



San Francisco Opera's Verdi's *DON CARLO*

California Content Standards
Kindergarten through Grade 12

LANGUAGE ARTS

WORD ANALYSIS, FLUENCY, AND VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT

Phonics and Phonemic Awareness:

Letter Recognition: Name the letters in a word. Ex. **Don Carlo = C-a-r-l-o.**

Letter/Sound Association: Name the letters and the beginning and ending sound in a word. **C-ar-l-o**

Match and list words with the same beginning or ending sounds. Ex. **Carlo** and **Countess** have the same beginning letter "c" and sound /c/; but end with different ending sounds. Additional examples: Carlo, Rodrigo, Tebaldo.

Syllables: Count the syllables in a word. Ex.: Prin-cess E-Bo-li

Match and list words with the same number of syllables. Clap out syllables as beats. Ex.: 1 syllable 2 syllables 3 syllables **bass = bass tenor = ten-or soprano = so-pra-no**

Phoneme Substitution: Play with the beginning sounds to make silly words. What would a "boprano" sound like? (Also substitute middle and ending sounds.) Ex. **soprano, boprano, toprano, koprano.**

Phoneme Counting: How many sounds in a word? Ex. **bell = 3**

Phoneme Segmentation: Which sounds do you hear in a word? Ex. **sing = s/i/n/g.**

Reading Skills: Build skills using the subtitles on the video and related educator documents.

Examine vocabulary in source material texts: *Don Carlo* libretto.

Examine the different names in the story; what would you name your characters or places?

Define words and expressions in the story that are unfamiliar: auto-de-fe, cloister; "choose between the veil and exile"

Concepts of Print: Sentence structure, punctuation, directionality.

Opera vocabulary: soprano, mezzo-soprano, bass, trouser role.

Examine contrasting vocabulary.

Find words in *Don Carlo* that are unfamiliar and find definitions and roots.

Find analogies in *Don Carlo*.

Metaphors

Parts of speech: Noun, verb, adjective, adverb, prepositions.

Vocabulary Lists: Ex. *Don Carlo* Opera glossary, Music and Composition terms



Reading Comprehension:

Story Development (What's the beginning, middle and end?): Character desires and motivation; Cause and effect: What made this happen?

The sequencing of events, climax, and resolution.

Read:

Opera source material: Source material for *Don Carlo*, *Don Carlo* libretto, biographies, etc.

Watch different versions of the opera on DVD; how do they differ and why?

Examine the history of *Don Carlo* in literature. Compare to the opera.

How did the tragedy evolve?

Compare and contrast the opera libretto with the source material – Schiller's play – that Verdi used to create *Don Carlo*.

Find characters in literature who've experience unrequited love.

Read sections of the English translation of the libretto. Write a brief synopsis based on the libretto.

Reflect on your viewing of the opera by sharing your questions about it with the other students.

Creative writing:

Interpret the story and create a new version. Create your own characters or change the opera's time period and setting.

Explore different genres of writing: poetry, song text, libretto, script for media arts, biography, autobiography, short story, historical novel, etc.

Explore literary devices such as the use of point of view, internal/external conflict, repetition of phrases and foreshadowing.

CREATIVE WRITING

Reinterpret the story by creating a new version using your own characters, time period and setting.

Explore different genres of writing: poetry, song text, libretto, script for media arts, biography, autobiography, short story, historical novel, etc.

Explore literary devices such as the use of point of view, internal/external conflict, repetition of phrases and foreshadowing.

Analysis and Interpretation: Expository writing, critiques/reviews.

Persuasive Writing: Letter writing, copywriting: advertising, fundraising, press release.

Write about what would happen to the characters if the story continued.

Set the story in a different time and place. Update the dialogue.

Read published letters by famous people; try to reconstruct their lives from the letters.

LITERARY RESPONSE AND ANALYSIS

Elements of a Story:

Character, plot, setting, conflict.

Chart out the elements of the plot.

Play segments of the opera; students' journal after listing the segments.

Compare the format of the libretto to the format of the original book.

Students respond to a letter from Don Carlo or Elisabetta asking them for advice.

Read a synopsis of Act I; how would you complete this story?

Examine the relationship between Art and politics – How do they drive and influence each other? A topic for debate, "Should the arts be political?" <http://www.houstonpress.com/arts/the-personal-is-political-6562239>

What are the King and Queen's motivations for the people?

Vocabulary:

Reading for understanding using the subtitles on videos and related educator documents.

Genres:

Historical, political dramas and compare to current day examples, featuring historical dynasties, mini-series (Wolf Hall, The Tudors, GoT, Masterpiece Theatre) and soap operas.

