



Every voice tells a story.™

**Student Night at the Opera is generously supported by:
Grants from City of San Diego Arts and Culture Commission
The Prebys Foundation
and many individual donors who care about introducing the
next generation of opera lovers to this art form.**

*Created by:
Cynthia Stokes, MFA
with help from:*

*Anne Fennell, K-12 Music Program Manager for SD Unified School District
Llewellyn Crain and Bernardo Bermudez at SD Opera*

A few things to know before attending *Student Night at the Opera*

- Opera is a story that is sung. As you watch and listen to the opera, think about how the words and music mix together to develop character relationships, conflict, and an overall artistic effect. Opera composers use different voice types to create a dramatic or comedic effect. How do the singers' voices impact you as you experience the opera?
- Opera singers sound very different from pop or rock and roll singers because they are not using microphones. Instead, they use their bodies as amplifiers. Opera singers have the rare gift of being able to make their voices soar over an orchestra and a chorus without any electronic support.
- Opera is often in another language. It was the most popular art form in Europe before movies, so operas were written in the language of the people who first attended them. Read the synopsis and listen to the musical excerpts before coming to the performance. The Civic Theatre has supertitles projected above the stage in English and Spanish for audience members to read along as the story is performed.
- FINAL ORCHESTRA DRESS REHEARSAL - The final orchestra dress rehearsal is a final gathering for rehearsal of all theatrical and musical elements for which no tickets are on sale to the general public. Because this is a rehearsal, there may be starting and stopping and some ARTISTS may mark (not sing out all the time)
- The opera you are going to attend is a live performance. The performers can see you and hear you in the audience- your polite behavior, applause and smiles tell them you are enjoying the performance.
- Make sure that any distractions (electronic devices like Phones, tablets, etc. are turned off and put away.
- Food and gum are not allowed in the theatre.
- Give the performance your full attention. You are going to have an amazing time!

Performance information:

Location:

San Diego Civic Theatre
1100 3rd Ave (Corner of Third Ave. and B Street)
San Diego, CA 92101

Date and Time:

Wednesday, October 30th, 2024. 6:30 to 8:50pm (Box office opens at 5:00pm)

La bohème

Libretto by Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa

Music by **Giacomo Puccini**

Time Written: 1893-1895

Characters:

Rodolfo: A writer (tenor)

Mimi: A seamstress (sews clothes) (soprano)

Marcello: A painter. Rodolfo's best friend (baritone)

Musetta: a singer, Marcello's on-again, off-again girlfriend (soprano)

Schaunard: A musician, friend of Rodolfo and Marcello

Colline: A philosopher (thinker), friend of Rodolfo and Marcello

Benoît: Their landlord

Alcindoro: Musetta's new boyfriend

Where the Story Takes Place:

When the opera was originally written, it took place in the 1830s in Paris, when artists lost support of the aristocracy and France was undergoing multiple political upheavals and revolutions.

In this production, the story takes place in Paris in 1939 as remembered by Rodolfo approximately ten years later. In 1939, France, where artists from all over the world had enjoyed freedom after World War I, was about to be engulfed by World War II. When Rodolfo remembers this time, World War II is over and France, like much of Europe, was rebuilding.

Historical Context:

The source story of *La bohème* is based upon Henry Murger's novel *Scenes de la vie de Bohème* set in 1830 Paris' Latin Quarter. This story has been adapted into many versions including: Jonathan Larson's smash Broadway hit, *Rent* during the 1990's.

Definitions of Voice Types

Mimi and Musetta are both **sopranos**. The soprano is the highest of the female voice types and is almost always the 'heroine' or protagonist of an opera.

Rodolfo is a **tenor**. The tenor is the highest of the male voice types and is often, but not always, the lead male role. The tenor is usually the hero.

Marcello and Schaunard are **baritones**. The baritone is the most common male voice and has a lower range than the tenor.

Benoît is a **bass-baritone**. The bass-baritone has a vocal richness and a large vocal range.

Colline and **Alcindoro** are **basses (bass)**, the lowest of the male voices often used for roles like servants or for more serious roles projecting nobility and wisdom.

Synopsis

PROLOGUE

In his Paris study, Rodolfo struggles to write between daydreams. He finds himself reflecting on bittersweet memories of his not-so-distant past.

ACT I

He is reminded of Christmas Eve in a Latin Quarter garret ten years earlier when he and painter Marcello, both near-destitute, try to keep warm using the pages of his latest drama as kindling for the stove. They are soon joined by their roommates, Colline, a philosopher, and Schaunard, a musician, who brings food, fuel, and funds he has collected from an eccentric student. As his three friends leave to celebrate their new fortune at Café Momus, Rodolfo remains behind to finish an article. There is a knock at the door; the visitor is a neighbor, Mimi, whose candle has gone out on the stairway. Rodolfo relights it. Mimi realizes she has lost her key, and in the confusion, both candles are blown out again. As the two search for the key in the moonlight, their hands touch. Rodolfo tells Mimi his dreams. She then recounts her life alone in a lofty garret, embroidering flowers and waiting for the spring. Expressing their joy in finding each other, Mimi and Rodolfo leave to join his friends.

ACT II

Rodolfo remembers introducing Mimi to his friends that night at Café Momus. Marcello's former sweetheart, Musetta, makes a noisy entrance, in the company of the wealthy Alcindoro. The ensuing mayhem reaches its peak when, trying to regain Marcello's attention, she sings a waltz about her popularity. Sending Alcindoro off on an errand, she comes back to Marcello in dramatic fashion, and tells the waiter to charge everything to Alcindoro.

ACT III

Rodolfo's memory then wanders to a snowy morning on the outskirts of Paris, a few months after Christmas Eve. Mimì meets up with Marcello at a tavern where he is living. She tells him of her distress over Rodolfo's incessant jealousy, and says she believes it is best that they part. When Rodolfo appears from the tavern, Mimì hides nearby, though Marcello thinks she has gone. The poet tells Marcello that he wants to separate from his sweetheart, citing her fickleness; pressed for the real reason, he breaks down, saying that her coughing can only grow worse in the poverty they share; he's desperately afraid she will die from her illness. Overcome with sadness, Mimì stumbles forward to bid her lover farewell. While Mimì and Rodolfo recall past happiness, Musetta quarrels with Marcello, who has caught her flirting. The painter and his mistress part, hurling insults at each other, but Mimì and Rodolfo decide to remain together until spring.

ACT IV

Rodolfo's final memory is of his garret that following spring, where he and Marcello pine for Mimì and Musetta. As Colline and Schaunard return, all are quickly interrupted by Musetta who bursts in to tell them that Mimì is outside, too weak to come upstairs. Rodolfo sees to Mimì, while Musetta asks Marcello to sell her earrings for medicine and Colline goes off to pawn his overcoat. Left alone, Mimì and Rodolfo recall their first meeting and their happy days, but she is seized with violent coughing. The others return as Mimì is drifting into her final slumber. As Rodolfo recalls his grief and loss, he calls out Mimì's name despairingly.

