forest

ROBERT BANKS tenor

PIANIST

CHOO CHOO HU

SYNOPSIS

Once upon a time ... Hansel and Gretel's home, a magical forest, and the witch's home

Brother and sister Hansel and Gretel are ignoring their chores, playing instead of doing what Father asked, so he sends them off into the nearby woods to look for berries for the family.

While picking berries, Hansel and Gretel get distracted, and while impersonating the Cuckoo bird they eat all the berries. Lost and scared in the darkening wood, the Sandman comes to them and puts them to sleep.

In the morning, the starving children wake to find a wonderful gingerbread house, which they immediately begin eating – without asking first. The owner of the

house – a Witch – arrives and tries to speak to Hansel and Gretel, but in their fear, they run away.

To keep the children nearby, the Witch tries to turn them into gingerbread children, but Gretel escapes and tries to push the Witch into the oven. The Witch catches her and explains why she's so lonely. Everyone comes to steal parts of her delicious house, she says, which she has worked hard to build herself. Then they run away, and she has no friends.

Hansel and Gretel apologize and promise to stay friends with the Witch. The Witch thanks the children and agrees to undo the other spells she has placed on the gingerbread children there. Father finds the children in the woods with their new friend the Witch, and they all sing together.

MEET THE CREATORS



Engelbert Humperdinck, 1854. (Image: From the Deutsche Fotothek of the Saxon State Library / State and University Library Dresden (SLUB) as part of a cooperation project. The Deutsche Fotothek guarantees an authentic representation only by using copies of the original images as provided by the Digital Image Archive.
<http://www.deutschefotothek.de/documents/obj/70244665>)

THE COMPOSER

ENGELBERT HUMPERDINCK

(September 1, 1854 in Siegburg, Rhine Province, Germany – September 27, 1921)

Engelbert Humperdinck was a German composer from the **Romantic Era**, best known for his opera *Hansel and Gretel*.

Humperdinck's musical career started at a very early age when he began taking piano lessons and produced his first composition at the age of 7. His first venture into writing music for the stage came when he was just 13 years old when he attempted to compose a *singspiel*. At 18, he began taking music classes at a conservatory, where he was awarded the opportunity to move to Munich, Germany to continue his studies.

Humperdinck's musical style was greatly influenced by fellow German composer Richard Wagner. Humperdinck served as Wagner's assistant in Naples, Italy, where he assisted in Wagner's production of *Parsifal*.

In 1890, Engelbert Humperdinck originally composed four songs to accompany a puppet show his nieces

were giving him at home. After his sister wrote a libretto, Humperdinck composed a *singspiel* of 16 songs with piano accompaniment, which he quickly used to begin working on a complete orchestration. This orchestration turned into *Hansel and Gretel*.

Hansel and Gretel premiered in 1893, under the baton of Richard Strauss. Between 1895 and 1919 Humperdinck produced six more operas, including *Dornroschen* (Frankfurt, 1902) and *Königskinder* (New York City, 1910), but neither they nor the spectacle *The Miracle* (London, 1911) enhanced his prestige. He also wrote incidental music for plays by Aristophanes, Shakespeare, and Maeterlinck; a Moorish Rhapsody for orchestra (1898); a string quartet, works for piano; and songs.

Hansel and Gretel has always been Humperdinck's most popular work, and in 1923 The Royal Opera House in London chose it for their first complete radio opera broadcast. It was also the first opera transmitted live from the Metropolitan Opera in 1931.

The Romantic Era

The Romantic Era was a literary, musical, artistic, and intellectual movement in the late 18th century to mid-19th century. Taking a turn away from the Enlightenment, where emotion was tempered and logic reigned supreme, Romanticism emphasized affect, fantasy, and individualism. In opera, the move from the Enlightenment meant a new emphasis on emotion. Some composers found more expressive techniques to tell their stories (bigger voices, bigger orchestras, more epic narratives), creating more equality between vocal and instrumental elements. In the Romantic Era, the orchestra was the most important part of the opera.

Singspiel or "sing play," 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* (1791) is an example of this style.

MEET THE CREATORS



Adelheid Wette. (Image: No known copyright restrictions / copyright expired.)

THE LIBRETTIST

ADELHEID WETTE

(September 4, 1858 in Siegburg, Rhine Province, Germany – August 9, 1916 in Eberstadt, Germany)

Adelheid Wette (Humperdinck) was born in Siegburg, Germany, on September 4th, 1858. The younger sister of the composer Engelbert Humperdinck, she contributed much to the family interest in folksong and fairytales, including occasionally writing texts for Humperdinck's musical settings. Eventually, she married Dr. Hermann Wette, who himself was the author of two folk-like libretti for Arnold Mendelssohn. Adelheid's own libretto for Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel* began in 1890 as a series of folksongs, four of which she asked her brother to set. Her skill in expanding these into a fully-fledged opera, while keeping the text's unpretentious character, was recognized as an important ingredient in the work's eventual success. In 1895 she collaborated with Humperdinck on another Grimms' fairy tale, *Die sieben Geislein* (*The Seven Little Goats*), but this work remained a series of domestic songs. Wette died in 1916.

Source: *New Grove Dictionary*

Imagine a world with more women composers and librettists. How would the stories change?

Adelheid Wette was one of the first women librettists in opera, with *Hansel and Gretel* in 1890. The journey for women to receive equal recognition in the opera industry has been a difficult one. According to OPERA America, over the past 30 years, the organization has awarded more than \$18 million to support the work of opera creators, companies, and administrators. However, until the launch of Opera Grants for Female Composers in 2013, fewer than five percent of the organization's grants were awarded to works by female composers. Opera Grants for Female Composers has helped to reverse that trend by investing nearly \$1 million in operas by women. Opera America grant recipient and composer Missy Mazzoli had this to say to The New York Times on the history of women in opera:

"Women have been not encouraged to be part of this field in a million subtle ways and also in some very obvious ways. When people ask me about being a woman writing opera, the thing that I always try to say is that here is no history, really. The history of women writing opera started, like, five years ago ... That said, there is a responsibility that's been ignored to seek out these women. And, most important, to give women opportunities that are based on their potential, not on their past experience."

Check out this list of composers who received OPERA America's Opera Grants for Female Composers

<https://operaamerica.org/Files/OADocs/GrantPDFs/OperaGrantsforFemaleComposersRecipients.pdf>

Learn more about the opportunities available to women in opera through the Women's Opera Network <https://operaamerica.org/content/about/won.aspx>

MEET THE CREATORS



The Grimm brothers, 1855; right: Jacob Grimm; left: Wilhelm Grimm (Image: NBerlin, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin - Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Nationalgalerie, A1 663 / This is a faithful photographic reproduction of a two-dimensional, public domain work of art.)

THE ORIGINAL STORYWRITERS

THE BROTHERS GRIMM:

JACOB LUDWIG KARL GRIMM (January 4, 1785 in Hanau, Germany - September 20, 1863 in Berlin, Germany)

WILHELM KARL GRIMM (February 24, 1786 in Hanau, Germany - December 16, 1859 in Berlin, Germany)

Jacob Ludwig Karl and Wilhelm Karl Grimm, the eldest of six children were born a year apart in the mid-1780s in Hanau, Germany. Their father, Philipp, was educated in law and served as Hanau's town clerk, a solid middle-class job. Their mother, Dorothea, gave the boys freedom to wander the countryside where, as Wilhelm later noted, their 'collector's spirit' was born.

By 1791, the Grimm family moved northeast to Steinau, another small town where their father took the position as the district magistrate. Five years later, Steinau marked the end of childhood comforts for Jacob and Wilhelm as in 1796, their father died at the age of 44 and Dorothea was forced to move her family of six children out of the government residence. With financial help from Dorothea's sister, 13-year-old Jacob and 12-year-old Wilhelm, were sent north to the city of Kassel to attend the Lyzeum, an upper-crust high school. They proved themselves to be gifted students by graduating at the top of their classes.

Their mother died in 1808 and, money grew even scarcer than before. Employed as a librarian, Jacob could barely support his five siblings. Meanwhile, Wilhelm, who suffered from asthma and a weak heart, gradually became so ill that that he could not even work. In 1812, the year that the fairy tales were first published, the Grimms were surviving on a single meal a day -- a hardship that could explain why so many characters in their stories suffer from hunger. Collecting fairy tales must have provided the brothers with a good distraction from their impoverished living circumstances.

During this time, the brothers had completely left behind law for literary research. They realized that the basis for modern social institutions resided in the past. With this in mind, they published their collection of Germanic folk tales, *Kinder und Hausmärchen*, in 1812. The collection was an immediate success and would serve as the earliest decisive text on the collection and science of folklore.

Between 1821 and 1822, the brothers raised extra money by collecting three volumes of folktales. Their purpose of collecting these folk tales from all over Germany was to show people that Germans shared a common culture and to advocate the unification of all the tiny German principalities. Jacob and Wilhelm argued that folktales should be collected from oral sources because they believed that they gave the most honest reproductions of stories. Their methods of collected oral sources became a model for other scholars to follow.

In 1825, Wilhelm married Dorothea Wild and four years later published his book, *Die Deutsche Heldensage*, a literary commentary on the German heroic saga. Jacob, in turn, would study philology, specifically looking at issues of grammar. His work would eventually create the basis for modern scientific etymology (the study of the history of words).

