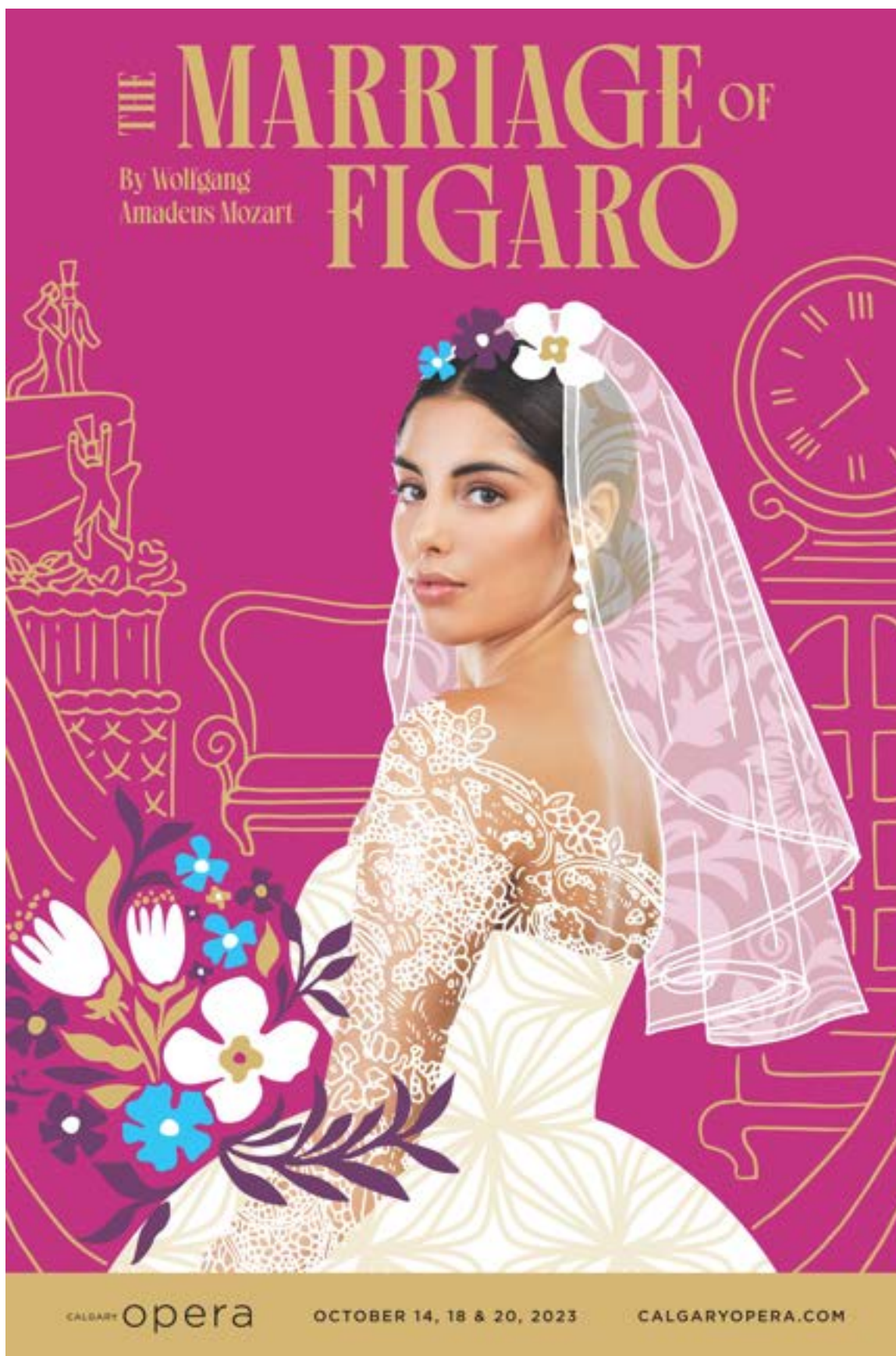


Calgary Opera Study Guide–The Marriage of Figaro

Student Dress Rehearsal–Southern Alberta Jubilee Auditorium–October 12, 2023



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Calgary Opera is situated on traditional land where the Bow River meets the Elbow River, authentically known by the Blackfoot name “Mohkinstsis” which we now call the City of Calgary. The City of Calgary is also home to Métis Nation of Alberta, Region III. We acknowledge the traditional territories of the Blackfoot and the people of the Treaty 7 region in Southern Alberta, which includes the Siksika, the Piikuni, the Kainai, the Tsuut’ina, and the Stoney Nakoda First Nations, including Chiniki, Bears paw, and Wesley First Nation.

Hello educators and students,

Welcome to our 2023-24 season! After celebrating our half century milestone last year we are back with our 51st season of mainstage operas at our performance home, the Southern Alberta Jubilee Auditorium. As always we have the impeccable Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra joining us in the pit, and this season, even on stage! And we welcome an incredible roster of international, Canadian and McPhee Artist performers to Calgary Opera .

We begin the season with Mozart’s classic tale of class tensions, adultery, and love, both hidden and overt, *The Marriage of Figaro*. This hilarious tale of Counts and servants deals with themes around love, desire, power and wits, and asks the question, “Who is actually in charge?” While Figaro is light and funny and a whirlwind of activity—the entire opera takes place in one day at the Almaviva’s estate in Seville—it digs deeper into class structure, infidelity, loyalty, gender roles and most importantly, forgiveness. No one can put all of these things together in the way that Mozart does, with heartfelt arias and duets and, of course, the requisite all cast ensemble at the end.

We are so excited to welcome you all back to the Jubilee for the first of our three final dress rehearsals and hope that you love it as much as we do! Looking forward to seeing you at the Jubilee,
Patricia Kesler—Education and Community Engagement Manager

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Canada



