

Middle School General Music

Unit Plan Overview

Name: Alyssa Loufman

Unit Topic/Title: Opera

Detailed Unit Description:

The unit will begin with a class discussion about students' knowledge and views of opera. Then students will watch and listen to three YouTube videos. One video is the scene from Puccini's *La Boheme* in which Musetta sings "Quando me'n vò". The second video is from Offenbach's *Tales of Hoffman* in which the "Barcarolle" duet is performed. The third video is from Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* and includes the well-known "Summertime". There will be a class discussion after watching the videos. Then students will break up into groups to create presentations based on this website: <http://www.musiclessonsonline.co.uk/HistoryOfOpera.html>. Next the class will watch the opera "Where the Wild Things Are" by Maurice Sendak. Then the unit will end with a final class discussion about opera.

List Unit Objectives:

1. Students will evaluate their own knowledge of opera and their opinions of opera
2. Students will listen to operatic music and analyze it's distinct qualities
3. Students will become familiar with the history of opera
4. Students will actively discuss opera's role in society and opera's perception by various people groups
5. Students will recognize typical aspects of opera in "Where the Wild Things Are"
6. Students will analyze the effectiveness of the acting and singing in opera performances as it relates to the story-line of the opera
7. Students will analyze the effectiveness of the use of various musical features in telling the story

Materials List and Budget (if any):

Item(s)	Qty.	Cost	Source/Vendor
VHS or DVD of "Where the Wild Things Are"	1	\$50	Amazon.com
Poster board	3	About \$3	Walgreens
Markers	12	Borrow from art department	Borrow from art department

Justification. (What is the value of this Unit. How does it connect to students' lives? Why teach it?):

This unit will allow students to reflect on their perception of opera and the perceptions other people have of opera. If their views of opera were negative initially they are given the chance to reconsider what opera means in society and how they can develop a more positive view of opera. In this class the students and teacher will discuss how opera relates to musical theater and how opera incorporates all aspects of drama and all aspects of music in one medium. Students will view opera in the light of contemporary acting and singing. They will also explore how opera is related to other forms of entertainment such as sporting events, television, and concerts. Students will be exposed to a contemporary form of opera from a children's book that many of the students will be familiar with.

Middle School General Music Unit Outline

Name: Alyssa Loufman

Unit Topic/Title: Opera Unit

1.	<p><u>Opera</u></p> <p>8. Students will evaluate their own knowledge of opera and their opinions of opera</p> <p>9. Students will listen to operatic music and analyze it's distinct qualities</p>	<p>The unit will begin with a class discussion about students' knowledge and views of opera (see discussion handout). Then students will watch and listen to three YouTube videos. They will have the texts and translations as they watch these videos.</p> <p>http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k0V6Bq0jU4Q&feature=related</p> <p>http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KEiZ-J97O5A&feature=related</p> <p>http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tEIL6kWwmv4</p> <p>There will be a class discussion after watching</p>	<p>Content Standard 3: All students will analyze, describe and evaluate works of art.</p> <p>2. Analyze the uses of elements of music in aural examples representing diverse genres and cultures.</p> <p>Content Standard 4: All students will understand, analyze, and describe the arts in their historical, social, and cultural contexts.</p> <p>1. Describe distinguishing characteristics of representative music genres and styles from a variety of cultures.</p> <p>3. Compare, in several cultures of the world, functions music serves, roles of musicians, and conditions under which music is typically performed.</p>	Computers	Watching the videos, participation in the class discussion
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		<p>the videos.</p>	<p>Content Standard 5: All students will recognize, analyze, and describe connections among the arts; between the arts and other disciplines; between the arts and everyday life.</p> <p>1. Compare how the characteristic materials of each art can be used to transform similar events, scenes, emotions, or ideas into works of art.</p> <p>2. Describe ways in which the principles and subject matter of other disciplines are related to music.</p>		
<p>2.</p>	<p>1. Students will become familiar with the history of opera 2. Students will actively discuss opera's role in society and opera's perception by various people groups</p>	<p>Then students will break up into three groups to create presentations using posters to organize their thoughts. The presentations will be based on these websites: http://www.musiclessononline.co.uk/HistoryOfOpera.html. http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/content/2374/2374_aida_operahistory.pdf</p> <p>One group will present on</p>	<p>Content Standard 3: All students will analyze, describe and evaluate works of art.</p> <p>2. Analyze the uses of elements of music in aural examples representing diverse genres and cultures.</p> <p>Content Standard 4: All students will understand, analyze, and describe the arts in their historical, social, and cultural contexts.</p>	<p>Poster board and markers</p>	<p>Contribution to the group work, assessment of each student on presentation (see rubric)</p>