Altogether, around 40 people (mainly women) delivered tales to the Grimms. Many of the storytellers came to the Grimms' household in Kassel. The brothers particularly liked visits from Dorothea Viehmann, a widow who walked to town to sell produce from her garden. Dorothea grew up listening to stories from travelers on the road to Frankfurt, Germany who came from far-off places. Among her treasures that she gave to the Grimm brothers was *Aschenputtel - Cinderella*. Another important informant was Marie Hassenpflug, a 20-year old friend of their sister, Caroline. Marie's stories eventually became what are known today as *Tales from Mother Goose*.

In 1840, the brothers moved to Berlin, Germany where they would live out the rest of their years in financial security and with the respect of their peers. Berlin would also be the place where the brothers undertook their most ambitious project, the *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, a dictionary of every German word used in literature for the previous three centuries. Regrettably, however, both brothers would die before its completion. Wilhelm died on December 16, 1859, and Jacob died four years later on September 20, 1863.

Source: Kennedy Center Education Department



Hansel and Gretel. (Image: No known copyright restrictions / copyright expired. Grimm, Jacob and Wilhelm; *The Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm*; Mrs. Edgar Lucas, translator; Arthur Rackham, illustrator; London: Constable & Company Ltd, 1909.)

THE MAGICAL WORLD OF FAIRY TALES

Contrary to what many may think, fairy tales were not originally intended for children. In fact, many of the fairy tales we know and love today were originally harrowing stories with gruesome endings that were told mainly by adults to other adults. For thousands of years, these stories were passed along only by word-of-mouth, changing gradually along the way. By the time the versions of fairy tales we are familiar with came to be, they had changed drastically from their original form. It wasn't until people began to write them down that fairy tales became popular with children.

One of the first people to record fairy tales in writing was a 17th century French writer named Charles Perrault. Perrault was born into a wealthy Parisian family in 1628, and was able to attend the best schools during his youth before becoming a lawyer as an adult.

In 1697, he wrote *Tales from Times Past*, along with *Morals: Tales of Mother Goose*, which earned him great popularity. Among his most famous fairy tales, we find *Blue Beard*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Puss in Boots*, and *Cinderella*. Now remember: Perrault did not make up these stories himself. Many of these tales were already well-known across France. Perrault simply wrote them down with great wit and charm that has been popular with children and adults for many generations.

After Perrault, the Brothers Grimm were the next writers to become well-known for recording fairy tales in written form. Many children may know the story of *Hansel and Gretel* from *Grimm's Fairy Tales*. Eventually, that tale made its way to the stage as an opera by Engelbert Humperdinck. In 1890, Humperdinck began composing a singspiel consisting of 16 songs, using a libretto that was devised by his sister, Adelheid Wette. *Hansel and Gretel* includes nursery rhymes that are well known to German children. The opera was an immediate success and has since been translated into many different languages.

Fairy Tale

The term “fairy tale” originated during the 17th century as French writers coined the phrase “conte de fee.” You may be wondering why these stories are called “fairy tales” in the first place. It is difficult to know for certain, but many people think that it is because female characters typically possessed the magical powers in these stories, and women with magical powers were equated to fairies.

Want to read more fairy tales and folk tales from around the world, please visit the websites below:

<https://fairytales.com/>

<https://www.storyberries.com/category/fairy-tales/famous-fairy-tales/>

OPERA 101

THE BASICS

Opera is a dramatic story told through song. Considered by many to be the most complete art form, it combines all of the elements of art, words, music, drama and dance. The earliest Italian operas were called by several names, such as “favola in musica” (fable in music) and “drama 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 about 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 makes 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*.

A BRIEF HISTORY

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.

In the 1100s the early Christian church set religious stories to music, a style known as liturgical drama. The first true opera, *Daphne* (1597), was composed by Jacopo Peri. It told the story of a Greek mythological character, Daphne, from Ovid’s “Metamorphosis.”

The first great composer of opera was Claudio Monteverdi. Some of his operas are still performed today.

German composer Christoph Gluck’s most famous opera, *Orfeo ed Euridice* (1762), marked a shift in importance from the performers to the drama. It also reduced the amount of recitative and laid the foundations for the progression of the art form.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was another prolific composer during this time and many of his operas like *Le nozze di Figaro* (*The Marriage of Figaro* - 1786) and *Die Zauberflöte* (*The Magic Flute* - 1791) are still frequently performed around the world.



The Atlanta Opera's 2016 mainstage production of *Romeo and Juliet* at The Cobb Energy Centre. (photo: Jeff Roffman)



OPERA 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 that a balance was achieved between the role of the orchestra and that of the singer. These two forces were combined 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. For example, the Paris opera audience 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.

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 a story.

DIFFERENT STYLES OF OPERA

OPERA SERIA Serious opera. These stories are often tragic, and typically involve heroes and kings or ancient myths and gods. *Julius Caesar* (1724) by George Frideric Handel is a classic example of opera seria.

OPERA BUFFA Comic opera, typically sung in Italian. The jokesters in these operas are typically from the working class, such as maids, peasants, or servants, who keep busy getting the best of their employers. *The Italian Girl in Algiers* (1813) by Rossini is an amusing example of opera buffa.

SINGSPIEL or "Sing Play," 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* (1791) is an example of this style.

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. *The Barber of Seville* (1816) by Gioachino Rossini is a popular example of bel canto.

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 can often last for several hours. Charles Gounod's *Faust* (1869 version) is an example of grand opera.

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. *Die Walküre* (*The Valkyries*) (1870) and other operas by Richard Wagner defined this style.



The Atlanta Opera's 2014 mainstage production of *The Barber of Seville* at The Cobb Energy Centre. (photo: Ken Howard)

SCIENCE OF SOUND

OPERATIC VOICES

TYPES OF OPERATIC VOICES

If you sing in a choir at school or church, you're probably already familiar with the different kinds of voice types. We have the same kinds of voice types in opera, but there are a few differences:

SOPRANOS are the highest female voice type, with a range similar to a violin. In opera, they usually sing roles like the Heroine, Princess, Queen, or Damsel in Distress. Sopranos are usually the female lead in the opera.



MEZZO-SOPRANOS are the middle female voice type. Their sound is darker and warmer than a soprano. They often perform the roles of witches, sisters, maids, and best friends. Mezzos also play young men on occasion, aptly called "pants roles" or "trouser roles," such as Hansel in *Hansel and Gretel*.



TENORS are the highest male voice type – they often sing roles like the hero, the prince, or the boyfriend. They can sound like a trumpet in both range and color. Tenors can be athletic and energetic as well as sensitive and emotional. They get all the good high notes and a lot of the applause!



BARITONES fit between choir tenors and basses – not as high as the tenors, but not as low as the basses. They can play both good and bad characters: sometimes they're the boyfriends or brothers – or the ringleader for some comedic shenanigans – but in serious operas they can be the bad guys.



BASSES are the lowest male voice type – they can sound like a bassoon, tuba or low trombone. In a serious opera they can represent age and wisdom (and sometimes evil geniuses), in a comic opera they can make you laugh. Sometimes they steal the show with their super low notes and provide a comforting presence with their warm, rumbling tones.



Think of your favorite story, movie or television show. If that story was turned into an opera, what kind of voice types would be best for each of the characters?

You can hear different kinds of voice types in popular music too. Think about your favorite singers – do they have high voices or low voices? What do you like best about the way they sing?

(photos: Nunnally Rawson, Jeff Roffman, Raftermen)

IMPORTANT JOBS

WHO KEEPS THE OPERA RUNNING?

In addition to the singers and musicians you see on stage and in the orchestra pit, there are many other people who help bring the show to life!

MUSIC DIRECTOR/CONDUCTOR is responsible for the musical excellence of an opera. They ensure the singers understand the music, sing in the appropriate style, and work with the orchestra to make sure everyone is playing correctly together.

STAGE DIRECTOR is responsible for the action on the stage. They work with the designers to create the concept for the production. They help the singers understand why their characters would act in certain ways, and how the characters communicate with each other.

CHOREOGRAPHER creates movement or dancing for operas. They study dance, movement and do research on different historical periods.

PRODUCTION MANAGER helps make the director's and designers' vision a reality by working with the shops that build the scenery and costumes.

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR makes sure that the lighting, scenery, costumes and props are coordinated and that the crews who handle those elements know what needs to be done during the performance.

STAGE MANAGER manages the rehearsal schedule and takes detailed notes about the stage directions, lighting cues and scenery changes. During the performance, they are backstage calling all the technical cues and making sure the show runs smoothly.

SET DESIGNER creates the concept for the physical environment of the opera and works with the director to create the scenery that helps tell the story. They research history, color, space, architecture, and furniture.

LIGHTING DESIGNER helps create the mood of each scene with light, shadow, and color. They also study the music and work with the set designer and the director to decide how light will be used to help tell the story.

COSTUME DESIGNER creates the look of the characters with clothing. They choose the fabrics and supervise the construction of the costumes, or selection of pre-made costumes.



The Stage Manager calls cues by watching monitors of a performance of *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* in 2018. (photo: Jeff Roffman)

WIG & MAKE-UP DESIGNER creates the hair and make-up styling for the show in tandem with the costumes and the production design. They are also responsible for any special effects make-up like scars, wounds or blood.

WARDROBE MANAGER makes sure all the costumes are clean and pressed and coordinates all the costume changes. Dressers help the singers put on their complicated costumes and change their costumes during the performance.