**Lesson Plans
Grades 3-5 (Elementary)**



Every voice tells a story™

**Student Night at the Opera is generously supported by:
Grants from City of San Diego Arts and Culture Commission
The Prebys Foundation
and many individual donors who care about introducing the
next generation of opera lovers to this art form.**

*Created by:
Cynthia Stokes, MFA
with help from:*

*Anne Fennell, K-12 Music Program Manager for SD Unified School District
Llewellyn Crain and Bernardo Bermudez at SD Opera*

San Diego Opera *La bohème* Study Guide, Fall 2024

Elementary Lesson #1: Synopsis (or story of the opera)

The Common Core State Standards Initiative is a multi-state educational effort in the U.S. aimed at creating consistent educational standards across states. Its goal is to ensure that K-12 students know what they should achieve in English language arts and math by the end of each grade level.

Common Core Standards for this lesson:

Grade 3 #1. Comprehension and Collaboration: d. explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion.

Grade 4 #1. Comprehension and Collaboration: c. Pose and respond to specific questions to clarify or follow up on information and make comments that contribute to the discussion and link to the remarks of others. d. Review key ideas expressed and explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion.

Grade 5 #1. Pose and respond to specific questions by making comments that contribute to the discussion and elaborate on the remarks of others. d. Review the key ideas expressed and draw conclusions in light of information and knowledge gained from the discussion.

Overview:

- Students will make predictions about events and characters while hearing the plot synopsis of *La bohème* read aloud by the teacher.
- Students will respond to the questions after the synopsis of each act is read, working in pairs or small groups.
- Student responses should be retained so they can compare their predictions with the events in the opera.

Exploring the Opera:

We're going to read the opera story of *La bohème* and talk about what happens in each part. You'll work with a friend or in a small group to answer some questions about the opera story *La bohème*. You can share your answers by discussing them with one another or write them down.

Act 1

Rodolfo is a writer who is having a hard time finishing his story. He remembers a Christmas Eve in Paris. He was poor and lived with his friend Marcello, a painter. The two are cold but happy and burn Rodolfo's story to keep warm. Their friends, Colline and Schaunard, bring food and money. The friends decide to go out to celebrate Christmas, but Rodolfo stays home. A neighbor named Mimì comes over because her candle had gone out. Rodolfo helps her and they fall in love with each other. They join their friends at the café.

Now that you have read the first part of the opera story, talk about these questions:

1. Why do you think Rodolfo and Marcello are happy even though they don't have much money?
2. What do you think will happen to Rodolfo and Mimì in the next part?
3. Describe the apartment Rodolfo and his friend live in.

Act 2

At the café, Rodolfo introduces Mimì to his friends. They are having a good time when Musetta, Marcello's old girlfriend, shows up with her new rich boyfriend, Alcindoro. Musetta sings to make Marcello jealous and then sends Alcindoro away. Musetta and Marcello get back together, and Musetta makes sure Alcindoro pays the café bill.

Now that you have read the second part of the opera story talk about these questions:

1. How close was your guess about what happens in Act 2? What surprised you in the story?
2. Describe Musetta and Alcindoro's costumes in Act 2. How do you imagine they are dressed? Compare this to the other characters in Act 2.
3. What do you think will happen in the next part of the opera?

Act 3

A few months later, on a snowy day, Mimì goes to see Marcello because she is upset with Rodolfo. She hides when Rodolfo arrives. Rodolfo talks about breaking up with Mimì because she is getting sick, and they don't have enough money. Musetta and Marcello have a fight and say goodbye. Mimì comes out to say goodbye, but she and Rodolfo decide to stay together until spring.

Now that you have read the third part of the opera story talk about these questions:

1. How close was your guess about Act 3? What surprised you in the story?
2. After listening to the story, imagine what Mimì is wearing in Act 3?
3. What do you think will happen in the next part of the opera?

Act 4

In the spring, Rodolfo and his friends miss Mimì and Musetta. Suddenly, Musetta comes to get help because Mimì is very sick. Rodolfo takes Mimì upstairs. Musetta, Marcello, and Colline go to sell things to buy medicine. Schaunard even sells his coat to help. Rodolfo and Mimì have one last happy moment together, but Mimì falls asleep and doesn't wake up. When the others return, they find out Mimì has passed away, and Rodolfo is heartbroken.

Now that you have read the last part of the opera story, talk about these questions:

1. How close was your guess about Act 4? What surprised you in the story?
2. How are Rodolfo and Marcello different at the beginning of Act 4 compared to Acts 1 and 2?
3. Talk about why they change during the opera.

Wrap up:

When you attend Student Night at the Opera, look for clues onstage that tell you more about the characters and story. Discuss your predictions with your group after you attend the opera and compare your results.

San Diego Opera *La bohème* Study Guide, Fall 2024

Elementary Lesson #2: Character

The Common Core State Standards Initiative is a multi-state educational effort in the U.S. aimed at creating consistent educational standards across states. Its goal is to ensure that K-12 students know what they should achieve in English language arts and math by the end of each grade level.

Common Core Standards for this lesson:

Grade 3 Key Ideas and Details

- #1. Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.
- #3. Describe characters in a story and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.

Grade 4 Key Ideas and Details

- #1. Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and then drawing inferences from the text.
- #3. Describe in depth a character, setting or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (a character's thoughts, words, or actions).

Grade 5 Key Ideas and Details

- #1. Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

Standards-Based Learning Outcome for this lesson: Music Creation

Grade 3, 4 and 5

3MC2 Describe how the music relates to its purpose or context and how it conveys expressive intent.

Outcomes:

Students will work in small groups to examine the words sung by an opera singer in *La bohème*. They will make predictions about the character in the opera based on the characters words and the music.

What You Will Learn:

In this lesson, you'll read a part of a song (called an aria) from *La bohème*. Then you'll listen to the aria. You'll use what you read and hear to describe a character named Mimì.

Key Words:

- **Opera:** A type of show where actors sing songs to tell a story.
- **Opera Singer:** Someone who sings and pretends to be a character in an opera.
- **Character:** A person in an opera or story.
- **Aria:** A special song in an opera sung by one person.
- **Libretto:** The written story of an opera. It includes all the words the singers sing.
- **Composer:** The person who writes the music for an opera.

Overview:

An **opera** tells a story with both words and music. The words are in the **libretto**, and the **opera singer** acts out a **character**. An **aria** gives us hints about what a character is like. The **composer** uses music to help show these clues.

Lesson Steps:

1. Read with a Partner

Read the following part where Mimì introduces herself. Take turns reading aloud.

MIMÌ:

Yes.

