

## OPERA



Go to your public, school, and classroom libraries and check your home for any books about opera. Collect all the different materials you can on this topic and bring them to school. Read and research all you can about mythical opera. Keep a bibliography on all the books you read and record them on your "The Joys of Opera" chart.

Opera is perhaps the most complex of all art forms. To better understand opera, research and explain the following terms. Choose a creative approach to display what you have learned.

- Aria
  - ensemble
  - Libretto
  - Oratorios
  - Score
  - bel canto
  - Grand opera
  - opera buff
  - recitative
  - singspiel
  - Coloratura
  - leitmotif
  - Opera seria
  - repertoire
  - Verismo
- The word opera comes from the Italian phrase "opera in musica." What is the meaning of this phrase? What is the general meaning of opera?
- What is meant by libretto? Why might libretto be difficult to understand? Why is it written as it is? What purpose does it serve?

Voice ranges are classified into various groups such as soprano, alto, tenor, baritone, and bass. There are also variations such as mezzo soprano and contralto. Discover what range each voice type has. Record a sample of singers' voices to demonstrate each type.

Many people are involved in producing an opera. Study these necessary jobs. If possible, arrange to meet and interview these people. Prepare a report of your findings.

- Choreographer
- Costume Designer
- Set Designer
- Chorus Master
- Librarian
- Singer
- Conductor
- Prompter
- Stage Director

Opera originated in the 16<sup>th</sup> century in Florence, Italy with the coming together of poets, musicians and aristocrats. Trace the historical development of this art form over the years in a media form of your choice.

Choose an opera to study in detail. Research the story and listen to the music. Listen to several different artists performing this opera. Do you detect different vocal interpretations?

Design a costume that would be appropriate for a character in this opera. Create two or three set designs representing scenes from this opera.

The philosopher Voltaire once wrote, "The opera is a spectacle as outlandish as it is magnificent, where the eye and the ear are more satisfied than the mind, where the fact that everything has to be set to music causes the most ridiculous situations, where they sing while a town is being destroyed, and dance around a tomb." Interpret this passage in your own words. Do you agree with Voltaire? Why or why not?



Select a composer or singer to research. Make a presentation to your class as if you were that person. Talk about your contributions to the world of opera. Dress in the style of this person. Accompany your presentation with examples of his/her music.