PROPERTIES (PROPS) MASTER is responsible for all the objects that the singers touch or move that are not part of their costumes. They do a lot of research to find the perfect period newspaper, set of glasses, bouquet of flowers, or book. They make artificial things look real on stage, like food or drink.

CREW & STAGEHANDS includes carpenters and electricians. They assist with the installation of the set on stage once it has been built. During the performance, they are responsible for set and lighting changes.

HISTORY OF OPERA IN ATLANTA

Opera has been an integral part of Atlanta's cultural fabric since October 1866 when the Ghioni and Sussini Grand Italian Opera Company presented three operas in the city. The performances were well received, and soon after, small touring companies began to bring more full-length operas to Atlanta.

In 1910, New York's Metropolitan Opera brought its tour to Atlanta for the first time. Once a year, for a full week during spring, people flocked to the city to see the Metropolitan Opera's wonderful performances and enjoy the many parties that were hosted throughout the city in celebration of the opera's arrival. Performing at the Auditorium-Armory, the fabulous Fox Theatre, and the Boisfeuillet Jones Atlanta Civic Center, the Metropolitan Opera's annual tour was a major social event. Every night of the week featured the performance of a different opera legend including Enrico Caruso, Birgit Nilsson, Leontyne Price, Frederica



Leontyne Price was one of the first African American featured singers with The Metropolitan Opera Company. This photo appeared in the program for the 1964 tour of *Don Giovanni*, in which she sang the role of Donna Anna. (photo: The Metropolitan Opera Company, *Carmen*, 1964 touring season program book / The Atlanta Opera archives)



The Metropolitan Opera Company's 1961 production of *Turandot* with Birgit Nilsson as Turandot. She sang this role in May that same year at the Fox Theater in Atlanta. (photo: The Metropolitan Opera Company, *Turandot*, 1967 touring season program book / The Atlanta Opera archives)

von Stade, Sherrill Milnes, Marilyn Horne, Plácido Domingo, Beverly Sills, Joan Sutherland, Richard Tucker and Luciano Pavarotti. The Met tour returned to Atlanta until 1986, with the exception of 1931-1939 due to financial complications of the Great Depression.

With the success and popularity of the Met's annual tour came a desire for Atlanta to have its own opera company. In 1979, the Atlanta Civic Opera was born, a result of a merger between the Atlanta Lyric Opera and Georgia Opera. The first artistic director was noted composer Thomas Pasatieri. The company's first popular opera production was *La traviata* on March 28, 1980 at the Fox Theatre. The following December, a festive gala was held in Symphony Hall with such noted artists as Catherine Malfitano, Jerry Hadley and Samuel Ramey. In 1985, the company was renamed The Atlanta Opera.

In the fall of 2007, The Atlanta Opera became the first resident company in the new Cobb Energy Performance Arts Centre. In 2013, the company recruited internationally recognized stage director Tomer Zvulun as its General and Artistic Director. In the 2014-2015 season, the company launched the acclaimed Discoveries series of operas staged in alternative theaters around Atlanta. In the 2016-2017 season, the company expanded its mainstage season from three to four productions at the Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre. The Opera works with world-renowned singers, conductors, directors, and designers who seek to enhance the art form and make it accessible for a sophisticated, 21st century audience. Today, The Atlanta Opera is one of the finest regional opera companies in the nation and continues to adhere to its original 1979 mission to enrich lives through opera.

Lessons included in the Opera Guide are designed to correlate with Georgia Standards of Excellence in English Language Arts, Science, Social Studies, and Fine Arts.

FINE ARTS

Music – Responding GM.RE.1; GM.RE.2

Who's Who & Synopsis
Meet the Creators
Opera 101
Types of Operatic Voices
Pre-performance activities
Opera Vocabulary
Music Listening Activity
Write a Letter to the Artists
Write a Review
The Science of Sound: Operatic Voices & Resonance

Music – Connecting GM.CN.1; GM.CN.2

Who's Who & Synopsis
Meet the Creators
Opera 101
Important Jobs at The Opera
Opera in Atlanta
Pre-performance activities
Music Listening Activity
Write a Letter to the Artists
Write a Review
Timeline Activity

Theatre Arts – Responding TA.RE.1; TA.RE.2

Who's Who & Synopsis
Meet the Creators
Opera 101
Types of Operatic Voices
Pre-performance activities
Write a Letter to the Artists
Write a Review

Theatre Arts – Connecting TA.CN.1; TA.CN.2

Who's Who & Synopsis
Meet the Creators
Opera 101
Important Jobs at The Opera
Opera in Atlanta
Pre-performance activities
Write a Letter to the Artists
Write a Review
Timeline Activity

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

ELA - Reading Literary

ELAGSERL1; ELAGSERL2; ELAGSERL3; ELAGSERL4; ELAGSERL7

Who's Who & Synopsis
Meet the Creators
Opera 101
Pre-performance activities
Opera Vocabulary
Music Listening Activity
The Science of Sound: Operatic Voices & Resonance

ELA - Reading Informational ELAGSERI1; ELAGSERI2

Who's Who and Synopsis
The Science of Sound

ELA - Writing ELAGSEW1; ELAGSEW2

Write a Letter to the Artists
Write a Review

ELA - Speaking and Listening ELAGSESL1

Activity: Prepare Students for Opera
The Science of Sound

SOCIAL STUDIES:

SS4H3; SSUSH7; SSUSH8; SS6G10

Opera in Atlanta
Timeline Activity

SCIENCE:

S1P1; S7L2; S8P4; S8P2

The Science of Sound

SUPPORT

SPECIAL THANKS

The Atlanta Opera would like to thank the following for their generous support of our educational and community engagement programs.



Official Beverage of The Atlanta Opera



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The David, Helen, & Marian Woodward Fund

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Are you worried about how to act or what to wear? You are not the only one! Opera stereotypes can make the art form seem intimidating to lots of people. Having an idea of what to expect at the performance may make it easier to enjoy your experience. Here are some suggestions of things you can do before The Atlanta Opera visits your school or community venue.

WHAT IS AN OPERA?

An opera is just like a play, except people sing the words in addition to speaking them. In most operas, all of the words are sung. There are other types of operas, however, in which there is almost as much speaking as singing. These are sometimes called operettas.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

You will immediately notice that opera singers, unlike their peers in popular music, do not use microphones. Rather, an opera singer develops her own body as a source of “natural” amplification.

START WITH THE STORY

In simple terms, an opera is a story set to music. Before the performance, review the plot synopsis of *Hansel and Gretel*. Ask students to consider the story, characters, and setting of the opera. Use the following questions to lead a class discussion:

- What is this opera about?
- What is the time period?
- Who are the main characters?
- What struggles do the characters face?
- What are their relationships to each other?
- What do you expect to see and hear at the opera?

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY TERMS

Refer to the Vocabulary page and crossword for *Hansel and Gretel*. Discuss with the students which of these terms 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?
- Use the activities that follow to familiarize students with these terms.

DESIGN A PROMOTIONAL POSTER

Create a poster to promote the upcoming performance of *Hansel and Gretel*. Display the poster in your school and send samples to The Atlanta Opera at education@atlantaopera.org.

OPERA ETIQUETTE

Students' job as audience members:

- **MAKE YOUR SCHOOL PROUD** by being an excellent audience member – please be quiet and listen carefully. Remember you are seeing a live performance, not watching television or a movie. The performers can see and hear you (as can other audience members).
- **LAUGH IF IT IS FUNNY**
- **CLAP AT THE END** of the performance to show how much you liked it. If you really enjoyed it, you can shout “BRAVO” or “BRAVA” – which means “great job!”
- **HAVE FUN!**



Students at the Cobb Energy Centre clapping and laughing while watching the Student Short performance of *The Daughter of the Regiment* in 2018. (photo: Jeff Roffman)

THE ATLANTA OPERA

PRE-PERFORMANCE

MUSIC LISTENING ACTIVITY

Before writing *Hansel and Gretel*, Humperdinck had been invited to Bayreuth to help Richard Wagner with his production of *Parsifal*. Humperdinck leapt at this opportunity to learn firsthand the inner workings of Wagner's methods of opera composition and production. *Hansel and Gretel* is Wagnerian in a number of important ways. Humperdinck uses musical phrases that are repeated in similar circumstances, like Wagner's leitmotifs.

Folk tunes play an important role in *Hansel and Gretel*. They ground the sometimes-fantastical plot in the world of real, flesh and blood people. The simple folk tunes within the complex musical world of Humperdinck's writing are part of what make the opera accessible to young audiences. The folk tunes are immediately hummable and are often excerpted from the opera and taught in elementary school music classes or published in beginning music books.

The first performance of *Hansel and Gretel* took place on December 23, 1893, in Weimer's Hoftheater. It was originally scheduled to premiere nine days earlier in Munich, but the singer scheduled to play Gretel, Hanna Borchers, fell ill. Another illness, this time of the singer

playing Hansel in Weimer, caused a shift in casting. The soprano slated to play Gretel switched to Hansel, while another singer took over the part of Gretel on short notice. Richard Strauss, who had declared the score a masterpiece when he first saw it, conducted. The premiere was not perfect. In addition to the casting difficulties, the orchestral parts for the overture had not yet arrived in Munich, and the performance was played without it.