They call me Mimì,
but my real name's Lucia.
My story is brief.
I embroider silk and satin
at home or outside.
I'm calm and happy,
and I like to make lilies and roses.
I love things
that have gentle magic,
that talk of love, of spring,
that talk of dreams and fancy -
the things called poetry...
Do you understand me?

2. Find Clues

With your partner, look for clues in Mimì's aria that tell us about her personality.

- Do you think Mimì likes to be alone or with other people?
- Why is embroidering lilies and roses important to her?
- She says, "I love all things that have gentle magic." What do these words tell us about Mimì?

3. Listen to the Music https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XacspEL_3Zk

Listen to Mimì's aria two or three times. It's sung in Italian. Here is the Italian version:

MIMÌ:

Sì.

*Mi chiamano Mimì,
ma il mio nome è Lucia.
La storia mia è breve.
A tela o a seta
ricamo in casa e fuori.
Son tranquilla e lieta,
ed è mio svago
far gigli e rose.
Mi piaccion quelle cose
che han sì dolce malia,
che parlano d'amor, di primavera,
che parlano di sogni e di chimere,
quelle cose che han nome poesia...
Lei m'intende?*

4. **Discuss What You Heard**

Talk with your partner about what you noticed in the aria now that you've heard the music.

- a. How does the music give you clues about Mimì's character?
- b. Can you find parts of the music that match the words in the aria?
- c. What did the music add to the aria?
- d. What do you think will happen to Mimì later in the opera?
- e. If Mimì were your friend, what things would you do together?

Wrap Up:

When you go to Student Night at the Opera, look for more clues about Mimì from the way other characters on stage treat her and how she moves onstage. Compare your predictions to what you saw onstage and discuss this with your group.

San Diego Opera *La bohème* Study Guide, Fall 2024

Elementary Lesson #3: The Composer

Standards-based education is an approach that outlines what students are expected to know and be able to do at various stages throughout their education, ensuring that all aspects of the educational process align with these predefined learning goals.

Standards Based Learning Outcomes for this lesson:

Identifying Connections

Grade 3 C1 Identify how music is connected to its purpose, context and intent.

Describing Connections

Grade 4 C1 Describe how music is connected to its purpose, context and intent.

Explaining Connections

Grade 5 C1 Explain how music is connected to its purpose, context and intention.

What You'll Learn: Today, you'll explore how an opera composer creates music that can tell an opera story. We'll listen to a piece of music from *La bohème* and talk about how it makes us feel and what it helps us imagine.

Vocabulary Words:

Opera Composer: This is a person who creates music for operas

Orchestra: A big group of musicians who play different instruments together.

Overture: This is a piece of music played at the start of a big part of an opera to get us ready for the story.

Background:

The opera composer writes music to help tell a story. The composer creates music that helps us recognize different characters in the opera.

You will need a pencil and paper for this lesson.

Steps to Follow:

1. **Listen to the Music:**

Listen carefully to the music from the beginning of Act 2 of *La bohème*:

<https://youtu.be/cgFFnqB5TVQ?si=cQragFyKYAJ5eflF>

While you listen, write words, draw pictures, or make designs to show what you're feeling and seeing.

2. **Share and Discuss:**

Talk with a partner or in a small group about what you wrote and drew.

See if you had similar ideas or different ones. Write down what was the same and what was different from listening to the music.

3. **Listen to the Music Again:**

Listen closely again for music that gives you clues about which characters you predict will be in the scene.

Wrap Up:

When you go to Student Night at the Opera, you'll hear this music live right after the intermission break. Afterward, look at your predictions about the beginning of Act 2. Was what you saw on stage similar or different from what you imagined?

San Diego Opera *La bohème* Study Guide, Fall 2024 Elementary Lesson #4: Preparing to attend the Opera

Standards-based education is an approach that outlines what students are expected to know and be able to do at various stages throughout their education, ensuring that all aspects of the educational process align with these predefined learning goals.

Standards-Based Learning Outcomes for this lesson:

#6. Performance and Audience Etiquette,

Demonstrating Audience and Performance Decorum

3PAE1 Demonstrate performance decorum and audience etiquette for the context and venue.

4PAE1 Demonstrate performance decorum and audience etiquette for the context, venue and genre.

5 PAE1 Demonstrate performance decorum and audience etiquette for the context, venue, genre and style.

Goal:

This lesson will help students learn how the layout of the Civic Theatre helps inform our opera etiquette at a live performance; we will also explore what makes opera singers so special and how they work with a conductor and orchestra to tell an opera story.

Vocabulary:

Opera: A special type of play where people sing instead of speaking.

Opera Singer: A person who sings in an opera.

Stage: The area where the actors and singers perform.

Orchestra: A group of musicians who play instruments.

Orchestra Pit: The area below the stage where the orchestra sits and plays.

Conductor: The person who leads the orchestra and makes sure everyone plays together.

Audience Seating: The seats where people sit to watch the performance.

Step 1: As a class look at the images of San Diego Opera's Civic Theatre where you will see San Diego Opera's production of *La bohème*.

- a. Look at a picture of the Civic Theatre. This is a photo of the outside of the theater.
<https://images.app.goo.gl/xRikMHdGAS7ei4Es7>
- b. Look at a picture of audience seating in the theater. All the seats are facing the stage so everyone can watch the opera.
<https://images.app.goo.gl/1Axs9L9DZUuNrxG46>
- c. This is a picture of the stage. This is where the opera singers will perform. They can see and hear the audience, just like the audience can see and hear them.
<https://images.app.goo.gl/Bi67spU8XX9Mb3QS6>

- d. This is a picture of the orchestra pit; the orchestra pit is located between the stage and the audience. Up to 90 musicians can play their instruments in the pit, and they are led by one opera conductor.

<https://images.app.goo.gl/YoC8Q9F33FVPwDy39>

Step 2.

Discuss in small groups why the audience, stage and orchestra pit are set up this way. Predict why this helps tell the story of the opera.

Step 3.

Opera singers can see and hear the audience. How do you think this will affect how you watch the performance? Also, opera singers don't use microphones—they use their trained voices to be heard over the orchestra. Where on stage do you think they should stand to be heard best? Discuss how this will impact the way you react to each performance?

Step 4.

The opera conductor helps the singers, and the orchestra sing and play together. The conductor uses a baton in their hand to guide the music. When you are watching the show look for the conductor at the center of the orchestra pit. Describe how the singers keep eye contact with the conductor and other singers on stage.

After you attend Student Night at the Opera, describe the relationship between the audience and the singer during a live performance and how it is different from watching TV or a movie.

