



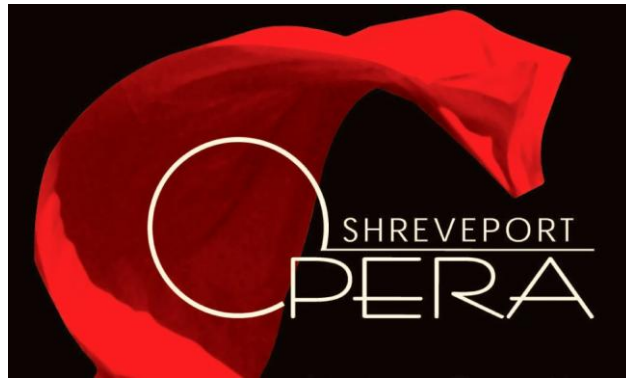
presents

# *Operatizers*

Study Guide

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Thank you for inviting Shreveport Opera Xpress (SOX) to your school. We are delighted to bring this year's production to schools throughout the Ark-La-Tex. We are proud to present *Operatizers*, an opera and Broadway review show.

The SOX Program is an important part of Shreveport Opera. We are committed to producing outstanding professional operas for children that educate as well as entertain. The objectives of SOX and this study guide are:

- To introduce students to the fundamental components of opera
- To introduce basic music terminology
- To excite children about seeing live performances
- To plant the seed for the audience of the future
- To help all involved understand that opera is also fun!

*Operatizers* is a 45 minute concert designed for middle and high school students. It will introduce them to the art form of opera through a presentation of popular opera and musical theater selections. During this concert, students will quickly realize that many of the selections are familiar through commercials, radio and the internet.

I urge your school coordinator or principal to please fill out and return the evaluation form. Your positive feedback and improvement suggestions are a fundamental part of ensuring grants and other funding opportunities for future performances.

Should you have any questions or need anything further, please don't hesitate to contact me at [executivedirector@shreveportopera.org](mailto:executivedirector@shreveportopera.org) or by phone at (318) 227-9503.

All the best,

Amanda J. Gouthiere, M.S.  
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# OPERATIZERS

## EVALUATION FORM

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Parish: \_\_\_\_\_

**Demographics** - For Shreveport Opera grant documentation, please give your best estimate for the number of students attending who are:

White \_\_\_\_\_ Black \_\_\_\_\_ Asian \_\_\_\_\_ Hispanic \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_ Special Needs \_\_\_\_\_

Total Students in Attendance: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade Levels: \_\_\_\_\_

### Pre-Performance

Did you make use of the materials provided on the Shreveport Opera website? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

If No, please indicate why:

\_\_\_\_\_

If Yes, please rate the quality and suitability of the guide: \_\_\_\_\_ Excellent \_\_\_\_\_ Good \_\_\_\_\_  
Fair \_\_\_\_\_ Poor

### Post-Performance.

How would you rate the quality of the performance? \_\_\_\_\_ Excellent \_\_\_\_\_ Good \_\_\_\_\_ Fair \_\_\_\_\_ Poor

How would you rate the quality of the overall experience? \_\_\_\_\_ Excellent \_\_\_\_\_ Good \_\_\_\_\_ Fair \_\_\_\_\_ Poor

Did you find the performers easy to understand? \_\_\_\_\_ Excellent \_\_\_\_\_ Good \_\_\_\_\_ Fair \_\_\_\_\_ Poor

Comments/Suggestions:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**We welcome and encourage student feedback. This form as well as any student drawings, notes, and/or thank you letters may be mailed to:**

**Please Mail To: Shreveport Opera  
212 Texas Street, Suite 101  
Shreveport, LA 71101**

**Fax to: (318) 227-9518**

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## Musical and Operatic Definitions

**ALTO** (It.)

The lowest female voice. Also called contralto.

**ARIA** (It.)

pronounced (AH-ree-ah) - A song for solo voice.