Despite its inauspicious beginning, the opera was received well, and it was taken on the rounds of theaters throughout Germany. Its rapid progress was helped along by the creation of a *Hansel and Gretel* touring company in 1894. In Berlin, even the emperor enjoyed the opera. Soon theaters in other countries began to put on productions of *Hansel and Gretel*. In Germany, the opera is generally associated with Christmastime, but it is performed throughout the year worldwide. Because *Hansel and Gretel* is meant to be experienced by children, it is often performed in the vernacular. Its first English-language translation was performed in 1894 and there have been many since, including the The Atlanta Opera's current production.

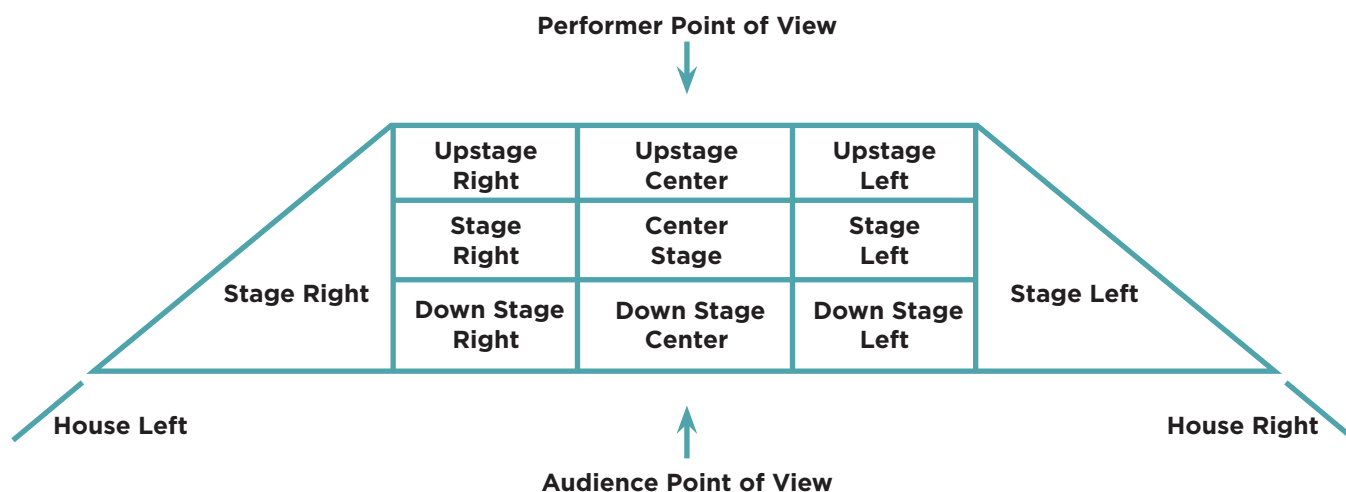
Listening Activity

Listen to Hansel and Gretel's Act I duet: "Little brother, dance with me" from the Metropolitan Opera's 2011-12 production and review the discussion questions below.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QCK5yMmdXj0>

- What are *Hansel and Gretel* singing about?
- If there were no lyrics in this excerpt, how might you be able to tell that the song is about dancing?
- When Hansel and Gretel are giving each other dancing instructions, what do you notice about the "action words" (clap, click, nick)? Does the repetition of the words have an effect on the music?
- Does there seem to be a pattern in the music? Specifically, listen for the repeated melody or tune that repeats several times with different words.
- Do you notice any changes in the melody? How would you describe these changes?
- As the piece continues, how would you describe how Hansel and Gretel are interacting with one another? Are they loving siblings? Are they playing and poking fun at each other? What clues can you find in the text about their relationship?
- Are there elements of the music that help us understand how Hansel and Gretel are interacting? Do they always sing the same part (unison)? Are there parts where they sing in two parts (harmony)? How does this change the feeling of the music?

Review the stage diagram below with the students. Draw the diagram on the whiteboard and have students come up and write in each part of the stage.



Long ago, stages used to be raked or slanted toward the audience. If you went away from the audience, or climbed up the incline, it became upstage. Down the incline was downstage. Remember, stage left and stage right are from the actor's perspective when they are on stage, not the audience.

- Ask all of your students to face in the same direction. Facing you or a wall is good.
- Have your students close their eyes and stand with their feet flat on the floor.
- Now, ask them to slowly raise their heels off of the floor and keep them that way.
- This is how it would feel to stand on a raked (or slanted) stage.
- Their heels are upstage, or on the higher part of the stage, near the back, and their toes are facing the audience. Have them imagine they are walking up and down, like they were actually going to points where the floor was higher and lower.
- Have them try to move around a bit and see what it feels like.
- Give them some stage directions to follow.
 - **EXAMPLE:** Cross stage-left or walk downstage, etc.
- Increase the complexity of the stage directions, making them two or more parts.
 - **EXAMPLE:** Walk to stage-right, then cross to up-stage left.
- Have students direct each other, giving simple stage directions.
- Students can create their own scene from the opera, block them and then perform them for the class.

NAME _____

Using the sketches provided, design costumes for the Hansel and Gretel characters from *Hansel and Gretel*. Designed and sketched by Joanna Schmink, Costume Designer for The Atlanta Opera.

HANSEL



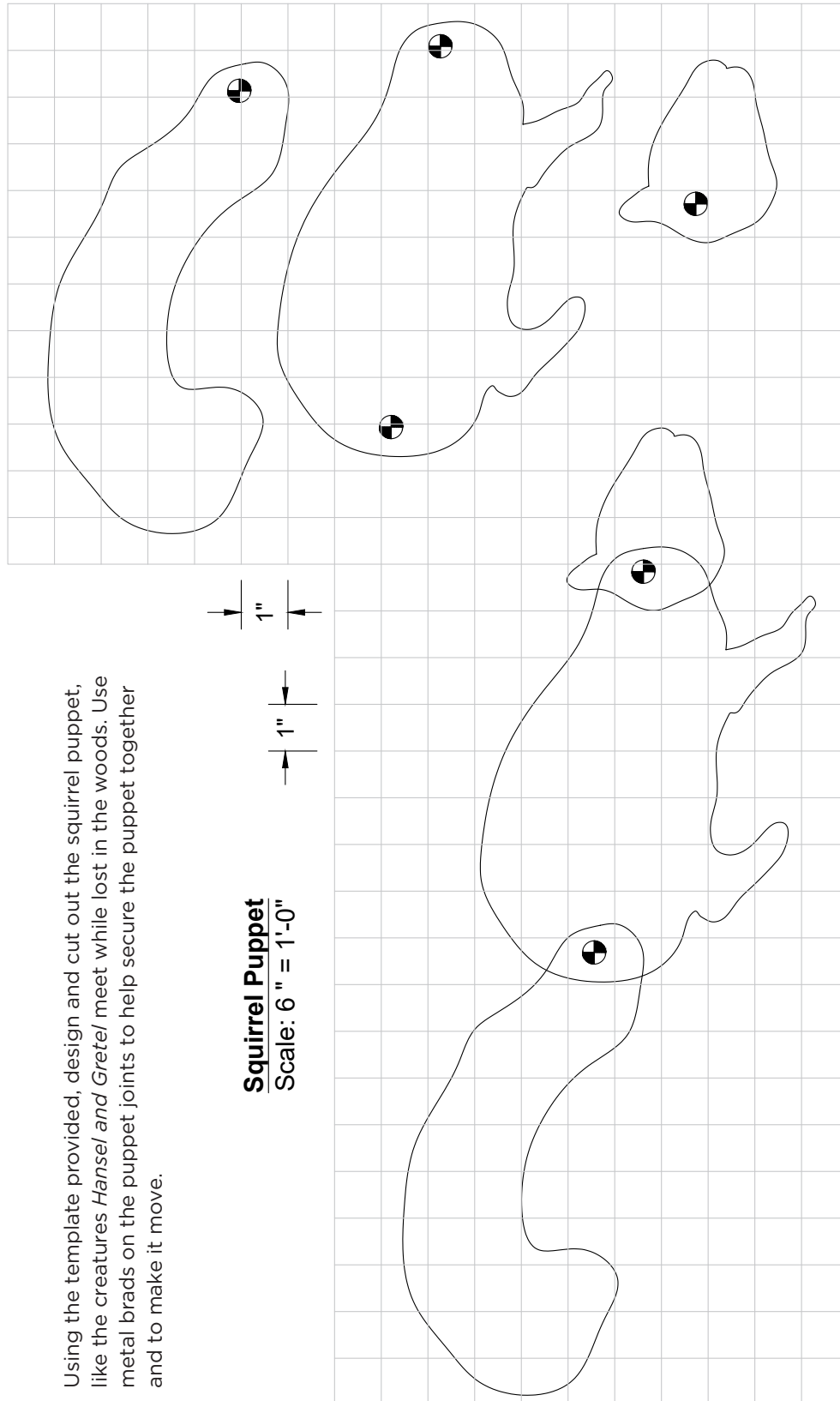
GRETEL



sketches © Joanna Schmink, 2019

Next Level

On a separate piece of paper, draw a costume for any character in the opera. The costume can be traditional, modern or abstract, but you must explain why you made the choices you did. Include as many details as possible. If you'd prefer not to draw, feel free to decorate paper, then cut and paste it to the costume template.



Using the template provided, design and cut out the squirrel puppet, like the creatures *Hansel and Gretel* meet while lost in the woods. Use metal brads on the puppet joints to help secure the puppet together and to make it move.