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The Marriage of Figaro—Things to know

- ◆ The original name of the opera is *Le nozze di Figaro*, which is Italian
- ◆ The opera is sung in Italian with English surtitles projected above the stage
- ◆ *The Marriage of Figaro* is the sequel to the famous opera *The Barber of Seville*, which introduced audiences to the character of Figaro, the barber turned valet
- ◆ The opera is a judgment on aristocracy, social classes and the feudal system. Although Count Almaviva is the head of the household, his servants want to get married against his will and, through love and good sense, prove that they are the ones that really run the show. This message was not well received amongst the nobility when the opera made its' debut in 1786
- ◆ The entire opera is set on one madcap day in Count Almaviva's castle near Seville, Spain in the late 18th century and is performed in 4 acts
- ◆ *The Marriage of Figaro* was composed by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, you've most likely heard of him before, and if you haven't, listen to this recognizable tune: <https://youtu.be/z4Hfv00egol>
- ◆ The opera premiered in Vienna, Austria at the Burgtheater on May 1, 1786
- ◆ The libretto, or words, of the opera were written by Lorenzo Da Ponte
- ◆ The opera is based on the 1784 play *La Folle Journée, ou Le Mariage de Figaro* by Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais, which was banned in France for its political satire
- ◆ *The Marriage of Figaro* is known as an *opera buffa*, a genre of opera which means "comic opera" in Italian. The genre developed in Naples, Italy in the mid-18th century. The opera is also referred to as a *commedia per musica*, a comedy for music.
- ◆ The character of Cherubino, a young male page, was written for and is played by a mezzo-soprano, which is the lower of the main two voice types for women. This is known as a Pants or Breeches role as it is a woman playing the part of a man

Preparing for the Opera—What to know before you go

PART I: PREPARING FOR THE OPERA EXPERIENCE

The more students are prepared for the experience of seeing a live opera, the more they will take from and enjoy it. Knowing the story, the life and times of the composer, and the music is vital in making their opera experience a sensational one!