**Lesson Plans for Middle School Classes
Grades 6-8**



Every voice tells a story™

**Student Night at the Opera is generously supported by:
Grants from City of San Diego Arts and Culture Commission
The Prebys Foundation
and many individual donors who care about introducing the
next generation of opera lovers to this art form.**

*Created by:
Cynthia Stokes, MFA
with help from:*

*Anne Fennell, K-12 Music Program Manager for SD Unified School District
Llewellyn Crain and Bernardo Bermudez at SD Opera*

San Diego Opera *La bohème* Study Guide, Fall 2024

Middle School Lesson #1: Synopsis

The Common Core State Standards Initiative is a multi-state educational effort in the U.S. aimed at creating consistent educational standards across states. Its goal is to ensure that K-12 students know what they should achieve in English language arts and math by the end of each grade level.

Common Core Standards for this lesson:

Key Ideas and Details:

- Grade 6:** Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says, explicitly, as well as inferences drawn from the text.
Grade 7: Site several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says, explicitly, as well as inferences drawn from the text.
Grade 8: Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says, explicitly, as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- Grade 6:** Describe how a particular story or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes, as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves forward towards resolution.
Grade 7: Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact.
Grade 8: Analyze how particular lines of dialogue, or incidents in a story or drama propel, the action reveal aspect of the character or provoke a decision.

Overview:

Students will make predictions about events and characters by reading the plot synopsis of *La bohème*. Students will work in pairs or small groups as they read aloud the four parts of the plot synopsis. Student responses should be kept so they can compare their predictions with the events in the opera.

Exploring the Opera:

You will read the synopsis of *La bohème* and talk about what happens in each act of the opera. You'll work with a friend or in a small group to answer some questions about the opera story *La bohème*. You can share your answers in a discussion or write them down.

La bohème

Composer: Giacomo Puccini

Librettists: Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa

Time Written: 1893-1895

Main Characters

Rodolfo: A writer

Mimi: A seamstress (sews clothes)

Marcello: A painter

Musetta: a singer

Schaunard: A musician

Colline: A thinker

Benoît: Their landlord

Alcindoro: Musetta's boyfriend

Where the Story Takes Place:

Paris, in the 1930s

Act 1:

Rodolfo is a writer who is having a hard time finishing his story. He remembers a Christmas Eve in Paris. He was poor and lived with his friend Marcello, a painter. The two are cold but happy and burn Rodolfo's story to keep warm. Their friends, Colline and Schaunard, bring food and money. The friends decide to go out to celebrate Christmas at a fancy Café, but Rodolfo stays home. A neighbor named Mimì comes over because her candle had gone out. Rodolfo helps her and they fall in love with each other. They joined their friends at the café.

Now that you have read the first part of the opera story talk about these questions:

1. The four friends are happy even though they are very poor. Can you think of any other stories you know where friendship was more important than money?
2. Make a prediction about the next Act of *La bohème*. What will happen to the friends? What will happen to Rodolfo and Mimì?
3. From the synopsis, describe the costumes you imagine that two of the characters are wearing on this cold night.

Act 2:

At the café, Rodolfo introduces Mimì to his friends. They are having a good time when Musetta, Marcello's old girlfriend, shows up with her new rich boyfriend, Alcindoro. Musetta sings to make Marcello jealous and then sends Alcindoro away. Musetta and Marcello get back together, and Musetta makes sure Alcindoro pays the café bill.

Now that you have read the second part of the opera story talk about these questions:

1. How close was your guess about what happens in Act 2? What surprised you in the story?
2. Describe the fancy café as you imagine it from the synopsis. What do you imagine the friends are eating? Compare what Musetta is wearing to what Marcello is wearing in this scene.
3. Make a prediction about Mimì and Musetta's relationship; do you think they will become friends or rivals?
4. Make a prediction about the next Act of the opera.

Act 3:

Rodolfo remembers a scene a few months later. It is snowy outside. Mimì goes to see Marcello because she is upset with Rodolfo. She tells Marcello that he is jealous all the time. She hides when Rodolfo arrives. Rodolfo tells his friend that he is trying to make Mimì leave him because she is getting sick, and they don't have enough money. Musetta and Marcello have a fight and say goodbye. Mimì comes out to say goodbye, but she and Rodolfo decide to stay together until spring.

Now that you have read the third part of the opera story talk about these questions

1. How close was your guess about Act 3? What surprised you in the story?
2. Explain why Mimì goes to Marcello for advice instead of Musetta? Do you imagine she would have gotten a different response from Musetta?
3. Based on the synopsis, what time of day does the scene take place? Describe what else you imagine is on the stage.
4. What do you think will happen in the next part of the opera?

Act 4

Rodolfo's last memory is of that spring. Rodolfo and Marcello miss Mimì and Musetta. Suddenly, Musetta comes to get help because Mimì is very sick. Rodolfo takes Mimì upstairs. Musetta, Marcello, and Colline go to sell things to buy medicine. Rodolfo and Mimì have one last happy moment together, but Mimì falls asleep and doesn't wake up. When the others return, they find out Mimì has died, and Rodolfo is heartbroken.

Now that you have read the last part of the opera story talk about these questions

1. How close was your guess about Act 4? What surprised you in the story?
2. Describe how Rodolfo and Marcello change from the beginning of the story to the end of the story. What have they learned about themselves?
3. Each of the characters make a sacrifice for their friend Mimì by selling their possessions to help her. What other stories have you read that shared a similar idea of sacrifice?

Wrap Up:

When you attend Student Night at the Opera look closely at how the production (sets, lights and costumes) give you clues about the characters and story. After the opera, make sure you look at your own set and costume ideas and compare them to the Student Night at the Opera production.

San Diego Opera *La bohème* Study Guide, Fall 2024

Middle School Lesson #2: The Librettist

The Common Core State Standards Initiative is a multi-state educational effort in the U.S. aimed at creating consistent educational standards across states. Its goal is to ensure that K-12 students know what they should achieve in English language arts and math by the end of each grade level.

Common Core Standards for this lesson: Key Ideas and Details

1. Identify textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says, explicitly, as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Craft and Structure:

4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases, as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative and technical meanings.

6. Determine an author's point of view or purpose of the text and explain how it is conveyed in the text.

Aim:

In this lesson, students will look for clues in the libretto of *La bohème* to make decisions about characters and their relationships. They will also make inferences about the world of the story based on clues presented by the librettist.

Vocabulary:

Opera: A dramatic or comedic story told onstage by singers using words and music. Opera productions use sets, lights and costumes to help create details of the dramatic or comedic story for an audience. Operas are accompanied by an orchestra led by a conductor.

Opera Singer: A person who pretends to be a character in an operatic story. All text in an opera is sung, instead of spoken.

Character: A person in an opera.

Character Want: The single most important thing a character is working to accomplish in an opera. Examples of wants include: to be loved, to achieve power, to gain respect.

Character Obstacles: The fears or difficulties that keep a character from achieving their Want. For example: if a character does not feel worthy, they may struggle to be loved in the story of an opera.

Opera Libretto: The story of an opera written out as a play or poem. The text of a libretto is the actual words an opera singer will sing during a performance.