Themes: Tragedy - Duty vs. Liberty (Nationhood, independence) love, friendship & loyalty, trust, fate. Status & Power – Maintain the status quo (social class and wealth), punishment, forgiveness, mercy (for Protestants); jealousy, deceit, sacrifice, and the battle of the sexes - magnanimity (Elisabeth marrying King Philip despite her love for Don Carlo), adultery (Eboli and King, lust between Queen and Don Carlo), family ties, legacy.

Character Actions and Motives:

Examine the character of Don Carlo. What do you think about Don Carlo? Do you like him? What are his motivations? What are his principles? Are you sympathetic to his plight?

Discuss Don Carlo's motivations. Do you think he makes the right decisions throughout the opera?

Think of five adjectives that describe Don Carlo. Support your choices with evidence.

Analyze the characters in the opera. What motivates their actions? What are their main traits? Do they change over the course of the opera?

Who are the characters that drive the action in this opera?

What are some emotions or feelings the characters exhibit in the story? How do you feel about how they act upon or express their emotions?

Examine each character's appetite. What are they hungry for?

Examine the relationships in the opera, i.e. between Don Carlo and Elisabetta, between Don Carlo and Princess Eboli. The relationship between Don Carlo and Phillip II, compared to Don Carlo and Rodrigo. How do they interact? How do the characters feel about each other?

Examine the male characters and their particular political attitudes. What do the characters in *Don Carlo* stand for? How are characters like current day politicians?

Tebaldo, the young page to Elisabetta, is one of Verdi's only trouser roles. Why?

Archetypes: What are stock characters (The King, The prince, his faithful friend)? Examine the family dynamic of the characters in *Don Carlo*. Do any of characters behave differently from what is expected?

Character Development: Examine character development: do the characters grow beyond their expected roles?

List some transformations or changes that the characters experience in the story. How do they respond to the changes? How do their characters change?

Compare the characters in *Don Carlo* to characters in stories that you know. Can you find any similarities?

Pick your favorite character in the opera and describe him/her. Write a letter from his/her point of view to another character.

Examine the use of subtext in the opera. Are people always saying what they mean, or is their language intended to mask something?

Examine character development: do the characters grow beyond their expected roles?

Compare and contrast the behavior of the different characters in the opera.

How do the different characters speak? What does that say about their social status?

Explore the nuances of the characters in the opera.

How do the characters go about getting what they want in the opera?

Are the female characters in the opera two-dimensional or three-dimensional?

Create a map of the characters. Who are the primary characters? Who are the secondary?

Alliteration: Recognize the similarities of sounds and rhythmic patterns in the libretto.

Figurative Language: Simile, Metaphor, Hyperbole, Personification, Allegory:

Language style and music reflects emotion of characters, and instrumental sounds or musical phrases can be used symbolize character.

WRITING STRATEGIES

Analysis and Interpretation:

Don Carlo production materials: artist biographies, program and program notes, synopsis, expository writing, critiques/reviews, etc.

Persuasive Writing:

Write a “me” poem for each of the characters: begin the poem with “I am” and list the characteristics of each person in separate phrases.

Write parrot poems from the point of view of the characters. Parrot poems are conversational poems in which partners write each line in turn.

Persuasive writing: create posters, advertisements for one of the characters.

Write dialogue for two of the characters in the opera. Each character only says one line, but uses different inflections each time he/she says it.

Writing exercise in which feelings are expressed like those in *Don Carlo* arias.

Write a passage expressing several characters’ inner thoughts at the same time.

Rewrite libretto using today as a setting. Use contemporary characters: Who would be Don Carlo today? Elisabetta?

Create a storyboard of *Don Carlo* as a soap opera.

Scenes, letters, diary or blog pages can be written from a particular character's point of view; make sure to take relationships between characters into account. Diary pages could focus on how characters convince themselves to do something — internal debate.

Letter writing, copywriting: advertising, fundraising, press release.

Write a different ending for the opera.

Write a letter from one character to another.

Write or draw a deleted scene for the opera; a scene we hear about, but don't see.

Divide into small groups. Each group writes the story from the point of view of a different character.

Write a prequel to the opera, focusing on Don Carlo's young life.

Keep journals from the point of view of the characters during the events of the opera.

Write this story from the point of view of the women. What if Don Carlo was a woman?

Rewrite a scene from the opera, switching the genders of the characters. How does the scene change? Rewrite a scene, changing the ethnicities. How does it change?

WRITTEN AND ORAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS

Debates between characters. Deliver persuasive speeches, identify tactics used.

Write a monologue with two scenes based on the alternate points of view held by a single character.

Spelling: Spell the names of the characters in *Don Carlo*.

Facial cues, expressions, gestures can sometimes amplify message being delivered, or can sometimes run contrary to meaning of words (subtext).

What are the different types of drama? What kind of drama is *Don Carlo*? How does it compare to similar types today?

