



## San Francisco Opera's Donizetti's *LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR*

### Curriculum Connections

California Content Standards  
Kindergarten through Grade 12

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## LANGUAGE ARTS

### WORD ANALYSIS, FLUENCY, AND VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT

#### Phonics and Phonemic Awareness:

Letter Recognition: Name the letters in a word. Ex. Lucia = L-u-c-i-a.

Letter/Sound Association: Name the letters and the beginning and ending sound in a word. E-dgard-o

Match and list words with the same beginning or ending sounds. Ex. Edgardo and Enrico have the same beginning letter "E" and sound /e/; and end with the same letters and ending sounds. Additional examples: Lucia, Alisa; Edgardo, Normanno.

Syllables: Count the syllables in a word. Ex.: Ed-gar-do

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. **s**oprano, **b**oprano, **t**oprano, **k**oprano.

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

Phoneme Segmentation: Which sounds do you hear in a word? Ex. bell = b/e/l.

#### Definitions:

Find words in *Lucia di Lammermoor* that are unfamiliar and find definitions and roots.

Learn Opera vocabulary: soprano, mezzo-soprano, bass.

#### Word analysis:

Examine contrasting vocabulary. Create lists of good vs. evil words from opera; write definitions.

Take lines from Italian libretto and translate the text using Google translate or Babelfish; do the supertitles match exactly? If not, why not?

Find analogies in *Lucia di Lammermoor*.

Explore the use of metaphors, ex.: rings, the ghost of the dead girl.

Concepts of Print: Sentence structure, punctuation, directionality.

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

## **Reading Comprehension:**

Story Development: Character desires and motivation;

Cause and effect: What made this happen? Sequencing of events, climax, resolution.

Read: Source material for *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Lucia di Lammermoor* libretto, letter from Donizetti, biographies, etc.

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

Read the original Sir Walter Scott novel, *The Bride of Lammermoor*.

Types of text: Poetry, fairy tale, song text, libretto, script for media arts, biography, etc.

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

## CREATIVE WRITING

Creative writing: Interpret the story and create a new version. Create your own characters.

Write about main characters' before the story starts. Write about Lucia's childhood.

Construct a love letter from Lucia to Edgardo while he travels to France.

Write an alternative ending. Where would you begin your new ending?

Explore the emotions and motivations of the various characters.

How could the story have ended differently if characters had worked out their differences constructively?

Write about a good character or an evil character.

Put yourself in the position of one of the characters; make an argument for your philosophy of life.

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, foreshadowing, building of tension.

## LITERARY RESPONSE AND ANALYSIS

### **Elements of a Story:**

Character, plot, setting, conflict.

Identify rising action, climax, falling action.

### **Vocabulary:**

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

Libretto, soprano, tenor, etc.

Fantasma, Spectral

**Genres:**

Fantasy vs. Reality, non-fiction, novel, play.

Play 15-minute segments of the opera; students journal after watching the segments.

Students respond to a letter from Lucia asking them for advice.

Chart out the elements of the plot.

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

Examine the use of letters in operas or other works of art. How do they act as plot devices?

Examine character development: do the characters grow beyond their expected roles? What is status of servants at the end of the opera? What is the status of the women vs. the men?

**Themes:**

Examine the themes of the opera:

Love & Madness - jealousy, deception, self-centeredness, envy, grief, bitterness, rage, evil

Power – control, manipulation, vengeance

Family - familial influence, family feuds, religion

**Character actions and motives:**

Explore each lead characters' actions and why they do the things they do.

How do the contrasting characters traits in *Lucia di Lammermoor* drive the story forward?

What are Lucia's character traits? Edgardo?

How do characters' actions move story along?

Why did Enrico forge the letter?

How could characters have changed their actions to alter the course of the story?

What are characters' real motives?

**Archetypes:**

The conniving brother

The suspicious, jealous, lover

The beauty gone mad

The loyal servant

### **Character Development:**

Analyze the characters in the opera. What motivates their actions? What are their main traits?

Does Lucia develop over time?

Do you see Lucia as a strong character or a weak character?

Explore the supporting role of Alisa. Does she genuinely care for Lucia?