		<p>how opera began, another on the development of opera, and the last group on modern opera.</p>	<p>1. Describe distinguishing characteristics of representative music genres and styles from a variety of cultures.</p> <p>3. Compare, in several cultures of the world, functions music serves, roles of musicians, and conditions under which music is typically performed.</p> <p>Content Standard 5: All students will recognize, analyze, and describe connections among the arts; between the arts and other disciplines; between the arts and everyday life.</p> <p>1. Compare how the characteristic materials of each art can be used to transform similar events, scenes, emotions, or ideas into works of art.</p>		
3.	1. Students will recognize typical aspects of opera in “Where the Wild Things Are”	<p>Next the class will watch the opera “Where the Wild Things Are” by Maurice Sendak. The unit will end with a final class discussion about opera.</p>	<p>Content Standard 3: All students will analyze, describe and evaluate works of art.</p> <p>2. Analyze the uses of elements of music in aural examples representing diverse genres and cultures.</p>	“Where the Wild Things Are” DVD	Participation

			<p>Content Standard 4: All students will understand, analyze, and describe the arts in their historical, social, and cultural contexts.</p> <p>1. Describe distinguishing characteristics of representative music genres and styles from a variety of cultures.</p> <p>3. Compare, in several cultures of the world, functions music serves, roles of musicians, and conditions under which music is typically performed.</p>		
4.	1. Students will recognize typical aspects of opera in “Where the Wild Things Are”	This is the second day for watching the DVD.	<p>Content Standard 3: All students will analyze, describe and evaluate works of art.</p> <p>2. Analyze the uses of elements of music in aural examples representing diverse genres and cultures.</p> <p>Content Standard 4: All students will understand, analyze, and describe the arts in their historical, social, and cultural contexts.</p> <p>1. Describe distinguishing characteristics of</p>	“Where the Wild Things Are” DVD	Participation

			<p>representative music genres and styles from a variety of cultures.</p> <p>3. Compare, in several cultures of the world, functions music serves, roles of musicians, and conditions under which music is typically performed.</p>		
5.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Students will analyze the effectiveness of the acting and singing in opera performances as it relates to the story-line of the opera Students will analyze the effectiveness of the use of various musical features in telling the story 	<p>The students and the teacher will have a class discussion about “Where the Wild Things Are”. We will also discuss opera’s role in society and the students’ opinions of opera. Students will write a reflection journal on opera and turn it in.</p>	<p>Content Standard 3: All students will analyze, describe and evaluate works of art.</p> <p>2. Analyze the uses of elements of music in aural examples representing diverse genres and cultures.</p> <p>Content Standard 4: All students will understand, analyze, and describe the arts in their historical, social, and cultural contexts.</p> <p>1. Describe distinguishing characteristics of representative music genres and styles from a variety of cultures.</p> <p>3. Compare, in several cultures of the world, functions music serves, roles of musicians, and conditions under which music is typically performed.</p>	None	<p>Participating in the class discussion, turning in a final reflection</p>

			<p>Content Standard 5: All students will recognize, analyze, and describe connections among the arts; between the arts and other disciplines; between the arts and everyday life.</p> <p>1. Compare how the characteristic materials of each art can be used to transform similar events, scenes, emotions, or ideas into works of art.</p> <p>2. Describe ways in which the principles and subject matter of other disciplines are related to music.</p>		
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Opera Unit Texts and Translations

PUCCINI “Quando men vo” from *La Bohème*

<i>Quando men vo soletta per la via, La gente sosta e mira E la bellezza mia tutta ricerca in me Da capo a pie'...</i>	When I walk all alone in the street People stop and stare at me And look for my whole beauty From head to feet
<i>Ed assaporo allor la bramosia Sottile, che da gli occhi traspira E dai palesi vezzi intender sa Alle occulte beltà. Così l'effluvio del desio tutta m'aggira, Felice mi fa!</i>	And then I taste the slight yearning which transpires from their eyes and which is able to perceive from manifest charms to most hidden beauties. So the scent of desire is all around me, it makes me happy!
<i>E tu che sai, che memori e ti struggi Da me tanto rifuggi? So ben: le angoscie tue non le vuoi dir, Ma ti senti morir!</i>	And you, while knowing, reminding and longing, you shrink from me? I know it very well: you don't want to express your anguish, but you feel as if you're dying!

OFFENBACH “Barcarolle” from *The Tales of Hoffman*

<i>Belle nuit, ô nuit d'amour, souris à nos ivresses. Nuit plus douce que le jour, ô belle nuit d'amour! Le temps fuit et sans retour Emporte nos tendresses; Loin de cet heureux sé jour le temps fuit sans retour.</i>	Lovely night, oh night of love, smile upon our joys. Night more sweet than the day, oh beautiful night of love! The time flies and carries away Our tender caresses forever; Far from this happy abode The time flies away it goes.
<i>Zéphyr embrasés, versez-nous vos caresses, Zéphyr embrasés, donnez-nous vos baisers, Vos baisers! Vos baisers! Ah!</i>	Burning zephyrs embrace us, With your caresses, Burning zephyrs embrace us, Give us your caresses, Your caresses! Your caresses! Ah!