Watch different versions of the opera on DVD and write reviews. Read example reviews first.

What is a treaty? Write your own peace treaty.

Designate someone as Don Carlo and someone to interview him. Conduct an interview.

Examine the structure of *Don Carlo*; can you relate it to other stories you've read or seen that have the same character(s) in different stories?

Define climax. Define denouement. How are they used in *Don Carlo*?

LISTENING AND SPEAKING

Oral Speaking: Connection between the written words and oral interpretation (recitative and sung), the phrasing and musicality of speech.

Act out main events of the story, in tableaux or longer scenes. Improvise. Give small groups different scenes, and then act out in succession.

Separate into small groups; each group researches and comes up with evidence for certain characters' motivations, then defends them in a classroom debate.

Tell the story of *Don Carlo* in your own words to other members of your class.

Write dialogue for two of the characters in the opera. Each character only says one line, but uses different inflections each time he/she says it.

Write two speeches about the same thing; write one to be delivered to a friend, and one to be delivered to a person of authority. How does your language differ?

Conduct a debate between two characters in the opera.

Reflection: What did you see, think, hear and feel? Ex. Verbal & written responses to *Don Carlo*.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Giuseppe Verdi (composer): biographies, timelines of work.

Joseph Méry and Camille du Locle (librettists): Biography, timeline of works.

ACTIVITIES

Create a character sketch.

Create Reader's Theater of *Don Carlo*.

Interview characters in *Don Carlo*; write a news story based on the interviews.

Create a news report about *Don Carlo* using HyperStudio.

Write a Dear Abby letter from one of the characters in the opera, and Abby's response.

Write a letter from one character to another, choosing a moment in the story to write about. Use the "Friendly Letter" format.

Using a letter from one character to another in the opera; edit the letter down to a tweet or Facebook post.

Write a blog post from the point of view of one character.

Write a fake twitter feed for Don Carlo or Elisabetta.

Write a scene of conflict between two people who start out as friends, then end up arguing. Compare it with a scene of conflict in the opera.

Play "Hot Seat": one student acts as one of the characters from the story, and the other students ask him or her questions based on that character.

Write a prequel for the opera about one of the characters' life.

Story writing: Adapt existing source material; create story/characters.

Libretto writing: Adapt *Don Carlo* (existing source material) or create a new story/characters.

Create written copy: program, poster design, advertising, biography, etc.

Read and report on feature articles from the opera program.



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MATHEMATICS

ATTRIBUTES

Comparisons in Don Carlo

Sorting and Classifying: What characters belong together, which don't, and why.

MEASUREMENT

Don Carlo's Use of Standard Units of Measurement in Story & Set Design.

2D & 3D Dimensions: Area, Perimeter, Volume, Scale, Proportion, Ratio.

Weight: Physical, Metaphorical, Balance.

Time: Passage of time (real & theatrical time), times of day (morning, afternoon and night; yesterday, today, tomorrow; time of everyday events such as dinner & bed time), estimation, reading time, age of characters.

Explore the math of the Spanish Inquisition, Use the Henningsen-Contreras statistics for the period 1540–1700
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spanish_Inquisition#Henningsen-Contreras_statistics_for_the_period_1540.E2.80.931700

Compare with the United Nations' statistics for international migration today.

<http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimates15.shtml>

Estimate how many people are in large ensemble scenes. Count the number of people who need to be paid when putting on an opera; use cast and company listings in the program to calculate.

Create a budget for a production of the opera. Students are responsible for accomplishing production and staying within budget.

Create timelines for Verdi's life, what's happening in other places at the same time.

GEOMETRY

As found Don Carlo's character, costume & set design.

Identification of Shapes, Repetition & Pattern, Rhythm & Symmetry.

Planes (Square, Rectangle, Triangle, Circle) & 3D (Cube, Pyramid, Sphere).

Positive & Negative Space, Interior & Exterior Space.

Build a scale model of a set for *Don Carlo*. What materials and what quantities of them would you need to build it?

Create analogies between polygons and different ensembles in the opera (i.e. a trio is a triangle, a quintet is a pentagon).

NUMBER SENSE

Counting using the production elements and music of Don Carlo.

Formulas & calculations: Addition, subtraction, multiplication, division.

More, less, or same as.

Concept of zero (absences, disappearances. Ex. rests/silence in music.

Ordering & sequencing.

Recognizing and creating numerical patterns. Ex. beats, ABA pattern in music.

Survey taking: tallying and graphing.

Predictions.

How many people are in an opera chorus? How much space do you need for them onstage?

How much money would a royal family have in the time the opera is set? Compare to today.

ACTIVITIES

Design and play a board game based on *Don Carlo*.