Squirrel Puppet
 Scale: 6" = 1'-0"

Imagine you are the set designer for *Hansel and Gretel*. Create your vision below for each scene where the opera takes place and draw each one as you imagined them:

Set Designers create the concept for the physical environment of the opera and works with the director to create the scenery that helps tell the story. They research history, color, space, architecture, and furniture.

HANSEL AND GRETEL'S HOME

THE DEEP, DARK FOREST

THE WITCH'S COTTAGE

THE ATLANTA OPERA

ELA OPERA VOCAB

BASIC OPERA TERMS

ACT / SCENE

Acts and scenes are ways of categorizing sections of operas. An act is a large-scale division of an opera, and an opera will typically include two to five acts. Acts can be subdivided into scenes, which are often differentiated by a change in setting or characters.

ADAGIO

Literally “at ease,” adagio is a tempo marking that indicates a slow speed. An adagio tempo marking indicates that the performer should play in a slow and leisurely style.

ALLEGRO

Italian for “cheerful” or “joyful,” allegro is the most common tempo marking in Western music, indicating a moderately fast to quick speed.

ARIA

A song for solo voice accompanied by orchestra.

BRAVO

Italian for “nicely done”; shouted by audience members after a performance.

CADENZA

An ornamented musical elaboration played in a free style by a soloist to display his or her virtuosity.

CHORUS

A section of an opera in which a large group of singers performs together, typically with orchestral accompaniment.

CRESCENDO

A gradual raising of volume in music achieved by increasing the dynamic level. When music crescendos, the performers begin at a softer dynamic level and become incrementally louder.

DIMINUENDO

A gradual lowering of volume in music achieved by decreasing the dynamic level. During a diminuendo, the performers begin at a louder dynamic level and become incrementally softer.

DYNAMICS

A musical trait pertaining to loudness and softness. Dynamics encompass a spectrum from **pianissimo** (very soft) to **piano** (soft) to **mezzo piano** (moderately soft), all the way up to **fortissimo** (very loud). Music can shift to another dynamic level either suddenly or gradually, through a **crescendo** or **diminuendo**.

ENSEMBLE

A musical piece for two or more **soloists**, accompanied by orchestra. Types of ensembles include **duets** (for two **soloists**), **trios** (for three **soloists**), and **quartets** (for four **soloists**).

FINALE

The last portion of an act, a finale consists of several musical sections that accompany an escalating dramatic tension. Finales frequently consist of multiple ensembles with different numbers of characters.

FORTE

Meaning “loud” or “strong” in Italian, forte is a dynamic level in music that indicates a loud volume. Adding the suffix “-issimo” to a word serves as an intensifier—since forte means “loud,” fortissimo means “very loud.”

INTERMISSION

A break between acts of an opera.

LEGATO

A type of articulation in which a melody is played with smooth connection between the notes.

LIBRETTO

The text of an opera, including all the words that are said or sung by performers.

MELODY

A succession of pitches that form an understandable unit. The melody of a piece consists of the tune that a listener can hum or sing.

OVERTURE

An instrumental piece that occurs before the first act as an introduction to an opera.

PIANO

Abbreviated p in a musical score, piano indicates a soft dynamic level.

RECITATIVE

Speech-like singing in between musical numbers that advances the plot.

RHYTHM

Refers to the way music unfolds over time; it is a series of durations in a range from long to short. Along with pitch, it is a basic and indispensable parameter of music.

SCORE

The complete musical notation for a piece, the score includes notated lines for all of the different instrumental and vocal parts that unite to constitute a musical composition.

TEMPO

Literally “time” in Italian, tempo refers to the speed of a piece of music.

TIMBRE

Pronounced TAM-bruh, a French word that means “sound color.” It refers to the complex combination of characteristics that give each instrument or voice its unique sound.

Write the letter of the correct match next to each problem.

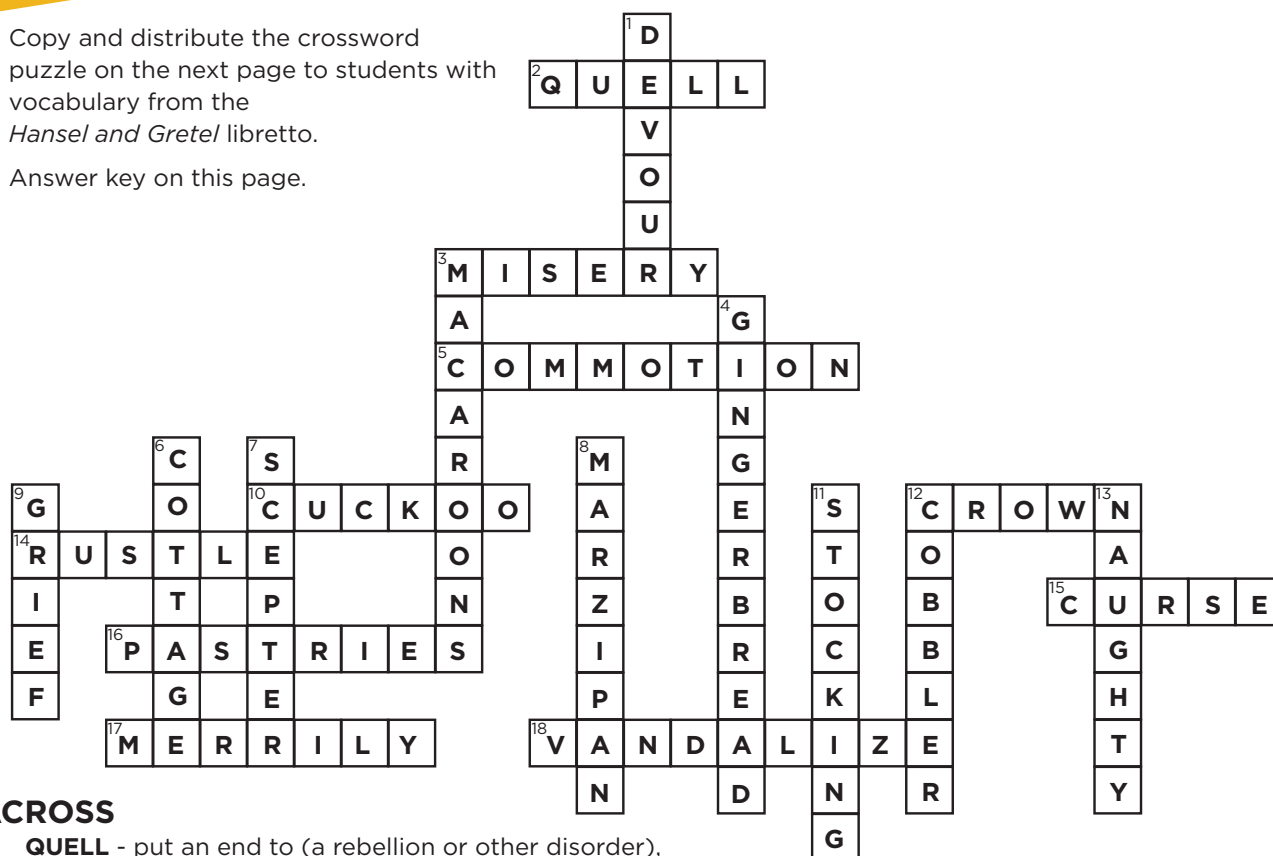
- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| 1. _____ CHORUS | a. A break between acts of an opera. |
| 2. _____ SCENES | b. A type of articulation in which a melody is played with smooth connection between the notes. |
| 3. _____ DYNAMICS | c. The last portion of an act. |
| 4. _____ ADAGIO | d. Refers to the speed of a piece of music. |
| 5. _____ SCORE | e. A way to categorize the sections of operas. |
| 6. _____ INTERMISSION | f. A musical trait pertaining to loudness and softness. |
| 7. _____ ARIA | g. A gradual raising of volume in music achieved by increasing the dynamic level. |
| 8. _____ TIMBRE | h. A song for solo voice accompanied by orchestra. |
| 9. _____ TEMPO | i. A musical piece for two or more soloists, accompanied by orchestra. |
| 10. _____ LEGATO | j. A tempo marking indicating a moderately fast to quick speed. |
| 11. _____ OVERTURE | k. Italian for "nicely done;" shouted by audience members after a performance |
| 12. _____ ALLEGRO | l. Refers to the complex combination of characteristics that give each instrument or voice its unique sound. |
| 13. _____ LIBRETTO | m. Speech-like singing in between musical numbers that advances the plot. |
| 14. _____ RECITATIVE | n. The complete musical notation for a piece. |
| 15. _____ ENSEMBLE | o. The text of an opera. |
| 16. _____ BRAVO | p. Refers to the way music unfolds over time; it is a series of durations in a range from long to short. |
| 17. _____ CRESCENDO | q. An instrumental piece that occurs before the first act as an introduction to an opera. |
| 18. _____ FINALE | r. A section of an opera in which a large group of singers perform together, typically with orchestral accompaniment. |
| 19. _____ DIMINUENDO | s. A gradual lowering of volume in music achieved by decreasing the dynamic level. |
| 20. _____ RHYTHM | t. A tempo marking that indicates that the performer should play in a slow and leisurely style. |

THE ATLANTA OPERA

HANSEL & GRETEL VOCAB

ACTIVITY

1. Copy and distribute the crossword puzzle on the next page to students with vocabulary from the *Hansel and Gretel* libretto.
2. Answer key on this page.