Overview:

Operas are stories told through words and music. Operas are sung by an **opera singer** who is playing a **character** in the opera. All characters are working toward a dramatic **want**, but obstacles keep them from achieving this want.

Lesson:

Here are two examples from the libretto in *La bohème*. The first example is sung by the character of Marcello who is a painter and Rodolfo's best friend. This scene takes place in

Act 2 of the story. Marcello and his friends have gone to Café Momus on Christmas Eve where he sees a woman he knows named Musetta.

Work with a partner on this activity.

1. Read the two examples and discuss them together. Based on the text, discuss how Marcello feels about Musetta at this point in the story. Use specific examples from the text to support your idea.
 - a. What does Marcello want in this moment?
 - b. What is the obstacle that keeps him from achieving his want?
 - c. Make predictions about Marcello and Musetta's past.

MARCELLO

*Her first name's Musetta.
Her last name's Temptation.
Her occupation is being
a leaf in the wind...
Always turning, changing
her lovers and her loves...
Like the screech-owl
she's a bird of prey.
Her favorite food
is the heart...she devours them!
And so I have no heart.*

2. Now look at a selection of Musetta's text from the libretto. She and her new boyfriend arrive at Café Momus right after Marcello and his friends. Based on the text, discuss how Musetta feels about all of the men at Café Momus at this point in the story and particularly Marcello. Use specific examples from the text to support your idea.
 - a. What does Musetta want in this moment?
 - b. What is the obstacle that keeps her from achieving her want?
 - c. Based on the text, what do you think will happen between Musetta and her current boyfriend?

MUSETTA

*As I walk alone
through the streets,
the people stop to look
and inspect my beauty,
examining me
from head to toe.
And then I savor the subtle
longing in their eyes
when, from my visible charms,
they guess at the beauty concealed.
This onrush of desire*

*surrounds me.
It delights me, it delights me.
And you who know, who remember and suffer,
how can you escape?
I know: you won't admit
that you're in torment,
but it's killing you.*

Expand:

If you were friends with Marcello or Musetta, what advice would you give them?

In what ways are Marcello and Musetta similar to characters you know from other stories you have read or seen in a movie or TV show?

Make a prediction: what do you imagine will happen to Marcello and Musetta later in the story?

Wrap Up:

Record your predictions and compare them to what happens when you attend Student Night at the Opera.

San Diego Opera *La bohème* Study Guide, Fall 2024

Middle School Lesson #3: The Composer

The Common Core State Standards Initiative is a multi-state educational effort in the U.S. aimed at creating consistent educational standards across states. Its goal is to ensure that K-12 students know what they should achieve in English language arts and math by the end of each grade level.

Common Core Standards for this lesson: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

7. Compare and contrast the experience of reading a story, drama, or poem, to listening to or viewing an audio, video, or live version of the text, including contrasting what they “see” and “hear”, when reading the text to what they perceive when they listen or watch.

Standards-based education is an approach that outlines what students are expected to know and be able to do at various stages throughout their education, ensuring that all aspects of the educational process align with these predefined learning goals.

Standards-Based Learning Outcome for this lesson: Music

Prof C 1 connect music to oneself or its historical cultural or societal context
ACC c1 Analyze intersection of music, oneself and music’s context

Vocabulary:

Opera Composer: A person who writes music for an opera.

Orchestra: A large group of musicians who play different instruments together.

Overture: Often an instrumental piece of music played at the beginning of the Act of an opera to get us ready for the story.

Background:

Opera composers use music to tell a story. The composer works with an orchestra and singers to create a special experience that goes beyond just words. The composer’s goal is to make the audience feel the story more deeply.

Aim:

Students will listen closely to a musical selection from opera composer Giacomo Puccini’s *La bohème*. Students will then identify specific moods that are created by the composer as well as setting and relationships.

What you will need for this lesson: Something to write with and paper.

Steps to Follow:

1. Listen to the music. First listen to the **overture to Act 3 (0 to 1min)**
https://youtu.be/l1sCO0RZuVo?si=l-qeP6lkcKz_1egR

Write down how the music makes you feel, what the music makes you see, what the music helps you imagine as you listen. You can use words, images, or designs to help describe your experience of listening to this music.

2. Share your work and discuss it with a partner or in a small group. Were there similarities in what you each wrote? Make a note of these similarities and differences and compare them after you attend the opera.
3. Listen again to the overture and discuss the following:
 - a. Describe the mood of the music.
 - b. Where do you hear sounds that remind you of nature or human activities?
 - c. What season of the year or time of day is the music representing if any?

Expand this idea:

When you attend Student Night at the Opera, this overture will be played right after intermission. Compare the experience of listening to a recording of the opera to actually watching this live during a performance. Take into consideration the effect of the orchestra, the conductor and the singers, as well as the scenic elements during the live production. How do they all impact your experience of a live opera performance?

Wrap Up:

After you attend Student Night at the Opera compare the experience of listening to the recording in class, and the experience of attending the live performance to one another and discuss them with your class. Discuss if one experience has a stronger impact for you as an audience member.

San Diego Opera *La bohème* Study Guide, Fall 2024

Middle School Lesson #4: Preparing to attend the Opera

Standards-based education is an approach that outlines what students are expected to know and be able to do at various stages throughout their education, ensuring that all aspects of the educational process align with these predefined learning goals.

Standards-Based Learning Outcome for this lesson:

#6. Performance and Audience Etiquette, Demonstrating Audience and Performance Decorum.

3PAE1 Demonstrate performance decorum and audience etiquette for the context and venue.

4PAE1 Demonstrate performance decorum and audience etiquette for the context, venue and genre.

5 PAE1 Demonstrate performance decorum and audience etiquette for the context, venue, genre and style.

Goal:

This lesson will help students learn how the layout of the Civic Theatre helps inform our opera etiquette at a live performance. We will explore what makes opera singers so special and how they work with a conductor and orchestra to tell an opera story.

Vocabulary:

Opera: A special type of play where people sing instead of speaking.

Opera Singer: A person who sings in an opera.

Stage: The area where the actors and singers perform.

Orchestra: A group of musicians who play instruments.

Orchestra Pit: The area below the stage where the orchestra sits and plays.

Conductor: The person who leads the orchestra and makes sure everyone plays together.

Audience Seating: The seats where people sit to watch the performance.

Step 1:

As a class look at the images of San Diego Opera's Civic Theatre where you will see San Diego Opera's production of *La bohème*.