BEFORE THE OPERA

Teachers and students may review the study guide and all of the suggested activities and discussions. Some of the activities/discussions should be started prior to seeing the opera. Preparing students ahead of time gives them a chance to view the opera with an eye towards what they will be considering after

- Read the enclosed synopsis of *Le Nozze di Figaro* which provides a background and helps familiarize students and teachers with the story
- Listen to the music excerpts found on page 19
- Read the history of opera and *La Nozze di Figaro* on pgs 15 & 18, artists, conductor and director on pages 11-14, and the composer and librettist on pages 16 & 17, and familiarize your group with the language of the opera on pgs 21, 22. All items in the guide can be reproduced
- Familiarize students with the characters and their opera voice types (i.e. soprano, bass, and tenor) on pg 10. A discussion can be held afterwards to see if students were able to discern between the different voice types and their thoughts on how the voice types worked, or didn't work, together
- Discuss the characters and plot, and engage students in discussion around the suggested themes

ATTENDING THE OPERA

There's nothing more exciting than attending an opera! You'll be a guest at the final dress rehearsal of *La Nozze di Figaro*. The preparation for this opera began a long time ago, several years ago in fact, when the opera was chosen and the artists were asked to perform in the opera. From costume rentals to singers memorizing their lines to putting the lighting and set together at the Jubilee Auditorium, countless hours of creative work have gone into making this production possible for you. Here's what you'll need to know about attending the opera:

At the Jubilee Auditorium, you may notice a long table with lights and people sitting behind it in the centre of the main floor of the auditorium. Seated in this area is the production team: Director, Stage Manager, Lighting Designer, and Choreographer (among others). They'll be taking notes and communicating with the many people backstage who help make all of the operatic magic happen. They'll be able to talk to the crew so changes can be made. Should anything need adjusting, the rehearsal might be stopped or a part repeated to make sure that it is perfect. This experience is a backstage view into the rehearsal process and is magic!

Preparing for the Opera—What to know before you go

DURING THE OPERA

Unlike actors on television or in the movies, performers onstage are very aware of the audience. They want to share their love of performing with you. Everything you do in the audience affects what happens on stage. You can show them how much you appreciate their work and the opportunity to come to the rehearsal by being as quiet as possible and not talking or sharing your opinions with your friends or teachers until the intermission or after the show.

Give the artists and the production your full attention!

“TO DO” LIST AT THE THEATRE:

Please Do...

- Use the bathrooms before the rehearsal begins or at intermission
- Enter and exit the theatre in an orderly fashion, Dress Rehearsals are General Admission, which means you can sit wherever you would like
- Turn off your cell phones and all electronic devices, no photography or video recording is allowed during the performance
- Applaud when the conductor enters and bows, then again after the overture, the 5-10 minute musical introduction played only by the orchestra that begins the show
- Applaud! You can also shout various forms of the word “Bravo” (see sidebar)
- Enjoy the rehearsal! It is a wonderful feeling to be in the theatre with other audience members experiencing a live performance, especially after a couple of years of not being able to!
- Have a discussion with your family, friends and teachers during the intermission and after the show is over about what you liked best, what you didn't like, parts that surprised you and more. The more you talk about and think about the show after you have seen it, the better you will remember it later on.

How to show you care

There is a long tradition of audience reaction to opera that goes back to opera's earliest days in Italy.

You might hear other audience members yelling “Bravo!”, which is Italian for “good, clever or skillful”, when they particularly liked something on stage. However, Italian is a gendered language and the way you say some words depends upon who you are saying them to or about.

So, “Bravo!” is only said to a single male, for example after the tenor sings a heart-wrenching aria. If the singer you are cheering for is a woman you would say “Brava!”

If there are multiple people on stage of various genders you would say “Bravi!” (Brav-ee) unless they were all women, in which case you would say “Brave!” (Brah-vay).

Got it? It might sound confusing, so don't let it get in the way of you expressing your pleasure with the performance. Enthusiastic clapping and even cheering is always welcome at a live opera performance.

