

2009-2010

✦ Del Valle High School Grade 10 ✦

Performing Arts and Academic Collaborative

a multi-year program that integrates artistic performances with the middle and high school Language Arts curriculum in Del Valle ISD

▶ UT OPERA ENSEMBLE

Del Valle Grade 10

Tues. September 15, 2009

UT LBJ Auditorium 10:30 AM

✓ GENERAL OBJECTIVES

- Students will become familiar with the classically trained vocal styles
 - Soprano
 - Mezzo Soprano
 - Contralto
 - Tenor
 - Baritone
 - Bass
- Students will gain an understanding and familiarity with the human voice as it is used in opera to allow a better appreciation of the voice and opera's role in culture.
- Students will develop reading, writing, and speaking skills.

MEDIA

Text, photos, links to audio & video online

Supplemental Video contents

- Opera: Sung stories – started in Italy in the early 1600s – used Greek literature - libretto
- Soap Opera: Started as radio shows sponsored by soap companies; also have dramatic stories
- Light Opera: Broadway shows
- Opera is used in movies, commercials, and cartoons
- Soprano, Contralto, Tenor, Baritone, Bass / boy sopranos
- Vocal range
- How singing can shatter glass
- Famous singers

Some of the youtube Links:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=eT5pw8E5IYE - Beverly Sills, Ah vous...

www.youtube.com/watch?v=YA2HqSZaDs&feature=related - Beverly Sills at age 8

www.youtube.com/watch?v=ItfuUd6Omks - Boy Soprano singing Queen of the Night

www.youtube.com/watch?v=MDtcidMR_6I - Three tenors

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NUN8TTqcRRU> Armenian Bass Vazgen Ghazaryan

<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-7765557442856739526#> Mythbusters breaking glass-16 min video

Other interesting related videos:

Another Boy Soprano: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IzstMw2ZB30>

Lengthy but interesting program about the Education of Opera Singers <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uo2x1W5M-V8>

High B examples by sopranos: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ibMz52gRzc>

Examples of Belting: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9xXn437QkF4>

Robert McFerrin Sr. Baritone voice (Bobby McFerrin's dad) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KpdehvuULe0>

Sesame Street: O is for opera <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WCGjOXCKMx0>

Bass Mikhail Svetlov <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1e8ZnyHXLMo&feature=related>

VOCABULARY

Voices are categorized from highest to lowest: **soprano, mezzo-soprano, contralto, tenor, baritone, and bass**
They are also defined by their “color” - **lyric** (sweet) or **dramatic** (more forceful)
Dramatic voices are usually villains and lyric voices are innocent and pure.

<http://www.operatraining.com/voice-types.html>

Female Voice Types

- **Soprano - The high female voice, also sung by pre-adolescent boys**
Strength: A soprano's strength is a strong head voice.
Voice tone: The soprano voice is usually bright and ringing.
Weakness: Sopranos have a harder time projecting in middle voice.
Common Performance Roles: usually the heroine or lead in the show, such as Ariel in *The Little Mermaid*, Marian the Librarian in *The Music Man*, and Mimi in *La Bohème*.
Famous sopranos: Maria Callas, Erna Berger, Inge Borkh Dolly Parton, Julie Andrews, Sara Brightman,
>**Also, Coloratura Soprano** (very high and light)
- **Mezzo-soprano** - Lower range than soprano, darker (mezzo means “half”) Many mezzos can sing as high as a soprano, but they can't *stay* as high as a soprano. / Common roles: Witches, Mean/Evil characters
Strength: Mezzos have a strong middle voice.
Voice tone: The mezzo voice is usually darker or deeper than her soprano counterpart.
Weakness: A mezzo's head voice is often her weakness
Famous mezzos: Emma Calvé, Cecilia Bartoli, Marilyn Horne, K.D. Lang, Patsy Cline, Karen Carpenter
- **Alto** - Lowest female voice type / Common roles: Maids, Mothers, Grandmothers.
Famous altos : Marianne Brandt, Maureen Forrester
Common Performance Roles: Mother, witch. Her roles include such fun ones as Miss Hannigan in *Annie*, Mrs. Potts in *Beauty and The Beast*, Carmen in the opera *Carmen*, and Aunt Eller in *Oklahoma!*

Male Voice Types

- **Tenor** - High male voice / Common roles : Heroes, lovers
Strength: The tenor's strength is his head voice.
Voice tone: The tenor voice is usually bright and ringing.
Weakness: His weakness is often his lower voice.
Common Performance Roles: the lead, hero, lover, wins the girl at the end of the show. Examples include Rodolfo in *La Bohème*, Don José in *Carmen*, Tony in *West Side Story*, Billy in *Chicago*, and Rolf in *The Sound of Music*.
Famous tenors: Luciano Pavarotti, Placido Domingo, José Carreras, Enrico Caruso, Elton John, Stevie Wonder.
>**Also, Countertenor** - Above tenor, similar to female alto (trained falsetto)
- **Baritone** - Above Bass, below Tenor
Famous baritones: Sherrill Milnes, Victor Maurel
- **Bass** - Lowest male voice
Strength: His low voice is his strength.
Voice tone: His voice is the deepest, darkest, and heaviest of the male voices.
Weakness: His high voice is his weakness.
Common Performance Roles: The bass or baritone is often the villain, father, or older man. Examples include Ramfis in *Aida*, the Mikado in *The Mikado*, and Jud Fry in *Oklahoma!* Some exceptions to this villain image are King Arthur in *Camelot*, Porgy in *Porgy and Bess*, and the Toreador in *Carmen*.
Famous basses: Cesare Siepi, Samuel Ramey, James Morris, Tennessee Ernie Ford, Barry White.