- a. Look at a picture of the Civic Theatre. This is a photo of the outside of the theater
<https://images.app.goo.gl/xRikMHdGAS7ei4Es7>
- b. Look at a picture of audience seating in the theater. All the seats are facing the stage so everyone can watch the opera
<https://images.app.goo.gl/1Axs9L9DZUuNrxG46>
- c. This is a picture of the stage. This is where the opera singers will perform. They can see and hear the audience, just like the audience can see and hear them
<https://images.app.goo.gl/Bi67spU8XX9Mb3QS6>

- e. This is a picture of the orchestra pit; the orchestra pit is located between the stage and the audience. Up to 90 musicians can play their instruments in the pit, and they are led by one opera conductor.

<https://images.app.goo.gl/YoC8Q9F33FVPwDy39>

Step 2.

Discuss in small groups why the audience, stage and orchestra pit are set up this way. Predict why this helps tell the story of the opera.

Step 3.

Opera singers can see and hear the audience. How do you think this will affect how you watch the performance? Also, opera singers don't use microphones—they use their trained voices to be heard over the orchestra. Where on stage do you think they should stand to be heard best? Discuss how this will impact the way you react to each performance.

Step 4.

The opera conductor helps the singers, and the orchestra sing and play together. The conductor uses a baton in their hand to guide the music. When you are watching the show look for the conductor at the center of the orchestra pit. Describe how the singers keep eye contact with the conductor and other singers on stage.

After you attend Student Night at the Opera, describe the relationship between the audience and the singer during a live performance and how it is different from watching TV or a movie.

**High School
Grades 9-12**



Every voice tells a story™

**Student Night at the Opera is generously supported by:
Grants from City of San Diego Arts and Culture Commission
The Prebys Foundation
and many individual donors who care about introducing the
next generation of opera lovers to this art form.**

*Created by:
Cynthia Stokes, MFA
with help from:*

*Anne Fennell, K-12 Music Program Manager for SD Unified School District
Llewellyn Crain and Bernardo Bermudez at SD Opera*

San Diego Opera *La bohème* Study Guide, Fall 2024

High School Lesson #1: Synopsis

The Common Core State Standards Initiative is a multi-state educational effort in the U.S. aimed at creating consistent educational standards across states. Its goal is to ensure that K-12 students know what they should achieve in English language arts and math by the end of each grade level.

Common Core Standards for this lesson:

Text types and purposes

1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

Research to build and present knowledge:

8. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism

9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Overview:

Students will first make predictions about events and characters by reading and discussing the plot synopsis of *La bohème*. They will then research and discuss the historical context of the opera. Students will document their predictions and research to reflect on after attending Student Night at the Opera.

Vocabulary:

Opera: A theatrical work combining singing, orchestration, and drama.

Dramatic Irony: A literary device where the audience possesses knowledge that the characters on stage do not.

Synopsis: A summary of the opera's story.

Foreshadowing: A literary device that hints at future events in the narrative.

Step 1:

Reading and Discussion:

Working in small groups, read Acts 1 and 2, then Acts 3 and 4. Respond to the prompts between the sections of the opera.

Overview:

First students will make predictions about events and characters by reading and discussing the plot synopsis of *La bohème*. Then, students will research and discuss the historical context of the opera. Students will document their predictions and research to reflect on after attending Student Night at the Opera.

Step 1:

Working in small groups read Act 1 and 2, then Act 3 and 4. Respond to the prompts between the two sections of the opera.

La bohème

Composer: Giacomo Puccini

Librettists: Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa

Time Written: 1893-1895

Main Characters:

Rodolfo: A writer

Mimi: A seamstress

Marcello: A painter

Musetta: A singer

Schaunard: A musician

Colline: A philosopher

Benoît: Their landlord

Alcindoro: Musetta's boyfriend

Where the Story Takes Place

Paris, in 1939 (The opera originally was set around 1830)

Prologue

In his study in Paris, Rodolfo is struggling to write while daydreaming about his past.

Act I

Ten years earlier on Christmas Eve, Rodolfo and his painter friend Marcello are very poor and use the pages of Rodolfo's play to keep warm. Their friends Colline, a philosopher, and Schaunard, a musician, join them with food and money from an unusual student. While his friends head out to celebrate at Café Momus, Rodolfo stays behind to work on an article. A neighbor, Mimi, comes to his door after her candle goes out. When she enters, she faints. Rodolfo revives her and helps her light her candle again. They search for her lost key together and their hands touch in the dark. As they talk, they realize they are drawn to each other. Mimi shares her lonely life and dreams, and they decide to join Rodolfo's friends at Café Momus.

Act II

At Café Momus, Rodolfo introduces Mimi to his friends. Marcello's ex, Musetta, arrives with a wealthy man, Alcindoro. She creates a scene to get Marcello's attention, singing a song about her popularity. Musetta eventually returns to Marcello, instructing the waiter to put the bill on Alcindoro's tab so he will have to pay it when he returns.

Prompts for Discussion and Writing:

- A. The young people in *La bohème* value their art, friendships, and passions over money. On a very cold night, they agree to burn Rodolfo's book rather than freeze. Do you think that art for art's sake is a worthwhile effort, or are the young men just indulging in their vanity?

- B. Based on the synopsis, draw or describe the apartment the young men share in Act 1 as you imagine it.
- C. In operas, plays, and stories, the actions of characters can foreshadow future events. Make predictions about what will happen next to the four central characters based on the synopsis.
- D. With your group discuss the following prompts and write them down to compare after you attend the opera.

Act III

Rodolfo remembers later that winter. In the snow outside Paris, Mimì meets Marcello at a tavern and reveals her troubles with Rodolfo's jealousy. She thinks it's best to break up. Rodolfo arrives, and Mimì hides while Marcello talks to Rodolfo. Rodolfo wants to break up with Mimì because he fears her illness will worsen due to their poverty. Mimì comes out to say goodbye, and while they remember happier times, Musetta and Marcello argue and break up. Mimì and Rodolfo decide to stay together until spring.

Act IV

In Rodolfo's final memory, it is springtime. Rodolfo and Marcello are still grieving over their break ups with Mimì and Musetta. Musetta arrives with news that Mimì is too weak to come upstairs. Rodolfo brings Mimì upstairs and takes care of her while Musetta asks Marcello to sell her earrings for medicine. Colline decides to pawn his coat to pay for Mimì's doctor. Alone, Mimì and Rodolfo remember their early days together, then Mimì falls asleep. The others return to find that Mimì has in fact died. Rodolfo is overwhelmed with grief and calls out her name in despair.

Prompts for Discussion and Writing:

- A. In Act III, Mimì seeks Marcello's advice about Rodolfo's jealousy but soon learns that Rodolfo is using jealousy to drive her away due to their poverty. Is Rodolfo's behavior an act of selfishness or sacrifice?
- B. Reflecting on the people you value most in your life, what sacrifices would you make to protect them?
- C. From your perspective, which character makes the greatest sacrifice for their love of another? Defend your choice.