Southern Alberta Jubilee Auditorium—Getting There



The Venue

Calgary Opera performs their three mainstage operas of the season at the Southern Alberta Jubilee Auditorium. There is a sister auditorium in Edmonton called the Northern Alberta Jubilee Auditorium. Together they make up the Alberta Jubilee Auditoria which were gifted to Alberta's citizens in 1957 as premiere performing arts venues from the Alberta government. In 2004 they underwent extensive renovations to improve the seating, acoustics and audience experience. Calgary Opera is one of the

resident companies of the Southern Alberta Jubilee Auditorium along with Alberta Ballet.

Generally speaking there is no concession service available for dress rehearsals but there are water fountains and washrooms on every floor.

Seating

There are approximately 2400 seats in the theatre, including the main floor as well as first and second floor balconies and terraces. During our dress rehearsal performances, usually the first floor balcony and terraces are open, with overflow coming down onto the back of the main floor.

Seating is NOT ASSIGNED for final dress rehearsals, it is General Admission, or first come—first served. You can sit anywhere on the first balcony and terraces and sometimes at the back of the main floor as well.

Accessibility

There are many accessible seats available on the main floor and first floor balcony for those with reduced mobility, as well as removable seats that allow for wheelchair patrons and their companions. There is an elevator and escalator in the north lobby which takes patrons up to the first floor. There is only stair access to the second floor from the first floor.

There is accessible parking located close to the main doors of the Jubilee Auditorium

For more information on seating, accessibility, parking or the venue please visit:

<https://jubileeauditorium.com/calgary>

Car parking

There is paid parking at \$7 per spot surrounding the auditorium as well as a drop off and pick up area outside of the main and north doors. Please see next page for bus pickup, dropoff and parking.

Transit

Calgary Transit C-Train or LRT has a station at the Jubilee Auditorium along the Red Line called the SB SAIT/AUARTS/Jubilee stop. From the stop there is immediate access to the building that leads to the Jubilee.

Character Study, Synopsis

The Merriam-Webster online dictionary defines the word SYNOPSIS as: a condensed statement or outline (as of a narrative or treatise) - you can read the full synopsis for the opera on page

An abbreviated synopsis, written by "ChatGPT":

"Le nozze di Figaro" is set in Count Almaviva's castle near Seville, Spain. The plot revolves around the events leading up to the marriage of Figaro, the Count's valet, and Susanna, the Countess's maid. The story takes place on a single day and is filled with love, jealousy, disguises, and witty intrigues.

The Count, Almaviva, has a history of womanizing, and he has grown interested in Susanna, who is engaged to Figaro. The Countess, Rosina, is aware of her husband's infidelities and longs for his love and attention again. Figaro, Susanna, the Countess, and other characters devise various plans to outwit the Count's advances and restore harmony to their relationships.

CHARACTER STUDY—

a few defining sentences about each character

Figaro, the count's valet—Figaro was a barber who helped the count marry the woman of his dreams, Rosina. He became the count's valet only to have the count start treating him badly and, as a result, he worries the count will take up his "lord's right" to take advantage of Susanna. Figaro is willing to help the count in his amorous pursuits outside of his marriage to Rosina, but not when it comes to his fiancée Susanna. Figaro is extremely jealous but, after some miscommunications and misunderstandings, ends up happily ever after with his beloved.

Susanna, the countess's maid and Figaro's fiancée—she loves Figaro deeply but, along with the Countess, laments Figaro and the Count's general lack of fidelity to their women. She and the Countess devise a plan to teach Figaro and the Count a lesson about loyalty and love that involves switched identities.

Count Almaviva, a nobleman—Once a kind and attentive suitor, he no longer tries to hide his attention for other women from his wife. He actively pursues getting together with Susanna, but Susanna and the Countess' plan to catch him in the act works and he is shamed publicly.