Design a deck of trading cards based on the characters of *Don Carlo*.

Research remonetizing formula; how do economists determine how much money was worth then vs. now? What is the value of the money Don Carlo has in today's money?

Create costume patterns for *Don Carlo*. Use yourself as a size model and design the patterns to fit you.

Build a scale model of a set for *Don Carlo*. What, and what quantities of, materials would you need to build it?



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SCIENCE

The principals of science used in Don Carlo.

THE FIVE SENSES:

Sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell.

What are senses involved in experiencing opera?

How do senses develop and decline as you get older?

The loss of what sense would most diminish experience of opera.

PARTS OF THE BODY:

Identification of body parts important to performing. Ex. Diaphragm, larynx, throat, mouth, etc.

Identification of body parts associated with hearing music, how ears work.

Identification of body parts associated with viewing opera, how eyes work.

Examine the science of men and women and psychological and physical differences.

LIFE SCIENCE

Explore the genetics of Don Carlo's family tree. Familial traits, In breeding and the "Habsburg Jaw"

<http://scienceblogs.com/gnxp/2009/04/14/inbreeding-the-downfall-of-the/>

DNA Lab - Monocultures vs. biodiversity (benefits of diverse gene pool in terms of survival)

How does the body react in times of stress like those that occur in the opera?

What happens to your brain when you're in love or when you're angry? How is your body affected?

THE ELEMENTS

Fire, Water, Earth, Metal, Air, Wood.

Weather.

Sun, Moon, Stars.

PHYSICS

Sound: Voice, Instruments, Acoustics, Amplification, Recording.

Concepts of Gravity, Time & Space.

Science and the Spanish Inquisition; religion and science; emotion and science; bias/belief of right

Learn about the Trial of Galileo Galilei (1633) <http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/galileo/galileo.html>

ACTIVITIES

Create an illustrated version of Don Carlo's family tree. https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philip_II_of_Spain#Family

Explore the characters' psychological motivations and the neuroscience of perception and decision-making.

What is DNA? Explore DNA with DNA Interactive. <http://www.dnai.org/>

Learn genetics. Explore the Genetic Science Learning Center <http://learn.genetics.utah.edu/>

Learn more about monocultures, and the importance of biodiversity.

Find the DNA in a Banana. <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/find-the-dna-in-a-banana-bring-science-home/>



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SOCIAL STUDIES

PERSONAL CONNECTIONS

Self-Identity.

Family: Immediate & Extended. Caring brother and sister relationship.

Roles of family members in your life and the choices you make.

Time: Past, Present, Future.

Place: Neighborhood, City, State, Continent, World, Universe.

What are the characters beliefs about death?

How do different ideologies tie in? political influence vs. religious influence.

Modern day witch-hunts. When does it become other nations responsibility to care for persecuted peoples?

How do the arts influence political, social and moral decision-making?

CIVICS

Social Hierarchy: Class, Status. Ex. officers, servants.

How is class indicated by the music, the costumes and other elements in *Don Carlo*?

Political events during Verdi's time. Nationalism, Symbolism - Verdi became disillusioned; Realpolitik

Learn about Flanders – What's the history of the formation of Belgium, challenges of bringing Belgium and Netherlands into union; Flanders was major trade hub and did not want to pay tribute to Spanish court. Sacrificing Flanders independence for the sake of the empire

What is the relationship between The Church vs. The State in *Don Carlo*? (The Church has more power than King at the end of *Don Carlo*, basically telling Don Carlo what to do)

Power dynamics - Rulers/people in power having empathy/compassion vs. power corrupts. What happens when people lose faith in their leadership? Where are there civil uprisings today?

Create a timeline for the Renaissance and the Reformation.

What is the relationship between Church and State in different countries today?

There is a biblical reference when the Grand Inquisitor demands sacrifice of son; what other stories have this same situation?

GEOGRAPHY

The Opera's setting: Where is this place? What is this culture?

Map locations mentioned in the opera.

Location of Verdi's birth. Where else did he live?

Trace Verdi's travels and draw a map of the different places where he lived.

Map of Europe over different time periods, compare and contrast, how have borders changed?

Based on the story, pick a new setting for the opera. How would the story change, if at all?

Review the cast list for this production of the opera; where do the singers come from?

HISTORY

Research when Verdi was born and the time period when Verdi lived. What are the differences and similarities between Verdi's Europe and Europe today?

Examine class system, government and politics during Verdi's time.

How is historical information reflected in the viewpoints of the characters?

Create a Venn diagram: what was true about the time of *Don Carlo*, what is true about our time, and what overlaps?

What would the audience during Verdi's time have known about these characters before seeing the opera? What would they be expecting from characters like King Philip II, Don Carlo and Elisabetta?