BACKGROUND

Vocal Registers

The human voice is made up of several registers. A vocal register is a grouping of notes of the same quality that are produced by the same vocal chord coordination.

Chest Voice - generally used for the lowest notes; similar to the male speaking voice; only suitable for certain notes; vibrations are in the chest

Head Voice - vibrations are felt in the head area; suitable for high notes

<http://www.dummies.com/how-to/content/identifying-the-fab-four-singing-voices.navId-323653.html>

Libretto <http://www.dummies.com/how-to/content/understanding-an-operas-libretto.html>

Understanding an Opera's Libretto

Like a stage play or a movie, an opera starts with words — *thousands* of words. An opera's words are called its *libretto*, whereas, in a stage play, the words are called the *script*, and in a movie they're called the *screenplay*. Libretto means "little book" in Italian, and that's precisely what it is; your average libretto is scarcely thicker than a *TV Guide*. But because *singing* a sentence takes about three times longer than *saying* it, a "little book," when set to music, becomes a full evening in the theater. In pop music, the writer of the lyrics is often forgotten. In fact, we often don't even know the *composer's* name — but we usually do remember the *singer!*

In opera, the *librettist* (the libretto writer) likewise gets ignored far too often; we still say "Mozart wrote *The Magic Flute*," when actually he wrote only the *music*. The plots of most librettos—like most movies and plays—feature *larger-than-life* characters and situations. Everyone loves a good, juicy story, regardless of its plausibility (see *The Matrix* or *Spiderman*). It's fun (or cathartic, or moving) to empathize with the nightmarish plight of an operatic protagonist for an evening.

Reading assignment option 1:

Origins of Opera: (Except from Wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opera_-_cite_note-3)

Dafne by Jacopo Peri was the earliest composition considered opera, as understood today. It was written around 1597, largely under the inspiration of an elite circle of literate humanists in Florence who gathered as the "Camerata de' Bardi". Significantly, Dafne was an attempt to revive the classical Greek drama, part of the wider revival of antiquity characteristic of the Renaissance. The members of the Camerata considered that the "chorus" parts of Greek dramas were originally sung, and possibly even the entire text of all roles; opera was thus conceived as a way of "restoring" this situation. Dafne is unfortunately lost. A later work by Peri, Euridice, dating from 1600, is the first opera score to have survived to the present day. The honor of being the first opera still to be regularly performed, however, goes to Claudio Monteverdi's L'Orfeo, composed for the court of Mantua, Italy in 1607.

Reading assignment option 2:

Definition of an aria:

Aria is an "air" or formal song in which the characters express their emotions in a more structured melodic style. Duets, trios and other ensembles often occur, and choruses are used to comment on the action. In some forms of opera, the recitative is mostly replaced by spoken dialogue. Melodic or semi-melodic passages occurring in the midst of, or instead of, recitative, are also referred to as *arioso*, or small aria. During the Baroque and Classical periods, recitative could appear in two basic forms: accompanied only by a harpsichord and a cello, or with an orchestra accompaniment.

By the 19th century, the orchestra played a much bigger role, and Richard Wagner revolutionized opera by abolishing almost all distinction between aria and recitative in his quest for what he termed "endless melody". Subsequent composers have tended to follow Wagner's example.

? CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

Teachers---please let me know what kind of activities you are able to have in preparation for the performance.

Some possible questions:

What is the name of the high voice for women singers? The low voice for women singers?

What is the name of the high voice for male singers? The medium voice for male singers? The low voice for male singers?

When did opera start? In what country? Why?

What is a libretto?

REAL WORLD CONNECTIONS

possible questions....

Have you seen opera in movies or on TV?

What is similar and different about opera and your school's musical show, *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*?

AT THE PERFORMANCE

As you watch each singer, notice

- facial expressions
- the unique qualities of the voice
- the range of the voice low to high
- the body language they use before, during, and after they sing
- the emotion you feel as they sing (happy, funny, angry, sad?)

Listen for different voice types. Which did you hear?

In which languages were the arias sung?

How was voice or acting used to create a character type, express a feeling or an emotion?

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AFTER THE PERFORMANCE

Questions you may ask the performers:

When did you realize you enjoyed singing and that you were good at it?

When did you decide you wanted to go to college to study singing?

What did it take for you to improve your skills?

Do you have a mentor that helped give you direction? Why opera? What are the requirements for a career in opera?

What do you want these high school students to watch for or learn about from this performance?

What can you tell them so they will anticipate and look forward to the performance?

What do singers do to bring life to their character and music/lyrics?

Warm-up procedures? Your voice is your instrument. Career opportunities? Competition?

What other careers are involved related to this kind of performance? –sound, lighting, costume design

For essay:

Describe two things you learned about during the opera performance that surprised you.

What kind of education and training is required for a career in opera?

How would scenery and costumes add to the performance?