

A General Introduction to Opera



Activity

This stage will explore various aspects of opera and will enhance pupils' comprehension of key opera components. Reinforcement of these concepts will be encouraged through class discussion and a variety of worksheets. These may be conducted as independent tasks or as peer-assisted activities.

Task 1

Pupils should share their prior knowledge and experience of operas to allow the class teacher to gauge their level of understanding. The prompt questions and facts provided on the General Introduction to Opera Teaching Pack may be used to encourage discussion. Pupils should aim to identify the different types of voices involved in opera and a general description of each.

Possible Discussion Questions

- Have you ever been to an opera?
- What does an opera involve?
What does it look and sound like?
- Which languages feature in operas?
- Do you know any famous operas?

Task 2

Pupils should complete the Opera Voices Worksheets.

Task 3

Pupils should watch the videos of Dulcamara/Nemorino and Adina/Belcore and identify through class discussion which types of voices these characters have. They should write down their ideas in the relevant areas of the Opera Voices Worksheets. Pupils should justify their answers accordingly. For example, "I think Adina is a soprano because she can sing very high notes." The teacher should explain that these characters will be analysed more thoroughly later in the unit

Resources

- **Teaching Pack**
- **Opera Voices Worksheets**
- **Opera Seria vs Opera Buffa Worksheet**
- **Aria Video**
- **Recitative video**
- **Melisma video**
- **Modern Major General video**
- **Rinaldo video**
- **Themes, Styles, and Characters video**



Musical Analysis Teaching Notes: Lesson 1

A General Introduction to Opera (continued)



Activity

This stage will explore various aspects of opera and will enhance pupils' comprehension of key opera components. Reinforcement of these concepts will be encouraged through class discussion and a variety of worksheets. These may be conducted as independent tasks or as peer-assisted activities.

Task 4

Discuss and show the videos relating to the three operatic concepts: Aria, Recitative and Melisma.

Aria: Begin watching at 12 minutes 13 seconds.

Recitative: Begin watching at 18 minutes 32 seconds.

Melisma: Watch the full video.

Task 5

Show the video [Themes & Styles](#) as an introduction to the concept of Opera Seria and Opera Buffa. Encourage discussion amongst pupils to identify the difference between the two.

Task 6

Discuss the main features of Opera Buffa and introduce pupils to the concept of patter. Show the video clip [Modern Major General](#). Watch Rossini's Comic Opera Highlights for more Opera Buffa examples.

Task 7

Discuss the main features of Opera Seria. Watch the video clip of [Rinaldo](#).

Task 8

Pupils should complete the Opera Seria vs Opera Buffa Worksheet. They should use the previous class discussion to help them identify the key features of each style. Pupils may use the internet (if available) to provide three examples of each type of opera. If access to the internet is not readily available, then pupils may simply list the operas that discussed in class.

Resources

- **Teaching Pack**
- **Opera Voices Worksheets**
- **Opera Seria vs Opera Buffa Worksheet**
- **[Aria Video](#)**
- **[Recitative video](#)**
- **[Melisma video](#)**
- **[Modern Major General video](#)**
- **[Rinaldo video](#)**
- **[Themes, Styles, and Characters video](#)**



Musical Analysis Teaching Notes: Lesson 2

Donizetti and *The Elixir of Love*



Activity

This stage will explore Donizetti's life and works and will introduce pupils to the main characters and plot of *The Elixir of Love*. Further reinforcement of Donizetti's key works and the synopsis of *The Elixir of Love* will be encouraged through class discussion and a variety of worksheets. These may be set as independent tasks or conducted as peer-assisted activities.

Task 1

Introduce Donizetti to the pupils and discuss the key events within his life using the prompts provided on the Teaching Pack.

Task 2

Pupils should complete the Donizetti Timeline worksheet and/or the Match the Operas worksheet, dependant on their abilities. They may wish to use the Internet to aid their research.

Donizetti Timeline Worksheet: Pupils should research the key events that occurred in Donizetti's life throughout each given year.

Match the Operas Worksheet: Pupils should match the plots to the correct opera.

Task 3

Introduce the characters of *The Elixir of Love* before discussing the plot of the opera. Ask pupils to identify which character is most likely to assume the role of hero/villain.

Task 4

Show the "Regency" videos of *The Elixir of Love*. This will give pupils a flavour of opera performed in its original language.

Task 5

Provide scissors, glue, and several large pieces of paper. Pupils should work in groups to complete the Planning the Plot worksheet. They must cut out the different sections of the synopsis and re-arrange them into the correct order by pasting them onto their sheet of paper. Pupils may wish to illustrate the events of the opera.

Option: If these resources are not available, simply number the sections of the plot and display the sections on screen. The class can then discuss and identify the correct order for the plot.