Step 2: Historical and Cultural Context

1. The creative team of *La bohème* set the production between 1929 and 1939.
2. Research the following topics:
 - France's role in World War I
 - Paris between the Wars (1918-1939)
 - Women in the workforce in France during the 1930s
 - The Great Depression in France (1931-1939)
 - The French economy in the 1930s
 - Poverty in France during the 1930s
 - Diseases associated with poverty
 - World War II in Europe

3. Share your research with your group and the class. Re-read the synopsis and discuss how this historical and cultural context affects your understanding of the story.
4. How does the history and cultural context of Paris during 1930-1939 influence your experience of *La bohème*?

Wrap Up:

After attending Student Night at the Opera, discuss the impact of dramatic irony. How did knowing information that the characters did not affect your experience of the opera?

San Diego Opera *La bohème* Study Guide, Fall 2024 High School Lesson #2: The Libretto

The Common Core State Standards Initiative is a multi-state educational effort in the U.S. aimed at creating consistent educational standards across states. Its goal is to ensure that K-12 students know what they should achieve in English language arts and math by the end of each grade level.

Common Core Standards for this lesson:

Key Ideas and Details

3. Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.

Craft and Structure:

6. Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness or beauty of the text.

Outcomes:

In this lesson, you will read the last scene in Act I from *La bohème*. Your job is to explore the craft of the librettists Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa. What is important in the telling of the story as they give characters words and actions?

Vocabulary:

Libretto: The written story of an opera. It includes all the words the singers sing.

Librettist: The person who writes the text and songs of an opera.

Opera: A type of show where actors sing songs to tell a story.

Character: A person in an opera story.

An **opera** tells a story with both words and music. The words are in the **libretto**, and the opera singer acts out a **character**. All of this text is crafted by a **librettist**.

Step 1.

Work in small groups (3-4 students). Two of you will read the different character from the last scene of Act 1 in *La bohème*. The text is included below. All of the text in italics are called stage directions. The stage directions tell the reader what is happening on stage.

Scene from Act I *La bohème*, Libretto by Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa.
Rodolfo meets Mimi

Rodolfo closes the door, sets his light on the table and tries to write. But he tears up the paper and throws the pen down.

RODOLFO

I'm not in the mood.
There's a timid knock at the door.
Who's there?

MIMI

outside
Excuse me.

RODOLFO

A woman!

MIMI

I'm sorry ... my light
has gone out.

RODOLFO

opening the door
Here.

MIMI

in the doorway, holding a candlestick and a key
Would you...?

RODOLFO

Come in for a moment.

MIMI

There's no need.

RODOLFO

Please ... come in.
Mimi enters, and has a fit of coughing.
You're not well?

MIMI

No ... it's nothing.

RODOLFO

You're pale!

MIMI

I'm out of breath ... the stairs ...

She faints, and Rodolfo is just in time to support her and help her to a chair. The key and the candlestick fall from her hands.

RODOLFO

Now what shall I do?
He gets some water and sprinkles her face.
So.
How ill she looks!
Mimi comes to.
Are you better now?

MIMI

Yes.

RODOLFO

It's so cold here. Come and sit
by the fire.
He helps her to a chair by the stove.
Wait... some wine.

MIMI

Thank you.

RODOLFO

Here.

MIMI

Just a little.

RODOLFO

There.

MIMI

Thank you.

RODOLFO

(What a lovely creature!)

MIMI

rising

Now, please,
relight my candle.
I'm better now.

RODOLFO

Such a hurry!

MIMI

Yes.

Rodolfo lights her candle for her.
Thank you. Good evening.

RODOLFO
Good evening.

Mimi goes out, then reappears at the door.

MIMI
Oh! foolish me!
Where have I left
the key to my room?

RODOLFO
Don't stand in the door:
the wind makes your light flicker.

Her candle goes out.

MIMI
Heavens! Will you relight it?

Rodolfo hastens to her with his light, but when he reaches the door, his candle goes out, too. The room is dark.

RODOLFO
There ... Now mine's out, too.

MIMI
Ah! And where can my key be?

RODOLFO
Pitch dark!

MIMI
Unlucky me!

RODOLFO
Where can it be?

MIMI
You've a bothersome neighbor ...

RODOLFO
Not at all.

MIMI
You've a bothersome neighbor...

RODOLFO

What do you mean? Not at all!

MIMI

Search.

RODOLFO

I'm searching.

They hunt, touching the floor with their hands.

MIMI

Where can it be?

RODOLFO

Ah!

He finds the key and pockets it.

MIMI

Did you find it?

RODOLFO

No.

MIMI

I thought ...

RODOLFO

Truthfully!

MIMI

Are you hunting?

RODOLFO

I'm hunting for it.

Guided by her voice, Rodolfo pretends to search as he draws closer to her. Then his hand meets hers, and he holds it.

MIMI

surprised

Ah!

They rise. Rodolfo continues to hold Mimì's hand

RODOLFO

How cold your little hand is!
Let me warm it for you.
What's the use of searching?
We'll never find it in the dark.
But luckily
there's a moon,
and she's our neighbor here.
Just wait, my dear young lady,
and meanwhile I'll tell you
in a word
who and what I am.
Shall I?
Mimì is silent

(Rodolfo's Aria)

RODOLFO

Who am I? I'm a poet.
My business? Writing.
How do I live? I live.
In my happy poverty
I squander like a prince
my poems and songs of love.
In hopes and dreams
and castles in air,
I'm a millionaire in spirit.
But sometimes my strongbox
is robbed of all its jewels
by two thieves: a pair of pretty eyes.
They came in now with you
and all my lovely dreams,
my dreams of the past,
were soon stolen away.
But the theft doesn't upset me,
since the empty place was filled
with hope. Now that you know me,
it's your turn to speak. Who are you? Will you tell me?

(Mimi's aria)

MIMI

Yes.

They call me Mimi,
but my real name's Lucia.

My story is brief.

I embroider silk and satin
at home or outside.

I'm tranquil and happy,
and my pastime
is making lilies and roses.

I love all things
that have gentle magic,
that talk of love, of spring,
that talk of dreams and fancies -
the things called poetry ...
Do you understand me?

RODOLFO

Yes.

MIMI

They call me Mimi –

I don't know why.

I live all by myself
and I eat all alone.

I don't often go to church,
but I like to pray.

I stay all alone

In my tiny white room,
I look at the roofs and the sky.

But when spring comes
the sun's first rays are mine.

April's first kiss is mine, is mine!

The sun's first rays are mine!

A rose blossoms in my vase,
I breathe its perfume, petal by petal.

So sweet is the flower's perfume.

But the flowers I make, alas,

The flowers I make, alas,
alas, have no scent.

What else can I say?

I'm your neighbor, disturbing you
at this impossible hour.

When the window is opened, the moonlight comes in, lighting up the room. Turning, Rodolfo sees Mimì wrapped in a halo of moonlight. He contemplates her, in ecstasy.