Research the story of *Don Carlo*; was the story based on a real story?

Don Carlo was written for International Exposition – how would that influence the piece? How quickly could the opera spread?

Research the reception of *Don Carlo* upon its premiere.

Assign different topics from the time of the opera to small groups, and have them present to each other: money and trade, social structures, military, the arts, etc.

Verdi saw something in this story to structure an opera around. What was happening in Europe when the opera was written? What were the social structures in Europe at the time?

Research the Spanish Inquisition.

Examine systems of royalty.

What toll does war have on people? What is the impact of war on people today? What similarities and differences do you see between then and now?

Don Carlo is an opera about different religions; written in a time when religions were being formed. Where might one set a new opera look to write about this theme?

How does *Don Carlo* explore the theme of the Individual vs. climate/economics/social forces to effect change?

History of Opera

- How Opera began, history of San Francisco Opera, history of the Adler Fellow Program.

ACTIVITIES

Map settings in which play and opera take place.

How do people win in this opera? What do they think they have gained when they win? What is their own personal concept of winning? Create a board game or card game that would have been typical of the era involving the characters from *Don Carlo*.

Pick another time period in which to set *Don Carlo*. Research and design costumes and sets to reflect trends, society at that time.

Write a letter from one character to another using the writing materials used at the time of *Don Carlo* (quill pens, wax seals, parchment).

Create timelines of events in opera; Verdi's operas.

Create an organizational chart of the character relationships in *Don Carlo*.

Researching the backstory or the story that comes after *Don Carlo*.

Create a timeline of the story of *Don Carlo*; include events that were happening elsewhere in the world at the same time.

Examine the power relationships in the opera.

The story of *Don Carlo* could be set in a different time and place. Pick a different setting for the plot of this story.

Research the development of *Don Carlo*. Why would an artist be commissioned to write an opera? How do new operas get made today?



SAN FRANCISCO OPERA EDUCATION

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PHYSICAL EDUCATION

What dances could you do to music from the different scenes?

What kinds of dances would you use to represent different characters?

How do you move differently when you're young and old?

MOVEMENT

Walking, dancing, jumping, balancing, leaping, lifting, etc. Ex. Move your body in different ways using the example of each character.

Act out how Don Carlo and King Philip II would walk. What are the differences?

What would dances of the period have looked like?

Choreograph dances for selected scenes in *Don Carlo*.

Practice dancing to music from the opera. What music selections lend themselves to dancing?

PHYSICALITY OF PERFORMING

Endurance & strength, posture, breathing techniques.

Choreography of fights onstage. Learn how stage combat techniques ensure safety for the performers. Create your own choreography for the fight scene between King Philip II, Don Carlo, and Rodrigo.

TEAM-BUILDING

Cooperative games encourage collaboration and build trust.

Play number games, where students have to gather in groups of two, three, and so on. The object is to get together as quickly as possible. They can also be instructed to create pictures with their bodies, or move in unison.

Construct relays around relationships between characters or servants' chores.

Exercises to move together as a group. Building the ensemble.

Partner dancing, changing partners, partnering exercises, mirroring activities.



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HEALTH EDUCATION

The unifying ideas of health literacy are as follows:

- Acceptance of personal responsibility for lifelong health
- Respect for and promotion of the health of others
- An understanding of the process of growth and development
- Informed use of health-related information, products, and services

MENTAL & PHYSICAL HEALTH

Taking care of your body. Ex. What do performers have to do to prepare their body for performing?

Conflict resolution. Ex. How do the characters resolve all their problems with each other? How don't they?

Dealing with emotions, stress. Ex. Explore from the point of view of each character. Who did they talk to about their problems and emotions before the invention of psychology?

Family issues. Complicated family dynamic in *Don Carlo*.

Gender roles & body image.

Examine the scenarios in the opera where people have choices; what kinds of decisions do they make and could they have been better?

How do the characters in the opera communicate with each other? Could they have improved their relationships through empathy? Fairness, punishment by proxy – The servant gets punished when Queen is really at fault

How do the characters in the opera try to influence each other? Are they experiencing peer pressure? What pressures act on the characters in the opera? How do they respond?

Love at first site; can it be powerful? Is it dangerous? How?

What makes a happy marriage? Elisabetta's situation - a loveless marriage; arranged marriage

How are women treated in this opera? How do they assert themselves?

Examine the male playwright's perspective of Verdi's women and their emotions: Scorn; Eboli feels scorned by Don Carlo (hell hath no fury). Eboli curses own beauty; is beauty an asset? Beauty as power. How might a female playwright present a different picture of the relationships in *Don Carlo*?

Do the characters in *Don Carlo* seem mentally healthy?



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CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Assign jobs from the opera to students in the classroom. What would be the most coveted jobs? What would be the most important jobs?