GERSHWIN “Summertime” from *Porgy and Bess*

Summertime,
And the livin' is easy
Fish are jumpin'
And the cotton is high

Oh, Your daddy's rich
And your mamma's good lookin'
So hush little baby
Don't you cry

One of these mornings
You're going to rise up singing
Then you'll spread your wings
And you'll take to the sky

But until that morning
There's a'nothing can harm you
With your daddy and mammy standing by

Summertime,
And the livin' is easy
Fish are jumpin'
And the cotton is high

Your daddy's rich
And your mamma's good lookin'
So hush little baby
Don't you cry

Opera Unit, Day 1

Discussion Questions

1. What is the first word or phrase that comes to your mind when you think of opera?
2. What experiences, events, or conversations helped you form your opinion of opera?
3. Based on the videos you watched today, are the assumptions you made about opera true?
4. If you did not have copies of the words for these songs would you have known what the characters are singing about? Why or why not?
5. What did the actors/actresses in these videos do to display visually what they were singing about?
6. How did the music help to convey the messages in these songs?
7. How is opera similar to musical theater? How is it different from musical theater?
8. How is opera similar to other forms of entertainment (e.g.: movies, television shows, concerts, sporting events, art shows, poetry readings, etc.)?

The History of Opera

<http://www.musiclessonsonline.co.uk/HistoryOfOpera.html>

Opera is a hybrid form, a mix of music and theatre, where the performers have to be both actors and singers. Over the centuries it's developed into a complete art form that has avid fans and critics, and a wealth of lovely music.

How It Began

Opera began in the Italian city-state of Florence during the Renaissance of the late 16th century. There was no sense of creating something new; instead a group of nobles were simply trying to recreate the heyday of classical Greek theatre. The first operas staged were the old Greek plays; with some music added (the original dramas had included music). It was a short step from reciting the plays with music to singing, and not long before composers began writing music for the productions.

According to records, the first original opera was called *Dafne*, and was produced at the end of the 1500s. But it was Monteverdi, one of the great opera composers, who expanded the form, adding the aria, a song where a performer could not only show technique, but also emotion, giving depth to the story of each opera. Within just a few years, other composers had added to the form with chorus roles and instrumental interludes, making it a complete blend of words and music.

In many ways, opera was the pop music of its day, with arias the hit songs. Its popularity spread across Europe like wildfire (the first English opera was Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, premiered in 1689), and soon cities had purpose-built opera houses (the first was in Venice). For many years opera was viewed as an Italian form, which led to composers writing the librettos (or lyrics) of their operas in Italian.

The main stars of opera weren't yet the female sopranos and male tenors, who would in time take the lead roles, and become celebrities. Instead, many of the main roles and arias were the province of castratos, and each aria was played twice - making opera a lengthy proposition.

The Development of Opera

It was Christoph Gluck, a German composer, who changed the face of opera, and made it more like the form we know today. With *Orfeo et Eurydice*, staged in 1762 in Vienna, he revolutionised the form, emphasising the drama of the piece and cutting the fat.

It was a great success, and Gluck composed other operas that stuck to the same focus, influencing those who followed him, like Mozart, whose *Marriage of Figaro* was one of the most popular operas of its day. Combing humour with its tale, and some memorable tunes, it set the standard for opera, which he tried to outdo with *Così fan tutti* and *The Magic Flute*.

In the 19th century different strands of opera emerged - the Italian, German, French and even Spanish. Russia even followed suit. France took it to epic heights with grand opera that included dance interludes with a full ballet company and productions that lasted four to five hours. Composers like Verdi and Rossini worked in this style, and it was certainly an influence of the work of Wagner, whose Ring Cycle, a retelling of Teutonic myth, took opera to epic, extravagant proportions.

Modern Opera

Wagner was a hard act to follow, although a few tried. But it was apparent that opera couldn't continue in that direction. It needed new ideas. They came in the 20th century with Schoenberg and Berg, who brought new, avant-garde musical techniques to bear on the form. In their wake came Britten, Henze and Shostakovich, who didn't go quite as far musically, but still influenced opera.

One notable development was using a smaller orchestra, a reaction to economic circumstances. But operas continue to be written, with American composers like John Adams and Phillip Glass two of the leading lights of the form.

Many of the great opera singers have become household names - people like Placido Domingo, Luciano Pavarotti and Beverly Sills, and their frequent television appearances have helped return opera to the kind of mass popularity it enjoyed in the 1700s.

Brief History of Opera

Lesson Connection: *Aida* and Its Relevance to the World Today

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Millions of people like opera, but why? What is opera, and why do some people feel it is the greatest form of musical expression?