Are any of the characters emotionally strong or weak?

How does Edgardo change over time?

How are characters developed through dialogue and soliloquy? How do characters change over course of opera? How could the characters have altered their actions for a more favorable outcome? How are characters affected by outside events beyond their control? How do they react?

Examine character development: do the characters grow beyond their expected roles? What is status of servants at the end of the opera? What is the status of the women vs. the men?

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

Compare the characters in this opera to the characters in Donizetti's comic opera *The Elixir of Love*.

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

### **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.

Lucia's madness is associated with the glass harmonica.

## WRITING STRATEGIES

### **Analysis and Interpretation:**

Expository writing, critiques/reviews

Poetry, fairy tale, song text, libretto, script for media arts, biography, program, program article, synopsis, etc.

*Lucia di Lammermoor* production materials: artist biographies, program and program notes, synopsis, expository writing, critiques/reviews, etc.

How does Donizetti grab attention at beginning of opera? How do writers grab the audience's attention?

What other stories do you see the relationship between Lucia and Edgardo?

Compare and contrast Lucia to Romeo and Juliet.

Compare and contrast Iago from Shakespeare's *Otello* and Enrico's action.

Compare and contrast Edgardo's ring throwing scene to Alfredo's money throwing scene in *La Traviata*.

Why does Lucia tell Edgardo not to ask her brother for her hand in marriage?

### **Persuasive Writing:**

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

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 or use stream of consciousness.

Write the forged letter that Enrico shows to Lucia di Lammermoor so that she will believe that Edgardo has forgotten her.

Write the marriage contract that Arturo and Lucia sign.

Explore biographies of the historical characters; write biographies of their real-life counterparts. How does their depiction in the opera correspond to historical accounts?

Research the source materials for *Lucia di Lammermoor*. How does the novel differ from the opera? What do they share in common?

Write a modern-day version.

Write a different ending for the opera.

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

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

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

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.

Rewrite libretto using today as a setting. Use contemporary characters: who would be Enrico today? Lucia di Lammermoor?

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?

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

Writing exercise in which feelings are expressed like those in *Lucia di Lammermoor* arias.

Create a storyboard of *Lucia di Lammermoor* as a soap opera.

### **WRITTEN AND ORAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS**

Spelling: Spell the names of the characters in *Lucia di Lammermoor*.

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

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.

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

Analyze ensembles; how does music allow multiple people to say very different things at the same time? Can you do this in spoken word—improv activity.

## 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.

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?

### **Reflection:**

What did you see, think, hear and feel? Ex. Verbal & written responses to *Lucia di Lammermoor*.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Donizetti, composer, and Salvatore Cammarano, librettist: Biographies, timeline of works.

Settings of play, opera. Where do characters come from?

### **Understanding the Plot:**

#### *Act I; Scene 1*

The opera opens with the Enrico, (Lucia's brother) and his men seeking an intruder on the property of their newly acquired castle. Who is it? (Edgardo) Why do they care? (it used to be his land; also he is there to secretly meet with Lucia)

What else is troubling Enrico? (his family's fortunes have been diminished, and Lucia is refusing the hand of the man who could save the family, Arturo)

Why is Edgardo Enrico's mortal enemy? The Ravenswood family has a historical feud with the Ashton family

Why might Lucia not be interested in love? (her mother recently died) But is this true? No, she is in with love for Edgardo

What does Enrico do? Swears he will end the relationship

#### *Act I; Scene 2*

Lucia foreshadows her later insanity at this point. What does she tell her maid/companion Alisa? (she saw the ghost of a girl killed where they are by a jealous Ravenswood man, and her body is in the fountain)

What is Alisa's response? The ghost's fate is a warning and she should give up Edgardo

Why does Edgardo leave for France? (his family has joined the Scottish revolt, they are out of power and he is going to seek help from Louis XIV)

What does he plan to do before he leaves? See Enrico and ask for Lucia's hand in marriage

Lucia tries to dissuade him and he reacts angrily. Why? (Enrico's father was killed by Enrico and his family put his family out of power; He is on the outs and blames Enrico)