How are jobs different now from then? How did people get jobs in Verdi's time?

What jobs would people have had at the time of the story? What would their education have been?

How would people do work differently in Verdi's time? How would they be limited by available technology?

Assign jobs for the production of the opera to different students; each has to present a concept for their part of the design. Create an evaluation rubric for their job performance, including creativity, presentation skills, budget management.

Research the careers of opera singers who have played the roles in *Don Carlo*.

Jobs at the Opera.

Explore backgrounds and training of people who work at the Opera.

- Wardrobe
SF Opera: Timelapse - Costume Shop - Distressing - *The Trojans* <https://youtu.be/BH9rCmbpqqd4>
- Set design, stage plots
SF Opera Timelapse changeover: Figaro to Aida <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HkrLB1Gciqk>
- Lighting
SF Opera Don Carlo Teaser - Summer 2016 <https://youtu.be/6Dkawv43UsA>

Who are the professionals outside the opera who make the opera happen? Police, fire, caterers, etc.

Organizational chart of San Francisco Opera.



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VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

MUSIC

STORYTELLING & MUSIC: WHAT IS AN OPERA?

Character and plot development through musical themes. What is the difference between major and minor keys and how do changes between keys help tell the story?

How does orchestral music enhance what characters are singing? How does it act as another character?

How does music associated with a particular character enhance their class status?

What kinds of ensembles are possible with this story and these characters?

Which voice types usually portray which types of characters and why?

How is musical pacing different between dramas and comedies?

Pick out moments when Verdi's orchestration indicates certain staging ideas or action.

How do instruments represent characters? Identify repetition and variation of themes.

How does orchestral music communicate a character's state of mind? Set a mood?

Key plot points: The composer and librettist determine the placement of arias within the libretto to heighten emotion in the story.

What is "Grand Opera"? How has opera changed over time?

How are operas similar to musicals? How are they different? Watch examples of both.

Compare the musical storytelling in Verdi's opera *Don Carlo* with Lin-Manuel Miranda's musical *Hamilton*.

Source material for Opera: Novels (Puccini's *La Bohème*, Tan & Wallace's *The Bonesetter's Daughter*); Films (*The Fly*), Real-life events (Heggie's *Dead Man Walking*, Adams' *Nixon in China*); Related genres – Musical Theater (*Sweeney Todd*, *Rent*), Rock Opera (*Tommy*), popular song versions of opera.

VOCABULARY

Musical Structure: Solos, duets, trios, choral numbers.

Composition: Arias, recitative, overture, incidental music. Identify characters who have arias in the opera.

Musical Instructions: Tempo, legato; pianissimo; crescendo, cadenzas, etc.

Voice ranges: Soprano, mezzo-soprano, tenor, baritone, bass-baritone, countertenor, bass.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

History of San Francisco Opera, the Adler Fellows program.

Giuseppe Verdi: Biography, timeline of works, signature sound within genres: sonatas, symphonies, masses and requiem, operas.

Examine Verdi's career. What did *Don Carlo* represent for him?

Compare and contrast operas from Verdi's different periods - later years: longer, larger cast, greater spectacle

Look at Verdi's use of the voice (high baritone and dramatic mezzo development)

Compare *Don Carlo* with other operas that deal with religious wars of the periods, such as Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots*, *Dialogues des Carmélites*.

Compare the women in *Don Carlo* with Donizetti queen sequence of operas: Anna Bolena, Maria Stuart, Roberto Devereux.

What were Verdi's personal motivations for writing *Don Carlos*?

How does the opera use engage the audience in the story of individuals within the big spectacle?

Who is Charles V? Character accuracies. Interesting story, political power, personal toll

Compare the characters in *Don Carlo*. Is their complexity of character seen or not seen through their arias?

Role of veil song – foreshadowing technique, connections through entire opera

Friendship duet: what are friendship songs, where do you find them? What do they mean? Find other friendship duets in opera (ex.: *Così* trio “Soave il vento”, The Pearl Fishers); musical expressions of friendship (“Drink with Me” from *Les Misérables* or “The Story of Tonight” from *Hamilton*; What song would you choose to represent a moment when your friend “takes the bullet for you”?

ACTIVITIES

Listen to multiple recordings of *Don Carlo* and study different interpretations.

Learn and memorize songs from *Don Carlo*.

Pick modern songs that could tell the story of *Don Carlo* or describe the characters.

How does the music for different characters identify their social status?

Write themes, motifs for each character; start by writing themes for things in students' everyday lives.

Create mood music to go along with certain passages of the book.

Play the introductory passages for each character for students before they know the story of the opera; have them respond to each piece of music, then see how it matches up to the story.

Create and perform songs for the characters from the opera. Choose design elements based on the music & text.