Countess Rosina Almaviva, the count's wife—While trying to maintain her dignity with a husband who pursues younger women publicly, she suffers from loneliness and rejection. With the help of Susanna and the young page Cherubino, she tricks the Count and

forces him to realize that their love for each other has more merit than his lusty affairs. She is intelligent and seeks to maintain her position of power while also leading a fulfilling and loving marriage.

Cherubino, the count's very flirtatious and passionate teenage page, he is in love with almost every woman in the house, but most of all Susanna

Marcelina, Bartolo's housekeeper—She loaned Figaro a substantial amount of money on the agreement that if he couldn't repay her, he would have to marry her. She is trying to make him honour the agreement

Doctor Bartolo, a physician—a tricky doctor from Seville who is on Marcelina's side when it comes to the deal with Figaro

Don Basilio, a music master—The Countess's music teacher who is also trying to convince her to give in to the Count's advances

Antonio, a gardener—Antonio is, in addition to being the Count's gardener, Susanna's uncle. He is an observant character

Barbarina, Antonio's daughter—Also Susanna's niece, she is the only woman truly in love with Cherubino

Synopsis

ACT 1

Count Almaviva's country estate near Seville, late 18th century.

The servants Figaro and Susanna are preparing for their wedding. Figaro is furious when his bride tells him that the count has made advances toward her and vows to outwit his master ("Se vuol ballare"). The scheming Dr. Bartolo appears with his housekeeper, Marcellina, who wants Figaro to marry her. When she runs into Susanna, the two women trade insults. The page Cherubino enters; finding Susanna alone, he explains to her that he is in love with all women ("Non so più"). He hides when the count—who is angry because he caught Cherubino flirting with Barbarina, the gardener's daughter—shows up. The count again pursues Susanna, but conceals himself when the music master, Basilio, approaches. When Basilio tells Susanna that Cherubino has a crush on the countess, the count furiously steps forward. He becomes further enraged when he discovers the page in the room. Figaro returns with a group of peasants who praise the count for renouncing the traditional feudal right of a nobleman to take the place of a manservant on his wedding night. The count orders Cherubino to join his regiment in Seville and leaves Figaro to cheer up the unhappy adolescent ("Non più andrai").

ACT 2

The countess laments that her husband no longer loves her ("Porgi, amor"). Encouraged by Figaro and Susanna, she agrees to set a trap for him: they will send Cherubino, disguised as Susanna, to a rendezvous with the count. The page sings a song he has written in honor of the countess ("Voi, che sapete"), after which Susanna begins to dress him in girls' clothes ("Venite, inginocchiatevi"). When she goes off to find a ribbon, the count knocks and is annoyed to find the door locked. Cherubino hides in the closet. The countess admits her husband, who, when he hears a noise, is skeptical of her story that Susanna is in the closet. Taking his wife with him, he leaves to get tools to force the door. Meanwhile, Susanna, who has reentered unseen and observed everything, helps Cherubino escape through the window before taking his place in the closet. When the count and countess return, both are stunned to find Susanna inside. All seems well until the gardener Antonio appears, complaining that someone has jumped from the window, ruining his flowers. Figaro, who has rushed in to announce that everything is ready for the wedding, pretends that it was he who jumped. When Bartolo, Marcellina, and Basilio appear, waving a court summons for Figaro, the delighted count declares the wedding postponed.

ACT 3

Susanna leads the count on with promises of a rendezvous, but he grows doubtful when he overhears her conspiring with Figaro. He vows revenge ("Vedrò, mentr'io sospiro"). The countess recalls her past happiness ("Dove sono"). Marcellina wins her case but then, noticing a birthmark on Figaro's arm, is astonished to discover that he is her long lost son, fathered by Bartolo. The joyful parents agree to marry as well. Susanna and the countess continue their conspiracy against the count and compose a letter to him confirming the rendezvous with Susanna that evening in the garden (Duet: "Che soave zeffiretto"). Later, during Figaro and Susanna's wedding ceremony, the bride slips the letter to the count.