**BARITONE**

pronounced (BARR-ah-tone) - The middle range male voice, between tenor and bass.

**BASS**

pronounced (BASE) - Lowest of the male voices.

**COSTUME**

Clothing a singer wears to portray a character.

**COMPOSER**

The person who writes the music.

**DESIGNER**

The person who creates the scenery, costumes and lights.

**DUET**

pronounced (do-ET) - Music written for two people to sing together, usually to each other.

**ENSEMBLE**

Two or more singers singing at the same time to express their emotions and tell the story.

**LIBRETTO** (It.)

pronounced (lih-BRET-oh) - The word literally means "little book." The text or words of an opera.

**MELODY**

A series of musical tones that make up a tune.

**MEZZO-SOPRANO** (It.)

pronounced (MEDZ-oh soh-PRANH-oh) - The middle female voice, between soprano and contralto.

**OPERA**

pronounced (AH-per-ah) - A play that uses singing instead of speaking and is accompanied usually by piano in rehearsals and orchestra in performances.

**PIANO** (It.)

pronounced (pee-AN-oh) - A musical instrument used to accompany singers in rehearsals when there is no orchestra. The orchestral score is reduced from parts for many instruments to one part for the pianist, which combines all the important music that must be played to give a complete sound for the singers.

**RECITATIVE**

pronounced (ress-it-uh-TEEVE) - A type of music using words sung with the rhythm of natural speech with some melody added. Recitative can come before an aria or stand alone and it gives information or moves the story along.

**REHEARSAL**

The time singers and musicians spend practicing before a performance.

**PROPS**

Objects placed on the stage, excluding scenery. Short for “properties.”

**SCORE**

The book which contains both the music and the text of the opera.

**SET**

The scenery used on the stage to show location for the action.

**SOPRANO (It.)**

pronounced (soh-PRANH-oh) - The highest female voice.

**STAGE DIRECTOR**

The person who decides how the singers will move on stage and how they will act while they are singing their parts.

**TENOR**

pronounced (TEH-nor) - The highest male voice.

**TRIO (It.)**

pronounced (TREE-oh) - Music written for three characters to sing together.

**VIBRATO (It.)**

pronounced (vi-BRAH-toe) - The natural way for a voice or instrument to enlarge its sound through a very rapid but very tiny waver in pitch.

**VOCAL RANGE**

The scope of the human voice from its highest to its lowest sounds. Voices fall into these categories:

**female:** soprano – high

**male:** tenor – high

mezzo-soprano – middle

baritone – middle

alto or contralto – low

bass – low



## **INVESTIGATE OPERA & MUSICAL THEATER**

### **WHAT DOES THE WORD OPERA MEAN?**

The meaning of the word "opera" comes from the Latin word "opus" which means a "work." What is a "work?" It is something that a person makes or thinks up. It is a poem or a song or a drawing or a composition or any other creative thing a person makes. The plural of opus is opera. "Opera" means "works" in the Latin language. Today we use the word "opera" to describe one large work of performing art that combines many kinds of performances. Opera = many works that are combined together. In opera there is a symphony orchestra, a dramatic play or comedy, singing and acting, scenery, costumes, special lighting and sometimes dancing.

### **WHERE DID OPERA BEGIN?**

Opera was created over 400 years ago in Florence, Italy. In 1597 a composer named Jacopo Peri wrote a play that was sung throughout instead of spoken. He did this because he was trying to write a play the way the ancient Greeks did. During this time period educated people were trying to learn all they could about the world of ancient Greece and imitate it. This first opera was about a character in Greek mythology and was called Daphne. The idea of presenting plays that were sung became very popular and more and more composers began to combine music and drama. Love of opera spread all over Europe and eventually the world. Operas have been written in every language and their popularity shows no signs of slowing down.

As in a play, designers must be called in to create the costumes, lights, sets and makeup for an opera production. As the actual performance approaches, the singers have dress rehearsals where they get to wear their new costumes and perform in front of the newly crafted scenery. Rehearsals give the singers an opportunity to practice their music and their acting with each other.