ACROSS

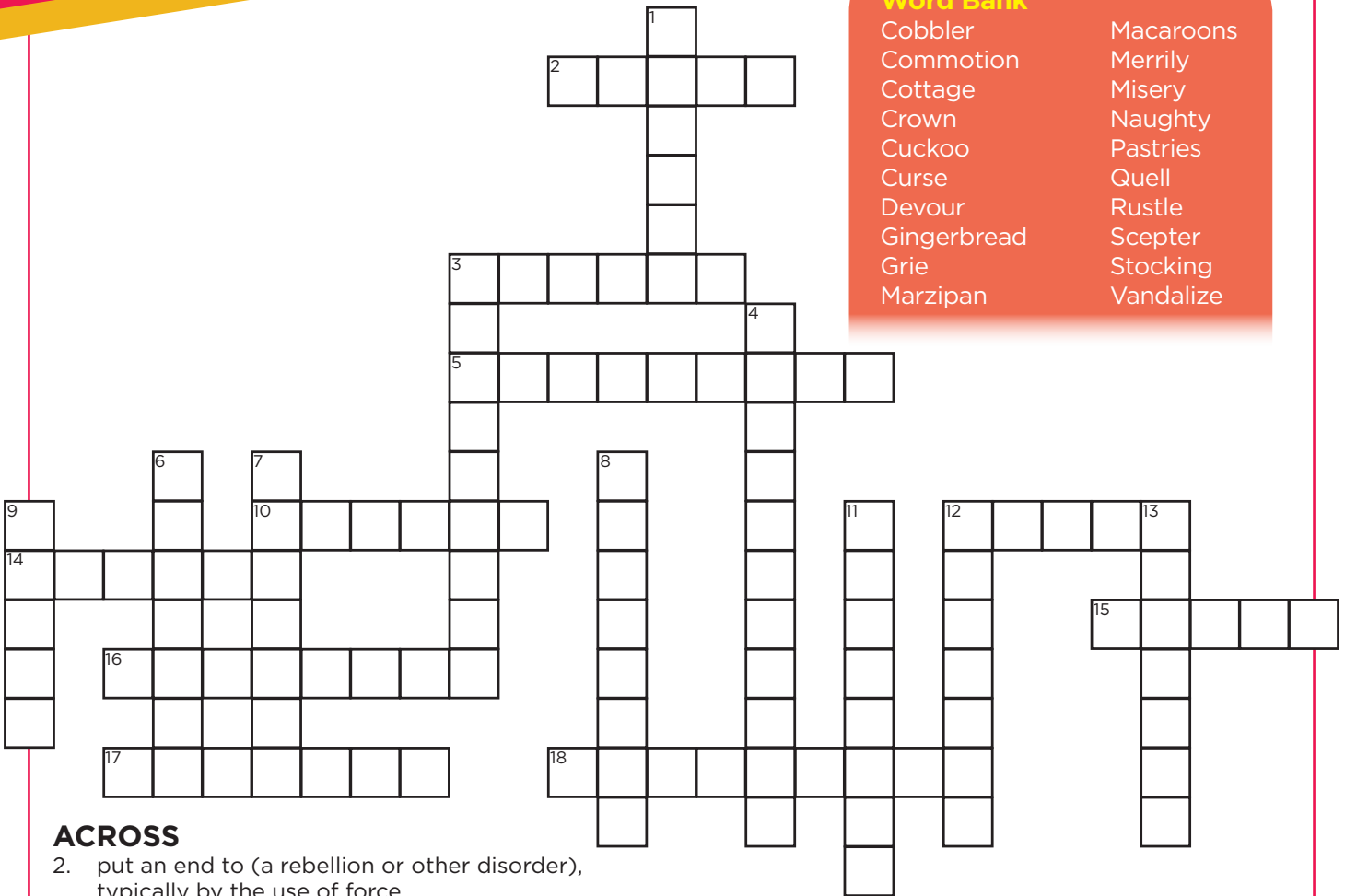
2. **QUELL** - put an end to (a rebellion or other disorder), typically by the use of force.
3. **MISERY** - a state or feeling of great distress or discomfort of mind or body.
5. **COMMOTION** - a state of confused and noisy disturbance.
10. **CUCKOO** - a medium-sized long-tailed bird, typically with a gray or brown back and barred or pale underbelly.
12. **CROWN** - a circular ornamental headdress worn by a monarch as a symbol of authority, usually made of or decorated with precious metals and jewels.
14. **RUSTLE** - make a soft, muffled crackling sound like that caused by the movement of dry leaves or paper.
15. **CURSE** - a solemn utterance intended to invoke a supernatural power to inflict harm or punishment.
16. **PASTRIES** - a dough of flour, shortening, and water, used as a base and covering in baked dishes such as pies.
17. **MERRILY** - in a cheerful way.
18. **VANDALIZE** - deliberately destroy or damage.

DOWN

1. **DEVOUR** - eat hungrily or quickly.
3. **MACAROONS** - a light cookie made with egg white, sugar, and usually ground almonds or coconut.
4. **GINGERBREAD** - cake made with molasses and flavored with ginger; fancy decoration, especially on a building.
6. **COTTAGE** - a small simple house, typically one near a lake or beach.
7. **SCEPTER** - an ornamented staff carried by rulers on ceremonial occasions as a symbol of sovereignty.
8. **MARZIPAN** - a sweet, yellowish paste of ground almonds, sugar, and egg whites, often colored and used to make small cakes or confections.
9. **GRIEF** - deep sorrow, especially that caused by someone's death.
11. **STOCKING** - a garment typically made of translucent nylon or silk that fits over the foot the upper thigh.
12. **COBBLER** - a person who mends shoes as a job.
13. **NAUGHTY** - disobedient; badly behaved.

Word Bank

Cobbler	Macaroons
Commotion	Merrily
Cottage	Misery
Crown	Naughty
Cuckoo	Pastries
Curse	Quell
Devour	Rustle
Gingerbread	Scepter
Grie	Stocking
Marzipan	Vandalize

**ACROSS**

2. put an end to (a rebellion or other disorder), typically by the use of force.
3. a state or feeling of great distress or discomfort of mind or body.
5. a state of confused and noisy disturbance.
10. a medium-sized long-tailed bird, typically with a gray or brown back and barred or pale underbelly.
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17. in a cheerful way.
18. deliberately destroy or damage.

DOWN

1. eat hungrily or quickly.
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9. deep sorrow, especially that caused by someone's death.
11. a garment typically made of translucent nylon or silk that fits over the foot the upper thigh.
12. a person who mends shoes as a job.
13. disobedient; badly behaved.

THE ATLANTA OPERA
FAN LETTERS
WRITE TO THE PERFORMERS

NAME

Using the words in the word bank below, write a letter to one or more of the performers from *Hansel and Gretel*. What did you like most? What did the music sound like? Did the singers use props or costumes to help tell the story? Who was your favorite performer? If you prefer, draw your favorite part of the performance. Give the letter or the drawing to your teacher to send back to The Atlanta Opera.

Word Bank

Hansel	Puppets
Gretel	Acting
Witch	Singing
Father	Opera
Sandman	Forest

Reviews of performances are important to every opera company. They help the company know how the performance was enjoyed by audiences, and get other people excited about coming to see the show!

Pretend you are an opera critic. Think about the performance you just saw of *Hansel and Gretel* 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.

To write your own review, you can focus on two different elements – what you **saw** and what you **heard**.

FACTS & OPINIONS

A review often combines two things – facts and feelings. It is a piece of straight reporting in which the reviewer tells the reader what he or she saw (facts), and an opinion piece in which the reviewer tells the reader what they liked or didn't like about those elements (opinions). Here is an example of a reviewer reporting what they saw:

“The town plaza is suggested by Paul Steinberg’s dizzyingly colorful set, with a mosaic floor and walls and piñatas hanging from above.”

For the first part of your review, briefly describe what you saw on stage – report what the sets, costumes and lights looked like. These are the facts about the show.

Next, give your opinion about whether you liked these choices. Did they help tell the story effectively?

THE ART OF THE ADJECTIVE

Critics need to have a great vocabulary of descriptive words when they write about what they hear so that the people reading their reviews can imagine what it was like to be there. People use lots of different adjectives to describe the voices of opera singers. Here's a review that's chock-full of great adjectives:

“The **light, smoky** baritone of George Gagnidze only hints at Rigoletto’s outsize emotions, and the **sweet, pure** soprano of Lisette Oropesa keeps Gilda **sweet** but **inert**. The **handsome, hyperactive** tenor Vittorio Grigolo has two registers, bellowing and crooning, and the conductor, Marco Armiliato, has his hands full trying to keep up with Mr. Grigolo’s **wayward** tempos.”

Sometimes it is very hard to describe the way music makes us feel. While there are definitely objective facts we can evaluate when we listen to music (qualities like loud or soft, fast or slow) most of the time we listen subjectively. This means that every opinion is valid – you don't have to know anything about opera to be moved by someone's singing or a beautiful instrumental solo.

Write a few sentences about the character you liked best and why. How did the music help tell you who the character was? Think of five adjectives to describe the way that person's voice sounded to you. How did it make you feel to listen to them?