What happens next? (Edgardo then declares his love for Lucia and they secretly become betrothed)

### *Act II; Scene I*

Enrico has arranged a marriage for Lucia for monetary/political reasons. Who did he choose and why? Arturo – he is rich and powerful)

What is Enrico worrying about? (The guests have arrived for the wedding and he is not sure if Lucia will submit to the marriage)

Lucia enters downcast. Enrico asks her why. What does she say? (She is promised to another and does not want to marry Arturo)

How does Enrico respond? (He shows her a forged letter saying that Edgardo has another love)

How does Enrico manipulate Lucia? (He tells her only Arturo can rescue Enrico from ruin; he positions it as her betraying him; he sees she is going mad and he tells her his ghost will haunt her forever)

What does Raimondo use to finally persuade her? Her mother's death – she says she will be tormented in her grave).

Lucia finally tells him they have won. How does she foreshadow her suicide? (Lucia picks up a sword and puts it in her sleeve)

Does anyone care about Lucia in her family? No, only the role she can play reestablishing the family's fortunes)

### *Act II; Scene II*

Why is everyone celebrating? (Through Arturo they see hope of prosperity again)

What is Lucia's demeanor when she enters (Lucia enters looking sad and distracted) Does anyone notice or seem to care? (No in fact Enrico is mad at her)

Enrico forces her to sign the contract. What does she say? (She says she is being led to sacrifice, she has signed her own death warrant)

What happens when Edgardo enters? Raimondo shows him Lucia's signature on the marriage contract and he curses Lucia and stomps out.

How does the scene end? (Famous sextet, everyone says what they are feeling)

### *Act III*

Enrico challenges Edgardo to a duel. Why? What is Edgardo eager to avenge? (His father's death)

Why are the wedding celebrants so happy? Because the wedding will make them more financially secure and thus safer and stronger)

But what happens? (Lucia murders Arturo, going crazy)

How do the celebrants react? (They pray they won't be punished for this murder)

The famous Mad Scene ensues. What happens? (Lucia, dressed in her wedding gown, is soaked in blood from Arturo's murder. She imagines Edgardo is with her and that they are getting married. She thinks back to the fountain where we first see evidence of her madness)

Who then enters? Enrico enters having heard the news and threatens her; the crowd defends her)

Finally Raimondo takes Lucia's side – says Enrico's his cruelty destroyed her life

She continues to sing to Edgardo and says she waits to see him in heaven; she wants to die she is so unhappy.

Why does Edgardo say he is the last member of a cursed family? (because so many of his ancestors are buried there – they were killed in the latest political skirmish)

Why does Edgardo want to die? (He thinks Lucia is married to Arturo)

Raimondo enters and says she's in heaven and Edgardo wants to join her; what does he do? (Stabs himself and dies)

## ACTIVITIES

Create a character sketch.

Story writing: Adapt existing source material; create story/characters. Or write new endings, deleted scenes.

Libretto writing: Adapt *Lucia di Lammermoor* (existing source material) or create a new story/characters.

Write a prequel for the opera about Lucia's and/or Edgardo's life.

Write a letter from one character to another; choose a moment in the story.

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

Read and report on program articles and reviews. Write your own review of a performance of *Lucia di Lammermoor*. Compare and contrast two different versions of *Lucia di Lammermoor* available on DVD.

Create a news report about Lucia di Lammermoor using HyperStudio.

Write a Dear Abby letter from one of the characters in the opera, and Abby's response. Read newspaper, magazine and web society pages and gossip columns:

Write a blog post or design a fake facebook or myspace page for a character (exploring avatars—public vs. private persona). Write fake twitter log for characters over the course of 24 hours.

- Have students create their own social scene.
- Create a society magazine, web magazine, talk show/entertainment program detailing the lives and intrigues of characters.
- Create diary/blog pages/Twitter blasts/web avatars for the characters in *Lucia di Lammermoor*.
- Conduct debates between characters.
- Using a letter from one character to another in the opera; edit the letter down to a tweet or Facebook post.

Read and report on the Feature Article from the opera program.

Create a board game for the opera, similar to The Game of Life.