In opera, the composer sometimes writes both the words and the music. However, the person who usually writes the words is the librettist.

Some great operas to know are The Marriage of Figaro, Don Giovanni, The Flying Dutchman, La Boheme, Tosca, and Porgy and Bess (to name just a few).

### **HOW IS THE OPERATIC VOICE DIFFERENT?**

Operatic singing is different from popular singing. There is more vibration in an opera singer's voice. This vibration is called vibrato, an Italian word. It helps the singer hold notes for a long time without taking a breath. Proper breathing is very important because the air in the lungs must be let out very slowly in a controlled way. Opera singers must be able to sing very high and very low, in a wide range and sing fast runs, which are many notes in a row, sung very rapidly. They do not use microphones or amplifiers to project their voices. All the power in their voices must come from inside their bodies. It takes years of study and breath control to learn how to do this. The highest singing voice is called soprano and the lowest voice is bass. Opera singers must also be able to sing in different languages because most operas are performed in the language in which they were originally written.

## WHAT ARE OPERETTAS?

Operettas are usually shorter than operas, and are usually of a light and amusing character. Operettas are often considered less "serious" than operas. The operetta is a precursor of the modern musical theatre or "musical." In the early decades of the 20th century, the operetta continued to exist alongside the newer musical, with each influencing the other. Some famous operettas include *Die Fledermaus* and *The Merry Widow*.

## WHAT IS MUSICAL THEATER?

Musical theater is closely related to another theatrical performance art, opera. These forms are usually distinguished by weighing a number of factors. Musicals generally have a greater focus on spoken dialogue (though some musicals are entirely accompanied and sung through. In particular, a musical is almost always performed in the language of its audience. Musicals produced in London or New York, for instance, are invariably sung in English, even if they were originally written in another language (*Les Misérables*, originally written in French, is a good example). While an opera singer is primarily a singer and only secondarily an actor (and rarely needs to dance), a musical theatre performer is often an actor first and then a singer and dancer. Someone who is equally accomplished at all three is referred to as a "triple threat". Composers of music for musicals often consider the vocal demands of roles with musical theatre performers in mind. Today, theatres staging musicals generally use amplification of the actors' singing voices in a way that would not be used in an operatic context.

Musical theater is a form of theater combining songs, spoken dialogue and dance. The emotional content of the piece – humor, pathos, love, anger – as well as the story itself, is communicated through the words, music, movement and technical aspects of the entertainment as an integrated whole. Although musical theater overlaps with other theatrical forms such as opera, it may be distinguished by the equal importance given to the music as compared with the dialogue, movement and other elements of the works. Since the early 20th century, musical theater stage works have generally been called, simply, "musicals".

Some of the most famous and iconic musicals through the decades that followed include *West Side Story*, *The Fantasticks*, *Hair*, *A Chorus Line*, *Les Misérables*, *The Phantom of the Opera*, *Rent*, *The Producers* and *Wicked*.

Since the 20th century, "book musical" has been defined as a musical play where the songs and dances are fully integrated into a well-made story, with serious dramatic goals, that is able to evoke genuine emotions other than laughter.[2][3] The three main components of a book musical are the music, the lyrics and the book. The book of a musical refers to the story, character development, and dramatic structure, including the spoken dialogue. Book can also refer to the dialogue and lyrics together, which are sometimes referred to as the libretto (Italian for "little book"). The music and lyrics together form the score of the musical. The interpretation of the musical by the creative team of each production heavily influences the way in which the musical is presented. That team includes a director, a musical director, usually a choreographer and sometimes an orchestrator. A musical's production is also creatively characterized by technical aspects, such as set design, costumes, stage properties (props), lighting and sound, which generally change from the original production to succeeding productions.

To research more, simply search opera or musical theater. Wikipedia paired with Youtube can be a great (and free) way to investigate the musical arts.



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