Compare two different filmed versions of *Don Carlo*; which visualization is more effective and why?

RELATED WORKS OF ART

How do portraits and details in costume indicate time periods. Look at the paintings of Goya, such as *An Inquisition Tribunal*, and other paintings that record historic times. <https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/asset-viewer/escena-de-inquisici%C3%B3n/QAHsJoGPh6kFeQ>

Study the work of visual artists who have designed performing arts productions: Gerald Scarfe, David Hockney, Julie Taymor, Marc Chagall, Maurice Sendak, Oskar Kokoschka, Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse, William Kentridge, Gianni Versace, Bill Viola.

THEATRE

STAGING

Stage vocabulary: Upstage, downstage, levels, blocking.

Theater Exercises: Tableaux, pantomime, events of *Don Carlo* using instruments and voices.

How does the music announce an entrance of a character? What does their entrance music say about them?

After seeing the opera, write a critique of the music. Focus on how the music communicates the mood, the characters, etc.

Listen for the different instruments in the ten-piece orchestra. How big is an orchestra usually?

Listen for the different styles of music in the opera; do different characters sing in different styles?

How is consonance and dissonance used in the opera?

Listen to clips from the opera; what moods do they set?

What did you think about the finale of the opera? Does the music live up to the moment in the story?

Source play by Friedrich Schiller (who wrote many historical/political plays)

Libretto by Joseph Méry and Camille du Locle.

VISUAL ARTS

How are line, color, shape, and texture used in costumes and sets of *Don Carlo*?

LINE

Use of line qualities: soft or hard, wavy or angular, silly spirals.

COLOR

Symbolism of color; color associated with particular characters.

The emotion of color. Ex. red=passionate, blue=calm, yellow=cheerful.

Personal associations with color.

Revealing character traits through the use of color—how do the characters' costumes, including fabrics and colors, reflect their status?

The use of lighting to establish mood and setting.

What colors would you use for different moments in the opera?

SHAPE

The use of shape in character design.

Positive & Negative Space—the stage is a frame.

TEXTURE

Texture: Material use in sets and costumes.

Visual Texture: Pattern and repetition in sets and costumes. How is texture used to convey status?

SPACE

Set design: From 2D plans to 3D construction.

LIGHT

The use of lighting to establish mood and setting.

Examine contrast of light and dark; use of lighting.

How does time of day affect the lighting and the mood on the stage?

How are shadows and shading used in the opera to convey meaning?

PRODUCTION DESIGN

Listen to the music and read the libretto prior to viewing the opera. Choose design elements based on the music and text.

Design paper dolls of characters. Dress them for different eras.

Design a production: dioramas, scale models, backdrops, props, costumes.

Design character make-up, costume, sets and props for classroom operas.

Study use of lighting in production design.

Study clothing of the time and setting for *Don Carlo*. What materials would have been used?

ACTIVITIES

Free-association drawing to music. Ex. Maurice Sendak's *Fantasy Sketches*.

Create illustrations and storyboards outlining the plot of *Don Carlo*.

Explore the history of typefaces; design the title in an appropriate typeface.

Create posters and advertisements for a performance of *Don Carlo*, or for a particular character in the opera.

Puppetry: Create your own version of *Don Carlo* using puppets (paper bags, stick puppets, shadow puppets, marionettes, and bunraku).

How would you draw Don Carlo in today's clothing?

What is role of disguise in opera? (Princess Eboli)? How are costumes and disguises used to reveal true behaviors/intentions?

Create caricatures of some of the characters in the opera.

In groups, create props for *Don Carlo*.

Draw silhouettes of characters; draw characters in other styles, like anime.

Look at the designs for the sets of *Don Carlo*; would you design the sets in the same way? What do you think their inspiration was?

Create posters and advertisements for the opera, or for a particular character in the opera.

Create dioramas of the story of *Don Carlo*.

Create costumes for the characters true to the time period; clothes that are suitable for different tasks.

Create paper dolls of the characters, with outfits for different scenes.

Design sets and costumes for a production of *Don Carlo* set in a different time and place of your choosing. Or pick a setting out of a hat. Make sure the costumes reflect the characters.

Design character make-up, costume, sets and props for classroom operas.

Did the visuals match the music of the opera?

How are the projections synchronized with the music?

Listen to audio-only examples prior to view in improvisation, vocal projection.

Stage etiquette & audience behavior.

Examine storyline, character development through theater games (similar to writing exercises in ELA connections).

Practice movement required for crowd scenes. How do individuals act like individuals in a crowd scene?

Explore different tones/feelings in monologues vs. dialogues vs. crowd scenes.

Explore soliloquies in theater, movies, etc.

List different emotions that the characters display in the operas; how would you act out the emotions without using words?