SUM IT ALL UP

In your opinion, what did you like best about the production? What did you think could use some improvement? Would you recommend that other people come see this opera?

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!

The Atlanta Opera Education Department, 1575 Northside Dr., NW, Suite 350, Atlanta, GA 30318 or education@atlantaopera.org

CREATE YOUR OWN PODCAST

Prepare a podcast show about *Hansel and Gretel*, exploring how two children get lost in the forest and what happens as they find their way back home. Working in a small group, prepare interviews with people who know Hansel and Gretel:

- Their father
- The witch
- The sandman

Want to make the interview more interesting? Get some background information on the story by interviewing:

- Some neighbors
- Cuckoo bird
- Forest animals
- Gingerbread children

Ask them questions about:

- Hansel and Gretel's life with their father
- What happened when they were lost in the woods?
- The witch
- The gingerbread house

Topics for deeper discussion or writing

TOPIC #1

Visit www.pitt.edu/~dash/grimm015a.html and read one of the original versions of *Hansel and Gretel* by the Brothers Grimm.

How does the opera version of *Hansel and Gretel* you saw differ from one of the versions of the Grimms' tale?

TOPIC #2

The story of *Hansel and Gretel* has been performed and adapted in many different ways, including an opera, ballet, musical theater, and even a film. Now that you've seen Humperdinck's version of *Hansel and Gretel*, watch a different version of *Hansel and Gretel* performed in a different way (film, theater, musical theater, ballet, etc.).

Compare and contrast the storytelling in the opera version and the different version that you picked. If you could create your own version of *Hansel and Gretel*, what art form would you use to tell your story and why?

Need help finding different versions of *Hansel and Gretel*? Here are a few examples to get you started:

<https://youtu.be/RffzMOV6rq0>

Coastal City Ballet

<https://youtu.be/EYVH2bjQf4Q>

Scottish Ballet

<https://youtu.be/Xmb4ve3WEys>

1954 Janssen film

<https://youtu.be/dK1IQMRO5iM>

Missoula Children's Theater 2014

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 17th 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:

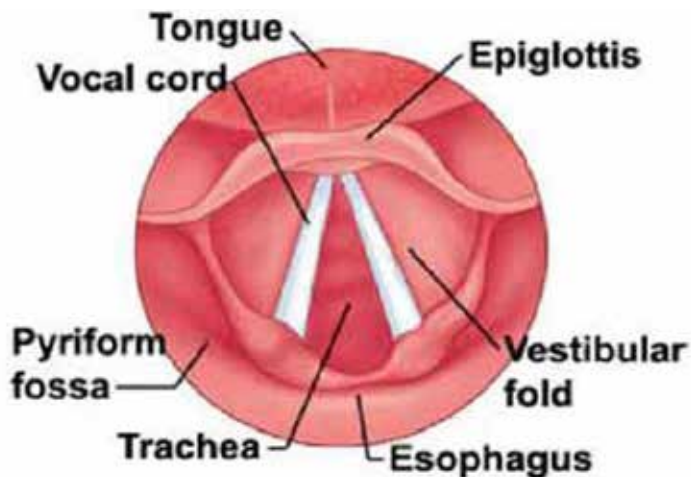
- an extensive range (the ability to sing both high and low)
- varying degrees of volume (loud and soft)
- resonance in the chest and sinus cavities (produces a full or round sound)
- an ability to project or fill a large space without amplification

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 25 years old. Compare that with the most popular singers on the radio today who could release their first albums as teenagers!

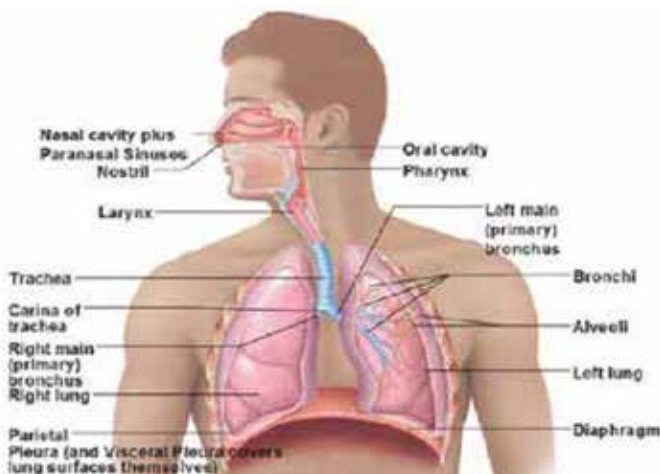
THE VOCAL CORDS

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 cords. The vocal cords are held in the larynx, which is sometimes called the voicebox or (in boys) the Adam's Apple. These two little cords of tissue vary in length but are typically 1 - 2 inches long. When you want to say something, your brain tells your vocal cords to pull together until they're touching lightly. Then, air pushes through them, and the vocal cords 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 cords vibrate. A faster vibration creates a higher pitch. The length of the cords also affects the pitch of the voice. Longer cords make a lower voice.



BREATHING / SUPPORT

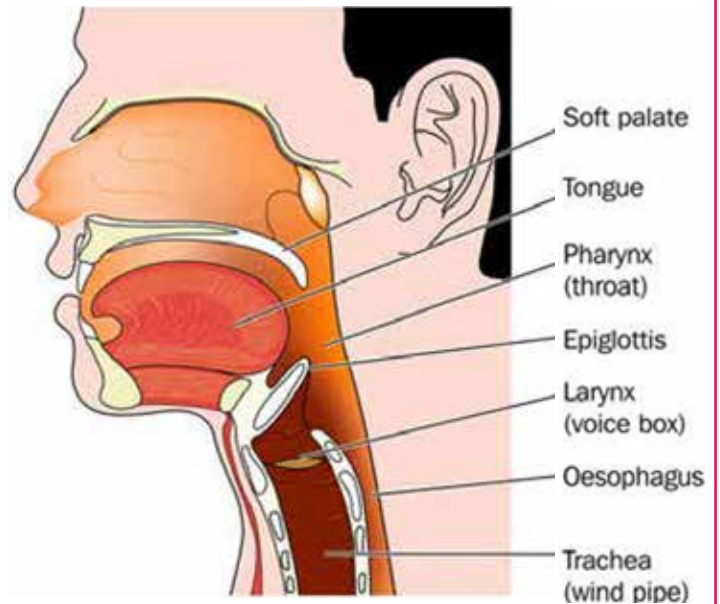
In order to sing long phrases with a lot of volume and a good tone, singers must breathe in a specific manner, making use of the entire torso area (lungs, ribs, diaphragm and viscera). As they breathe in, each part of this network does its job: the lungs fill up with air, which forces the ribs to expand 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 fullness in the low stomach or filling an innertube 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 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 (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 British. 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.



The Atlanta Opera's 2008 mainstage production of *Cinderella* at The Cobb Energy Centre featured Jennifer Larmore in the title role. (photo: Tim Wilkerson)

YOUR SENSE OF SOUND: ENERGY & 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.

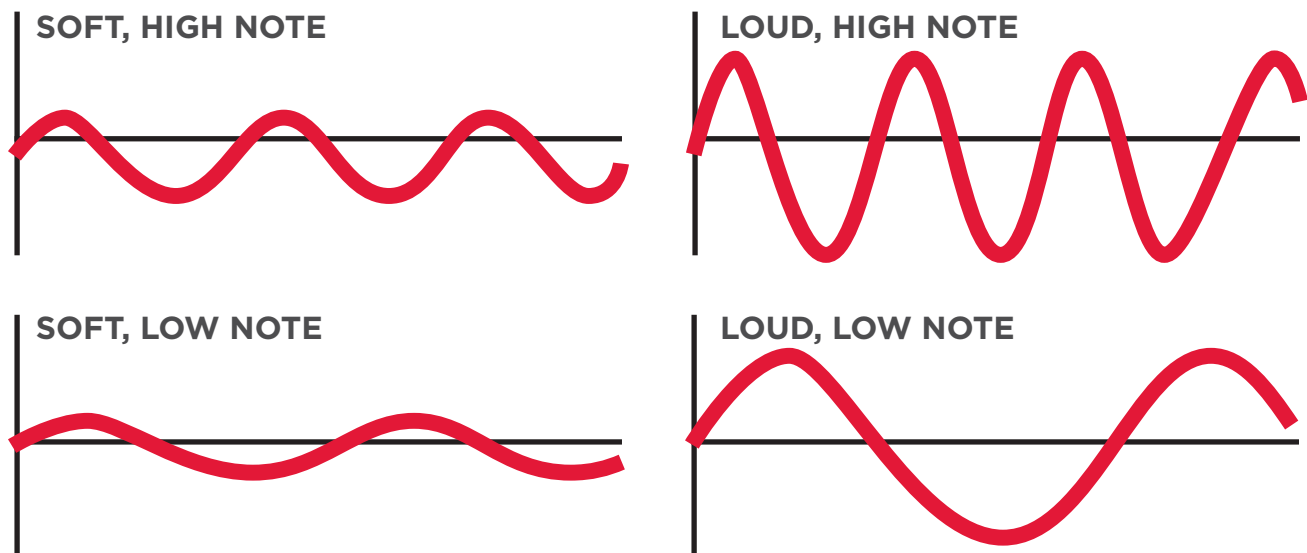
THINK ABOUT IT!

