



## San Francisco Opera's Rossini's *CINDERELLA* Curriculum Connections

California Content Standards  
Kindergarten through Grade 12

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### VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

#### MUSIC

##### STORYTELLING & MUSIC: WHAT IS AN OPERA?

Research the etymology of word, "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 are operas similar to musicals? How are they different? Watch examples of both.

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

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

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

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

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

What is bel canto opera? What is its structure? How did opera change after the bel canto period?

What is the purpose of an overture? How does the overture to Cinderella set the stage for the opera?

The overture uses a Rossini crescendo. What is that?

What is recitative? What role does it play in this and other operas?

Music is sung in duets, trios, quartets, quintets and sextets. What are these and what is the effect?

What is the music that is played while the storm is happening? How does it sound?

In Cinderella's final aria *Non piu mesta*, the music directs the singer to sing with a glissando. What is a glissando?

Define a buffo bass. Who is a buffo bass in *Cinderella*?

Rossini includes a number of patter songs in *Cinderella*. What is a patter song? What are its origins? What other composers use this technique. What is a patter song's effect on the listener?

Was the piano developed at the time of the opera, or was the harpsichord still being used? Rossini uses different voice types to enhance the characters in the opera. Cinderella has a warm mezzo-soprano voice and the step-sisters have a shrill soprano voice. How do these voice types impact your view of these characters?

Identify the different vocal styles in *Cinderella*. How do they express different emotions?

Identify the soprano and the mezzo-soprano voices in *Cinderella*

What is choral singing? What is its purpose in this opera?

How does the music describe different plot points?

Pick out words that are emphasized by the music.

How does Rossini use ensembles to tell the story?

How does Rossini use voice types to depict the characters? How do instruments represent characters?

Identify repetition and variation of themes.

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

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, etc.

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

Create videos that explain different music vocabulary.

Research traditional instruments like a harpsichord that would have been used in Rossini's time.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

History of San Francisco Opera, the Adler Fellows program.

Gioachino Rossini: Biography, timeline of works, signature sound within genres Listen to some of his other works.

Examine Rossini's career. What did *Cinderella* represent for him?

What was the story of Rossini's life? How many operas did he write? Which ones were successful in his day? Which ones are performed in today's time?

*Cinderella* was popular when first produced but then fell out of favor. How did it come back into favor?

## ACTIVITIES

Listen to multiple recordings of *Cinderella* and study different interpretations.

Watch different versions of the *Cinderella* story — Jules Massenet's opera *Cendrillon* (1899), Prokofiev's *Cinderella*, Rodgers & Hammerstein's *Cinderella*, Sondheim's *Into the Woods*

Learn and memorize songs from *Cinderella*.

Create and perform songs for the characters/events of *Cinderella* using instruments and voices.

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

Listen to the *Cinderella* overture; draw a picture of what you feel while listening to it.

Is there a difference between comedic music and dramatic music? Explain.

Practice “singing-speaking” like there is in the opera.

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 story.

Compare the instrumental music of Barber of Seville to movie music. Who are some well-known movie soundtrack composers?

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/events of *Cinderella* 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 styles of music in the opera; do different characters sing in different styles?

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?

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## **VISUAL ARTS**

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

### **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?

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

How is color used in this opera? For which effects?

How are contrasting colors used in the opera?

### **SHAPE**

The use of shape in character design.

Positive & Negative Space—the stage is a frame.

## TEXTURE

Texture: Visual Texture: Material use in sets and costumes.

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

## SPACE

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

How do you create the illusion of perspective onstage vs. on a piece of paper?

## LIGHT

The use of lighting to establish mood and setting.

Examine contrast of light and dark; use of lighting.

The use of lighting to establish mood and setting.

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

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

## PRODUCTION DESIGN

Who was Jean-Pierre Ponnelle? What was his role?

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

How does the opera use clothing to tell the story and advance the action of the opera?

Do different kinds of clothing tell us about the people who wear them?

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

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.

## ACTIVITIES

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

How is this production different from what you expected? Or from other operas you've seen?

Identify leitmotifs that accompany each character. Play the leitmotifs; draw what you think the characters look like based on the music.

In groups, create props for *Cinderella*: bread, banquet table and chairs, bracelets

Examine the sets for *Cinderella*. How does the design create a setting for comedy?

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

Design sets and costumes for a production of *Cinderella* 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.

Create illustrations and storyboards outlining the plot of *Cinderella*.

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

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

Create dioramas of the story of *Cinderella*.

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.

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

Masks: Create masks for *Cinderella* characters.

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

Listen to audio-only examples prior to viewing the opera. Choose design elements based on the music and text.

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

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

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

#### RELATED WORKS OF ART

Illustrated children's books of *Cinderella* and other operas.