Resources

- Teaching Pack
- Donizetti Timeline Worksheet
- Match the Operas Worksheet
- Planning the Plot Worksheet
- Scissors, large pieces of paper and glue/sellotape



Scottish
Opera

Musical Analysis Teaching Notes: Lesson 3

Tristan and Isolde



Activity

This stage will explore the similarities and differences between the comic *The Elixir of Love* and the tragedy of *Tristan and Isolde*. Further reinforcement of the plot of *The Elixir of Love* will be encouraged through class discussion and a variety of worksheets. These may be set as independent tasks or conducted as peer-assisted activities.

Task 1

Highlight the use of the love potion in *The Elixir of Love* and encourage discussion regarding the use of potions/magical elements in other fictional contexts (books/films). Provide examples such as Aladdin's lamp, Alice's "Drink Me" potion, or the rose in *Beauty and the Beast* to spark pupils' imaginations.

Task 2

Introduce the class to the composer Richard Wagner. Highlight how he also uses a love potion in his epic *Tristan and Isolde*. Through class discussion, examine Adina's reference to *Tristan and Isolde* within one of her arias. Read the aria lyrics and encourage pupils to share their ideas about what they think is occurring in the plot of *Tristan and Isolde* at this point.

Task 3

Pupils should complete the Comedy vs Tragedy Worksheet. Discuss the word bank on the teaching slides to provide prompts for their ideas. This list is not exhaustive and although it may help to guide pupils, they are free to add any other musical concepts that they deem appropriate. The teacher may alter this task for pupils depending on their abilities:

Option 1: Pupils should use the word bank to give them ideas for other musical concepts that could be associated with each opera that would successfully depict the overall mood of the plot. They should be able to justify why they have chosen particular concepts by relating to events within each opera.

Option 2: Pupils should match up the concepts from the given word bank to the relevant opera and justify why they chose them by relating to events within each opera.

Resources

- Teaching Pack
- Comedy vs Tragedy Worksheet



Musical Analysis Teaching Notes: Lesson 4

Character Analysis



Activity

This stage will explore various personality traits of each character in *The Elixir of Love*. Pupils will identify how Donizetti uses musical techniques and instrumentation to represent these characters in the opera. Pupils should be encouraged to explore these concepts through class discussion and a variety of worksheets. These may be set as independent tasks or conducted as peer assisted activities.

Task 1

Pupils should identify appropriate words to describe each character's personality within the opera. Show the example character traits provided after the pupils have had the opportunity to share and discuss their own ideas.

Task 2

Show the videos to allow pupils to identify musical concepts and techniques that Donizetti has used to represent each character:

- **Nemorino & Dulcamara** – [Fake Love Potion](#)
- **Adina & Belcore** – [Love Rivals](#)

Pupils may use the word bank provided as a relevant starting point for their ideas. Once again, this list is not exhaustive and pupils should be encouraged to explore other musical concepts that they have learned so far in the course.

Task 3

Pupils should complete the Character Analysis Worksheet. After they have had an opportunity to identify their own concepts, bring the class back together and discuss the various concepts.

Resources

- **Teaching Pack**
- **Character Analysis Worksheet**
- **[Fake Love Potion Video](#)**
- **[Love Rivals Video](#)**



Musical Analysis Teaching Notes: Lesson 5

Use of Language



Activity

This stage will explore the various languages used in opera. Pupils will engage with the translation process undertaken by Scottish Opera and gain an understanding as to how this affects the performers. They will state their own personal preference regarding the use of language and should be prepared to justify their answers. Pupils will be encouraged to explore these concepts through class discussion and a worksheet. These may be set as independent tasks or conducted as peer assisted activities.

Task 1

Pupils should identify which languages commonly feature in operas. This can be conducted as a partner discussion activity or as a whole-class discussion. Using the videos, provide pupils with specific examples of operas and their original languages.

Task 2

Show [The Language](#) video to pupils. This will highlight the challenges that the cast face as they prepare to shift from singing in Italian to the English translation. Ask pupils to identify what issues the performers may experience throughout this process.

Task 3

Show pupils the contrasting videos for [All's Well That Ends Well](#). This will provide a stark contrast between performances in the original Italian language versus a more modern, English version. Ask pupils to consider which version they prefer. They must justify their answer.

Task 4

Discuss the overall experience of watching an opera in its original language. Emphasise that this genre is now more accessible to everyone as the theatres provide subtitles on screens.

Task 5

Pupils should complete the Find the Language Worksheet. They may use the internet to help them identify the language of each opera and its composer. This can be an independent activity or pupils may wish to work with a partner.

Resources

- **Teaching Pack**
- **Find the Language Worksheet**
- **[The Elixir of Love: The Language Video](#)**
- **[All's Well That Ends Well \(Regency\) Video](#)**
- **[All's Well That Ends Well \(Storytelling\) Video](#)**
- **[All's Well That Ends Well \(High School Reunion\) Video](#)**