Opera began in the late 16th century in Italy, invented by a group of wealthy people in the city-state of Florence (now part of Italy), who wanted to reproduce ancient Greek dramas. Sixteenth-century Europe was experiencing a Renaissance (pronounced REH-nuh-zawnts), a time when artists, writers and architects became interested in the cultures of the past, especially the ancient Greeks, whose sculptures, architecture, and plays still exist. The texts of ancient Greek dramas made it clear that music was used in play productions hundreds of years earlier, but since there were no recordings then, the sound of the music remains a mystery. The 16th century Italians began to experiment by reading the plays aloud and adding a few musical chords as accompaniment.

This practice of reciting the text to accompaniment naturally led to singing the words, or recitative (raychee-tuh-TEE-voh in Italian). In English we use a slightly different form of the word, recitative, and pronounce it "reh-sih-tuh-TEEV". Over time, the music grew more complex, and musical professionals became interested in this combination of music and drama.

The first "real" opera was probably a recitative work titled *Dafne* (DAHf-nay), written in 1594 or 1597 by Jacopo Peri (YAH-kaw-poh Perry)--over 400 years ago! Peri's opera is lost (there were no music publishers then), but we know it existed because so many people wrote comments about the performance of *Dafne*. They could not wait to tell others about this exciting new art form.

Soon expert Italian composers like Claudio Monteverdi (CLOUD-ee-oh Mawn-tuh-VER-dee) expanded the new form, adding showy and complicated songs called arias (AH-ree-uhs) that allowed the singers to express the emotions of their characters--and to show off their singing abilities. Later, other composers added chorus parts, dances and instrumental interludes, and opera continued to grow and change.

Opera was invented in Italy, but its popularity quickly spread to Germany, France, England, Russia, Spain, Portugal and other countries. In 1637, the city-state of Venice (now part of Italy) built the first theater to be used exclusively for opera productions. Soon Venice built 16 other opera theaters for that city alone! At first, great German and Austrian composers like Handel and Mozart wrote operas in Italian because opera was considered an Italian art form. Eventually that concept expanded and composers wrote opera in their own languages. By the late 19th century, musical giants like Giuseppe Verdi (jeh-SEP-pay VAIR-dee) in Italy, and Richard Wagner (REE-card VAHG-ner) in Germany, were writing operas of tremendous length, with music and stories that demanded huge, expensive productions, mature singers with big voices, large choruses, large orchestras and complicated scenery and costumes.

European immigrants brought opera to the United States in the 18th and 19th centuries. The most famous opera theater in the United States, the Metropolitan Opera House, opened in New York City in 1883. Opera fans still love to attend operas at "The Met." Most of today's popular operas were

written in the 18th and 19th century by Mozart (MOTE-zart), Puccini (Poo-CHEE-nee), Verdi and Wagner. Modern composers like Gian Carlo Menotti, Samuel Barber, John Adams, and Dominick Argento write operas in English, but they are not as popular as the old "tried and true" operas.

Opera Unit Presentation Rubric

The student presented a portion of information in a clear manner .	/10
The student contributed to the research and planning for the group presentation.	/10
The student showed an understanding of the material being presented.	/10
The student demonstrated general knowledge of music (based on the musical information that has been presented thus far in the class).	/10
	Total
	/40

Opera Unit, Day 5

Discussion Questions

1. Has your opinions of opera changed after watching *Where the Wild Things Are*?
2. If your opinion of opera has changed over the past five days, what is your new opinion of opera? What made you change your mind?
3. If your opinion of opera has not changed, why had it remained the same? What made you hold on to your previous opinion?
4. What did the actors do in *Where the Wild Things Are* that helped tell the story?
5. What was used, besides words, to express emotion in this opera?
6. How popular is opera today? Where is opera most popular today?
7. What forms of entertainment are used today to take the place of opera? *Should* these forms of entertainment take the place of opera?
8. Is it important to continue producing and viewing operas or should we stop producing them all together?

Opera Unit
Reflection Journal Topic

Type a journal reflection at least one page in length. It must be double-spaced in 12 point font. Use Times New Roman or Arial font and keep all margins 1 inch wide. Respond to the following:

If you were given tickets to an opera, would you choose to see the opera or not?

If you would choose not to see it, explain why. What forms of entertainment would you prefer? How are these forms of entertainment different from opera? How are they similar to opera? What have you learned about opera in this unit that has brought you to the decision that you would not watch the opera?

If you would choose to see the opera explain what you would do at the opera. What aspects of the opera would you be most interested in (the singing, the acting, the costumes, the stage and the props, the story-line)? Why would these aspects be interesting? How would viewing the opera be similar to other forms of entertainment? How would it be different than other forms of entertainment? What have you learned about opera in this unit that has brought you to the decision that you would watch the opera?