Cross-cultural examination of the *Cinderella* story. Students will compare and contrast three culturally distinct variations of the *Cinderella* folktale: "Rhodopis," the Egyptian version; "Yeh-Shen," the Chinese version; and "The Hidden One," the Native American version. <http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/educators/lessons/grade-3-4/Cinderella%20Trilogy>

Examine the fairy tales as inspiration for the costume design of characters in *Cinderella*.

Look at the costume designs of Jean-Pierre Ponnelle from *Cinderella*.

Explore how the *Cinderella* story has been depicted by illustrators, such as Gustave Dore and Walter Crane.

Research the visual artists who were Rossini's counterpart artists.

Learn about artist Mary Blair's work on Disney's animated *Cinderella* (1950).

<http://www.waltdisney.org/storyboard/look-closer-art-cinderella>

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.

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## **THEATRE**

### **STAGING**

Stage vocabulary: Upstage, downstage, levels, blocking.

Theater Exercises: Tableaux, pantomime, improvisation, vocal projection.

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.

Practice slapstick moves from the opera, to the music. Practice doing them in different ways.

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

How would you stage the overture? Would you choose to have the characters onstage or not? Why?

Play theater games around the different power relationships in the opera.

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

Practice walking like the Don Ramiro, Alidoro or Don Magnifico, Angelina (Cinderella), Clorinda and Tisbe. How are their walks different?

Practice walking like a member of the opposite sex. How do you carry yourself differently?

How do directors make someone stand out in a crowd scene?

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?

Act out some of the descriptive language in the opera.

Set up your character's personality through gesture before he/she starts singing.

Act out the different ages of the characters in the opera (or the different ages they pretend to be).

Stage a crowd scene.

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

Stage etiquette & audience behavior.

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

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

## ACTIVITIES

Compare and contrast Rossini's opera, *La Cenerentola* with a different version of *Cinderella* (musical, ballet or theatre)

What are some of the comedy routines used in *Cinderella*?

Act out scenes about the themes from the opera: love, friendship and loyalty, etc.

Create props required by the opera.

Find some rhymes in the opera; how do they lend themselves to the comedy?

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

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?

Create movement to react to particular musical moments.

Practice moving as a large ensemble.

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## DANCE

Dance and Creative Movement in Stage-Blocking. Ex: tavern 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 are dances used in operas?

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

How have modern choreographers used Rossini's music? Ex.: NY City Ballet Rossini Quartets

Christopher Wheeldon's production of Prokofiev's *Cinderella* for San Francisco Ballet.

<http://www.sfballet.org/tickets/production/overview/cinderella>

Frederick Ashton's production of Prokofiev's *Cinderella* for American Ballet Theatre.

<http://www.sfballet.org/tickets/production/overview/cinderella>

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

## ACTIVITIES

Character Dances: Mirror dancing—partners and symmetry.

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

Interpret emotions through dance. Ex. Joy, fear, love.

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.

Choose a dance style that best represents each character (or the characters they're pretending to be).  
Choreograph movement in which the characters relate to each other.

Practice slapstick moves to music from the opera.

Create movements that reflect the tempi and the rhythms in the opera.

Play a game in which you dance to the music from the opera, then have to freeze when the music stops.

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.

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## **MEDIA ARTS**

Watch DVD of *Cinderella* and other operas. Watch different productions and compare.

Research clips of *Cinderella* found on the Internet, including animated versions

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

Watch silent movies; how do they make you pay more attention to the visuals? How do they affect your viewing of operas?

Do the sets in this production of *Cinderella* 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 *Cinderella*.

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 *Cinderella* and other Rossini operas, related films

- Rogers & Hammerstein's *Cinderella* <http://www.rnh.com/show/22/Cinderella>
- Disney's animated & live action version *Cinderella* <http://princess.disney.com/cinderella/movies>
- Sondheim & Lapine's *Into the Woods* [http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/educators/lessons/grade-5/Searching\\_For\\_Cinderella](http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/educators/lessons/grade-5/Searching_For_Cinderella)
- Watch and compare scenes from movies based on the *Cinderella* story, such as *The Glass Slipper*, *The Slipper and the Rose*, *The Princess Diaries*, *Ella Enchanted*, *Ever After*, *Enchanted* and *Cinderella*.
- *Opera Imaginaire*, a collection of animated interpretations of twelve of opera's most popular arias, features Rossini's "*La Cenerentola*."

## ACTIVITIES

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

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

Use digital audio to record student readings, musical performances.

Create video interviews of various characters.

Create podcasts from the points of view of various characters.

Create a montage for *Cinderella*.

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

Create a graphic treatment for the opera's title.

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

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

Create Facebook status updates for characters in the opera.

Create YouTube video testimonials for characters in the opera.