How does the opera mark the passage of time? How does the audience know time has passed between acts?

How would you use hair and make-up to age a performer to play the Grand Inquisitor?

How do performers move onstage differently than offstage? How do they have to move so that the audience can translate their movements?

How do the performers act when they're singing their thoughts vs. singing to each other?

Stage a crowd scene.

Create entrances and exits for different characters in opera; what would their music be?

How would you stage *Don Carlo* in a different culture? Kabuki, etc.

Opera Production Team: Director, stage manager, choreographer, designer, diction coach, choreographer, lighting, supernumeraries, etc.

In-House Personnel: Marketing, accounting, ticket takers, ushers etc.

ACTIVITIES

Act out scenes about the themes from the opera: love and marriage, jealousy and revenge, class and wealth, etc.

What do you think was done to the singer playing Don Carlo to make him look like the character? How could you do the same in your classroom?

Create props required by the opera.

Create movement and gestures to react to particular lines of the libretto.

Create movement to react to particular musical moments.

Examine different versions of the opera with different casts; how do the different performers make you see the story differently?

Cast the roles in the opera with your classmates. Who plays what role and why?

Cast the opera with current-day pop singers. What would play what roles?

Practice moving as a large ensemble.

DANCE

Dance and Creative Movement in Stage-Blocking. Ex: spinning scene.

Research dances of the period. How do they relate to the dances of today?

How is dance incorporated into the opera, into the music of the opera?

How is age and gender communicated through the way performers move in a dance?

What are the roles of choreographers, dance captains and dancers?

Choreograph a movement sequence for the *Auto de fé*

Investigate stage movement during Verdi's time.

ACTIVITIES

Character Dances: Mirror dancing—partners and symmetry.

Match movement with vocabulary. Ex. glide, slither, leap, tremble.

Interpret emotions through dance. Ex. Joy, fear.

Create movements for characters' emotions.

Interpreting the instruments through dance—improv to music.

Work with media arts students to create a ballet with projected backgrounds.

Create dances to your favorite parts of the opera.

Create a dance for Verdi's music in a different genre.

Choose a dance style that best represents each character. Choreograph movement in which the characters relate to each other.

Create pair dances for the different pairs in the opera.

What is a pas de deux? How could you create pas de deux for the pairs in this opera?

Create a dance that tells the story of the opera in abridged version.

Show how characters' movements change when they're in different situations.

Create movements for the themes in the overture.

MEDIA ARTS

Watch DVD of *Don Carlo* and other operas. Watch different productions and compare.

Research clips of *Don Carlo* found on the Internet, including animated versions.

Do the sets in this production of *Don Carlo* remind you of movies? What and why?

Learn about projectors and projections, various ways to project light. Create media that can be projected. Explore how images can influence mood.

Explore ways to explore negative space through media. Create media pieces inspired by *Don Carlo*.

Research how innovations in technology have influenced the development of Opera: Acoustics and Lighting, Audio Recording, Film and Video, the development of Supertitles, Internet.

Learn about technology currently used by SF Opera: technology used in staging, SFO's Media Suite, podcasts, cinemacasts, simulcasts, opera vision, etc.

Learn about experiments in future technology use involving opera, such as the development of Personal Opera @ MIT Media Lab, *Death and the Powers*.

Use television, films, web content to teach media literacy.

How is opera advertised? Research San Francisco Opera's advertising and media efforts.

Opera & Popular Culture: Cartoons (Bugs Bunny in *What's Opera, Doc?*, *The Rabbit of Seville*); Television (*Sesame Street*); Movies (*Pretty Woman*); Commercials (Nike's 1993 ad *Charles Barkley of Seville*); Event themes (*Nessun Dorma - 1994 World Cup*).

RELATED WORKS OF ART

Films & DVD of *Don Carlo* and other Verdi operas, related films

ACTIVITIES

Film and Animation: Explore photographic stop motion techniques. Ex. Use digital media to create 1-minute scenes from *Don Carlo*.

Create a poster to advertise a performance of *Don Carlo*. What information needs to be included? What typeface would be appropriate?

Use digital audio to record student readings, musical performances.

Create a 30-second audio spot, a one-minute podcast, and/or a *Don Carlo* activities website.

Create a montage for *Don Carlo*.

Create podcasts from the points of view of various characters.

Create video interviews of various characters.

Create a fake blog or Facebook page for one of the characters.

Create Facebook status updates for characters in the opera.

Create a fake Twitter feed for one of the characters in the opera.

Create YouTube video testimonials for characters in the opera.

Create a new version of *Don Carlo* for reality TV (ex.: Jerry Springer as Philip, Judge Judy as Inquisitor)

Media Literacy - Learn about online misrepresentation; creating new persona, online masking, online bullying