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 high 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:

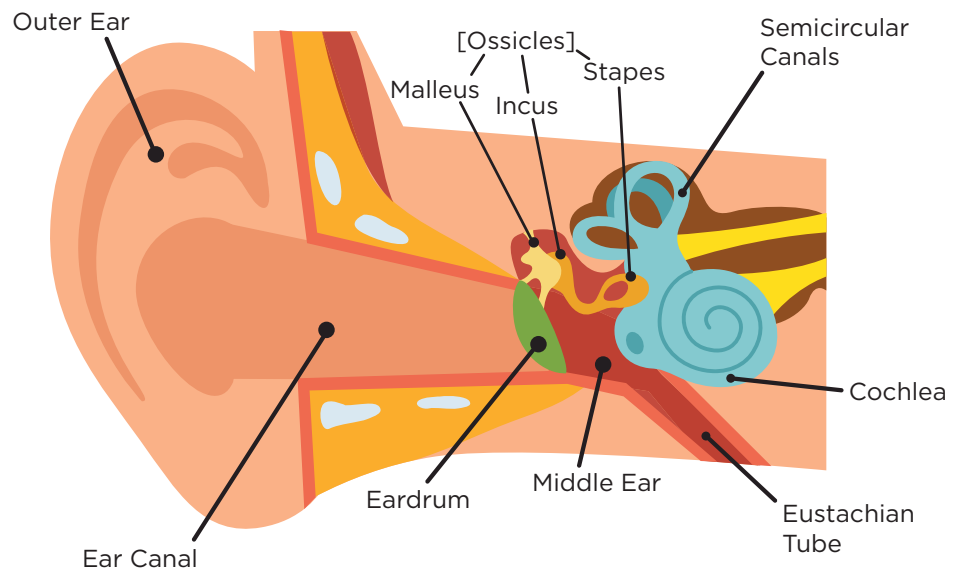


TRY THIS!

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 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 an opening in your ear called the canal. The outer ear also makes earwax to protect the rest of the ear.



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 malleus (hammer), the incus (anvil), and the stapes (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? Earwax (the 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 INNER EAR

Once vibrations enter your inner ear, they travel to the cochlea. The cochlea is a small, curled tube, 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.

DID YOU KNOW? The ossicles are the three smallest bones in your body.
 The stapes is the tiniest of all!

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!

History is much more than just a class we have to take in school. Everyone has a personal history that is affected by the time in which he or she lives. For example, great changes were occurring in the world during Humperdinck's time. Look over the timeline. How might these changes have affected people then?

Jacob Ludwig Karl Grimm (The Brothers Grimm)
born January 4, Hanau, Hesse-Kassel (Germany).

1785

1786

Wilhelm Karl Grimm (The Brothers Grimm)
born February 24, Hanau, Hesse-Kassel (Germany).

Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette executed.
Reign of Terror begins in France.

1793

Eli Whitney invents the cotton gin, spurring the growth of
the cotton industry and rise of slave labor in the U.S. South.

1800

The artistic, literary, musical and intellectual movement known
as Romanticism begins reaching its peak.

The Brothers Grimm begin attending
the University of Marburg (Germany) for four years

1802

1812

The War of 1812 between America and Great Britain begins.
The Brothers Grimm fairy tale collection is published in Germany.

America's first fully-staged opera performance takes place at
the Park Theater, New York City.

1825

Wilhelm Grimm marries Dorothea.

1840

The Brothers Grimm move to Berlin, Germany.

Engelbert Humperdinck (composer) is born at Siegburg
in the Rhine Province (Germany).

1854

1858

Adelheid Wette (librettist) is born in Seiburg (Germany).

Jacob Grimm dies at age 74.

1859

1861

MS, FL, AL, GA, LA, and TX secede from the Union, joining SC
to form the Confederate States of America with Jefferson Davis
as president. VA, AK, TN, NC follow. The U.S. Civil War begins.
Lincoln inaugurated 16th president.

Lincoln proclaims abolition of slavery in the U.S.

1862

1865

Lewis Carroll publishes "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland."
Lincoln fatally shot at Ford's Theater by John Wilkes Booth.
Lee surrenders to Grant at Appomattox, ending the American
Civil War.

Humperdinck music classes at the Cologne Conservatory.

1872

1874

Richard Wagner finishes *Götterdämmerung*, completing his
Ring Cycle begun in 1848. Humperdinck will see it four years later.

Humperdinck earns a scholarship and moves to Munich.

1876

Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake* premieres at the Bolshoi Theatre
in Moscow.

1877

The Brooklyn Bridge and the Metropolitan Opera House
are completed in New York City.

1883

Humperdinck and Wette start writing *Hansel and Gretel*.

1890

New Zealand is first country to grant the right to vote to women.

1893

Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel* premieres in Weimar.

1895

X-rays are discovered by German physicist Wilhelm Roentgen.

1916

Wette dies at the age of 58.

1921

Humperdinck dies at the age of 67.

1931

On Christmas Day, *Hansel and Gretel* is the first complete
Metropolitan Opera radio broadcast performance.

Make your own timeline!

Draw a vertical line on a piece of paper.
Write your birth year at the top and the
current year at the bottom. Then, write or
draw five important world events that have
happened during your lifetime.
Answer these questions:

- How have world events during your lifetime affected the way you live?
- How have these events affected the lives of others?
- How do world events affect your life differently than your parents? Your grandparents? Humperdinck?

ELEMENTARY LEVEL MATH PROBLEMS

- Mr. Smith wants to buy 2 tickets to see *Madama Butterfly* at Cobb Energy Centre. The tickets are \$8.00 a piece. How much will the tickets cost Mr. Smith?
- If you wanted to buy 5 tickets to *Così fan tutte* and they are \$3.00 each, how much will you spend?
- You owe \$11.00 for two opera tickets. You give the ticket seller \$20.00. How much change should you get back?
- Your teacher has \$100 to spend on tickets for *The Magic Flute*. Tickets cost \$5.00 for students and \$10.00 for adults. How many student tickets could she buy? How many adult tickets could she buy?
- Your class is going on a field trip to see a performance of *Carmen*. There are 20 students going and 5 chaperones. Tickets cost \$7.00 for students and \$12.00 for chaperones. 1 chaperone gets a free ticket. How much will the tickets cost for field trip?

ELEMENTARY ANSWERS

- $8 + 8 = \$16$ or $8 \times 2 = \$16$
- $3 + 3 + 3 + 3 + 3 = \$15$ or $5 \times 3 = \$15$
- $20 - 11 = \$9.00$
- $100 / 5 = 20$ students, $100 / 10 = 10$ adults
- $20 \times 7 = \$140$ for students, $4 \times 12 = \$48$ for adults, $140 + 48 = \$188$ total

MIDDLE SCHOOL LEVEL MATH PROBLEMS

- Mr. Smith wants to buy 75 tickets to see *Madama Butterfly* at the Cobb Energy Centre. The tickets are \$12.00 a piece. How much will the tickets cost Mr. Smith?
- You want to buy a block of tickets to *Così fan tutte*. Tickets are \$59.00 each but there is a special package offering a 20% discount for group sales. You have 64 people in your group. How much will you spend?
- You owe \$111.00 for two opera tickets. You charge this on your credit card and there is a 2% fee. What is your total cost?
- Your teacher has \$250.00 to spend on tickets for *Rigoletto*. Tickets cost \$7.00 for students and \$10.00 for adults. She needs to buy tickets for 29 students and 4 adults. Does she have enough money? Explain your answer.
- Your school is going on a field trip to see a student matinee of *The Magic Flute*. There are 452 students going and 22 chaperones. Tickets cost \$7.00 for students and \$10.00 for chaperones. 1 chaperone per every 20 students gets a free ticket. How much will the tickets cost for field trip? How many free chaperone tickets will your group receive?

MIDDLE SCHOOL ANSWERS

- $75 \times 12 = \$900$
- $59 \times 64 = \$3,776.00$ $\times 20\% = \$755.20$ $3,776.00 - 755.20 = \$3,020.80$ total
- $111 \times 2\% = 2.22$ $111 + 2.22 = \$113.22$
- Yes $29 \times 7 = \$203$ students, $10 \times 4 = \$40$ adults $203 + 40 = \$243$
- $452 \times 7 = \$3,164$ for students, $18 \times 10 = \$180$ for adults, $3,164 + 180 = \$3,344.00$ total - 4 free chaperones



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- The Atlanta Opera Website:
<https://www.atlantaopera.org/opera101/education/>

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION

- <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/>
- <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Hansel-and-Gretel-opera-by-Humperdinck/Act-II>
- <https://fairytalez.com/author/brothers-grimm/>
- <https://fairytalez.com/blog/how-to-write-a-fairy-tale-writing-magical-stories/>
- <http://creativekidseducationfoundation.org/kids/opera/base.htm>
- <http://classicalkusc.org/kids/opera/>
- <http://classicalkusc.org/kids/opera/teachers.htm>

RECORDING SUGGESTIONS

- https://open.spotify.com/album/68NaS07kka5nUMyLSnEd4V?si=K8Q6VF_oSEe-v3msxotDVA
- <https://open.spotify.com/album/72NQgThTRlgvbYrzTiXBBI?si=a2nLwwmzSxWMAalgit-Yew>
- <https://player.fm/series/met-opera-guild-podcast/ep-88-humperdincks-hansel-and-gretel>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QCK5yMmdXj0>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X1eIUvZauBk>