Continued on next page

Synopsis continued

ACT 4

In the garden, Barbarina tells Figaro and Marcellina about the planned rendezvous between the count and Susanna. Thinking that his bride is unfaithful, Figaro rages against all women (“Aprite un po’ quegl’occhi”). He leaves, just missing Susanna and the countess, who are dressed for their masquerade. Alone, Susanna sings a love song (“Deh! vieni, non tardar”). Figaro, hidden nearby, thinks she is speaking to the count. Susanna conceals herself in time to see Cherubino declare his love to the disguised countess—until the count chases him away to be alone with “Susanna.” Soon Figaro understands what is going on and, joining in the fun, makes exaggerated advances towards Susanna in her countess disguise. The count returns, finding Figaro with his wife, or so he thinks. Outraged, he calls everyone to witness his verdict. At that moment, the real countess reveals her identity. Realizing the truth, the count asks for his wife’s forgiveness. The couples are reunited, and so ends this mad day.

Cast of Characters

Character	Pronunciation	Voice Type	Performer
Figaro	FEE-gah-roe	Bass Baritone	Marcell Bakonyi
Susanna	Soo-ZAHN-nah	Soprano	Lucia Cesaroni
Count Almaviva	All-mah-VEE-vah	Baritone	Phillip Addis
Countess Almaviva	All-mah-VEE-vah	Soprano	Talise Trevigne
Cherubino	Keh-roo-BEE-noh	Mezzo-Soprano	Carolyn Sproule
Dr. Bartolo	BAHR-toh-loh	Bass Baritone	Matthew Treviño
Marcellina	Marh-chel-LEEN-uh	Soprano	Justine Ledoux*
Don Basilio/Don Curzio	Dohn Bah-ZEE-lee-yoh/Dohn KURTZ-eeoh	Tenor	Arieh Sacke*
Antonio	Ahn-TOHN-ee-yoh	Bass Baritone	Branden Olsen*
Barbarina	Bar-bah-REE-nah	Soprano	Nicole Leung*

* Members of the McPhee Artists Development Program—a professional development program for young opera singers

Artist Biographies



Marcell Bakonyi as FIGARO Born in Győr, Hungary, bass-baritone Marcell studied at the Leo-Weiner Conservatory of Music in Budapest, and at the Hochschule für Musik in Stuttgart with Julia Hamari. He won the International Competition Rolando Nicolosi, Rome, and received a Special Prize at the Marcello Giordani Competition, Catania. Marcell has been a member of the ensemble of Staatstheater Nürnberg, the Landestheater Salzburg, the Theater Heidelberg and of the Zürich Opera Studio.

His most recent guest appearances include Theater an der Wien (*The Cunning Little Vixen*), Teatro Maggio Fiorentino in Florence (*Doktor Faust*), Theater St Gallen (*Rusalka*), Teatro Nacional de São Carlos in Lisbon (*Bluebeard's Castle*), Teatro Real de Madrid (*The Passenger*), Osterfestspiele Salzburg (*Don Carlo*), Hungarian State Opera (*La Fanciulla del West*, *l'Italiana in Algeri*, *Il Trovatore*, *Carmen* and *Simon Boccanegra*), Macerata Opera Festival (*Die Zauberflöte* and *L'Elisir d'Amore*), Stadttheater Gießen (*Der Freischütz*), Innsbruck Festival für Alte Musik (*La Clemenza di Tito*, *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*), Pesaro International Rossini Festival (*Il Viaggio a Reims*). In 2012 he made his debut in the USA in *Die Zauberflöte* at Crested Butte Music Festival Colorado.

Mr. Bakonyi's future engagements include Truffaldino in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Sprecher/2. Geharnschter in *Die Zauberflöte* and Colline in *La Bohème* at Hungarian State Opera Budapest.