RODOLFO

Oh! lovely girl! Oh, sweet face
bathed in the soft moonlight.
I see in you the dream
I'd dream forever!

MIMÌ

(Ah! Love, you rule alone!...)

RODOLFO

Already I taste in spirit
The heights of tenderness!

MIMÌ

(You rule alone, O Love!)

RODOLFO

Already I taste in spirit
the heights of tenderness!
Love trembles in our kiss!

MIMÌ

(How sweet his praises
enter my heart ...
Love, you alone rule!)
Rodolfo kisses her.
No, please!

RODOLFO

You're mine!

MIMÌ

Your friends are waiting.

RODOLFO

You send me away already?

MIMÌ

I daren't say what I'd like ...

RODOLFO

Tell me.

MIMÌ

If I came with you?

RODOLFO

What? Mimì!
It would be so fine to stay here.
Outside it's cold.

MIMÌ

I'd be near you!

RODOLFO

And when we come back?

MIM

Who knows?

RODOLFO

Give me your arm, my dear ...

MIMÌ

Your servant, sir ...

RODOLFO

Tell me you love me!

MIMÌ

I love you.

RODOLFO and MIMÌ

as they go out

Beloved! My love! My love!

End of Act 1

Analyze the Text for Clues:

In your group, examine how the librettist has structured the events in this scene to draw conclusions about the characters and their relationships.

Interpret Specific Moments:

1. Mimi's Entrance:

Why does Mimì appear for the first time right after Rodolfo's friends have left for the café? If you were the librettist, what dramatic effect would you intend for this moment?

2. Mimi's Actions:

In the early moments of the scene, Mimì faints, her candle goes out, and she drops her key. What do these actions reveal about her character?

3. Rodolfo's Behavior:

Rodolfo hides the missing key and pretends to search for it as an excuse to hold Mimi's hand. What does this reveal about his feelings for Mimì? Look for clues about his confidence with women and justify your interpretation

4. Symbolism of the Moon:

What does the moon symbolize in this scene, and what is the effect of presenting it in moonlight? How would the scene differ if it took place during the day?

Wrap Up:

Discuss and write down your group's thoughts. After attending Student Night at the Opera, evaluate the overall effect of the opera's libretto with your group. Were there any surprises during the performance? What new insights about the characters did you gain from watching *La bohème*?

Extra Help

For more information, you can check out the full text of the opera and other resources linked here.

<https://opera-guide.ch/operas/la+boheme/libretto/en/>

San Diego Opera *La bohème* Study Guide, Fall 2024

High School Lesson #3: The Composer

The Common Core State Standards Initiative is a multi-state educational effort in the U.S. aimed at creating consistent educational standards across states. Its goal is to ensure that K-12 students know what they should achieve in English language arts and math by the end of each grade level.

Common Core Standards for this lesson: **Integration of Knowledge and Information**

7. Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats

Standards-based education is an approach that outlines what students are expected to know and be able to do at various stages throughout their education, ensuring that all aspects of the educational process align with these predefined learning goals.

Standards-Based Learning Outcomes for this Lesson:

Music

3. Concepts and Structure – explain how the elements of music informed the listener’s response to music.

8. Connections: connect music to oneself or its historical, cultural or societal context

Vocabulary:

Opera Composer: A person who writes music for an opera.

Verismo Opera: a style of opera where the composers wanted the audience to see a more realistic world on stage.

Orchestra: A large group of musicians who play different instruments together.

Overture: An instrumental piece of music played at the beginning of the act of an Opera.

Background:

Opera composers use music to tell a story. The composer works with an orchestra and singers to create a special experience that goes beyond just words. The composer’s goal is to make the audience feel the story more deeply.

Opera composer Giacomo Puccini was dedicated to creating **Verismo Opera**. The word verismo comes from the Italian word *vero* for ‘true’. Puccini and his colleagues believed that operas should reflected the lives of everyday people, including the poor, and the sick.

Aim:

Students will listen closely to a musical selection from opera composer Giacomo Puccini’s *La bohème*. Students will then identify specific moods that are created by the composer as well as setting and relationships.

What you will need for this lesson: something to write with and paper.

Steps to Follow:

1. Listen to the music. First listen to the **Overture to Act 3**
https://youtu.be/l1sCO0RZuVo?si=l-qeP6lkckKz_1egR
Write down how the music makes you feel, what the music makes you see, what the music helps you imagine as you listen. You can use words, images, or designs to help describe your experience of listening to this music.
2. Share your work and discuss it with a partner or in a small group. Are there similarities in what you each wrote? Make a note of these similarities and differences to look at after you attend the opera.
3. Listen again to the overture and discuss the following:
 - a. How does Puccini create a sense of mood and character using the orchestra?
 - b. Point to specific moments in the overture that create this effect?
 - c. How would you describe the location in this scene?
 - d. What season of the year or time of day is represented by the orchestration?

Expand:

Puccini and his colleagues were very much like the characters they created in *La bohème*. They were committed to creating a style of art they called **Verismo**. Verismo Opera's goal was to strip away romantic portrayals of art and show the world as these artists saw it, realistic and gritty. After you attend Student Night at the Opera discuss, with your class whether the total effect of *La bohème's* music and story felt realistic to you.

San Diego Opera *La bohème* Study Guide, Fall 2024

High School Lesson #4: Preparing to Attend the Opera

Standards-based education is an approach that outlines what students are expected to know and be able to do at various stages throughout their education, ensuring that all aspects of the educational process align with these predefined learning goals.

Standards-Based Learning Outcomes for this lesson:

7. Music Evaluation. Justify evaluation using criteria context, and research.
8. Connections Advance: Combine intersections of music, oneself and music context, possibly using research.

Outcome:

Students will brainstorm the different jobs needed to create a live performance, research the expertise required for these jobs, and discuss the goals associated with each role.

Activity:

Preparing for Student Night at the Opera

Step 1:

Imagine you and your classmates are tasked with creating a live performance. In small groups, list all the roles you think are needed for the performance. Remember, many of these roles are not on stage.

Step 2:

As a group, analyze the expertise required for each role on your list. Each group member should choose a role to research, then present a description of that role to the group. (Resource links are provided below.)

Step 3:

Discuss how people acquire the skills needed for these roles. Do you think they learn these skills independently, or do they attend a trade school, college, or conservatory program? Compare the time required for training in different fields.

Step 4:

Create a Venn diagram with your group to identify the common goals shared by everyone involved in a live performance. Discuss how understanding these shared goals affects the audience's experience. Also, consider how the audience's response might influence the goals of those working on the performance.

Step 5:

Choose one role from your discussion that interests you. During Student Night at the Opera, observe and identify evidence of that role in action. Share your observations with your group and teacher.

Resources and information about careers in opera:

<https://www.sfopera.com/learn/about-opera/people-at-the-opera/>

<https://www.berklee.edu/careers/communities/opera>