Lucia Cesaroni as SUSANNA With her "lush, creamy voice" and "giddy coloratura", Italian-Canadian soprano Lucia Cesaroni is in demand as some of opera's most coveted heroines. In 2022/23, Ms. Cesaroni joined the roster of The Metropolitan Opera where she covered Olga in Giordano's *Fedora*, sang Violetta in *La traviata* with the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony and returned to Pacific Opera Victoria as Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*. Other recent seasons have seen her make debuts with Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, North Carolina Opera and the Spoleto Festival. Upcoming engagements in the 23/24 season include reprising Susanna in *Le nozze di Figaro* with Calgary Opera and Ava in *Rocking Horse Winner* with Tapestry Opera. Ms. Cesaroni is an alumna of the University of Toronto Opera School (MMus).



Talise Trevigne as COUNTESS ALMAVIVA Highlights for Talise Trevigne include the role of Ma in Missy Mazzoli/Royce Vavrek's *Proving Up* at Omaha Opera and at Lincoln Centre; at Theater Basel in Switzerland she appeared in the title role *Madama Butterfly* following her great success in the role at North Carolina Opera and at Kentucky Opera. She joined The Atlanta Opera as Nedda in *I Pagliacci*, sang the title role Iris at Bard SummerScape Festival, and Ophelia in *Hamlet* at Fort Worth Opera. Her Heroines *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* at Opera de Lyon under the baton of Kazushi Ono were a great success, later revived at Israeli Opera. Miss Trevigne inaugurated the role of Pip the Cabin Boy in Jake Heggie's highly successful *Moby-Dick* at Dallas Opera, San Diego Opera, San Francisco Opera and Washington National Opera. She was nominated for a 2016 Grammy Award for Best Solo Classical CD.

Phillip Addis as COUNT ALMAVIVA Mr. Addis has established himself as one of Canada's leading baritones, being acclaimed internationally as both "an impeccable antagonist" as Mozart's Count Almaviva, and as "the ideal Pelléas of his generation" for his "erotically charged" performances as Debussy's lead in Paris, Dresden, Hamburg, Luxembourg, Parma, Modena, Cincinnati, as well as at the Ruhrtriennale and the BBC Proms. Mr. Addis has performed on the world's major stages, including l'Opéra National de Paris, LA Opera, the Canadian Opera Company, Semperoper Dresden, and the Hamburgischen Staatsoper, lead by such distinguished conductors as Sir John Eliot Gardiner, James Conlon, Yannick



Artist Biographies

CONT. of Phillip Addis–Nézet-Séguin, Seiji Ozawa, Kent Nagano, Carlo Rizzi, and Sylvain Cambreling.

Mr. Addis balances his operatic career with extensive concert experience. He was the baritone soloist for *Carmina Burana* with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* with Canada's National Arts Centre Orchestra, and Britten's *War Requiem* with the Cincinnati May Festival, and the Britten LA/100 Festival. as well as the world premiere of Scott Good's *The Sleepers* with London Sinfonia. In 2022-23 he performs Handel's *Messiah* with the Orchestre Classique de Montréal, Newfoundland Symphony Orchestra, Early Music Voices Concert Society in Calgary and Orchestre Symphonique de Trois-Rivières; as well as Bruckner's *Te Deum*/Stephanie Martin's *Water* with the Grand Philharmonic Choir.

With a passion for the art song repertoire, Addis has given recitals with Emily Hamper, pianist, at the l'Opéra National de Paris, the Canadian Opera Company, The Brisbane Music Festival, the Orford Arts Centre, the Vancouver International Song Institute, and the Canadian Art Song Project. From 2015-2022 Addis and Hamper were co-Artistic Directors of the Stratford Summer Music Vocal Academy.



Carolyn Sproule as CHERUBINO Acclaimed for her "irresistible charisma and dark luscious sound...whose star is deservedly on the rise" (Opera News), Canadian mezzo-soprano Carolyn Sproule is engaged in the 2022-2023 season to debut with Pacific Opera Victoria as Carmen, return to The Metropolitan Opera singing Third Lady in *The Magic Flute*, return to the Canadian Opera Company as the Page in *Salome* as well as to sing a recital, sing Carmen in concert with the Reno Philharmonic, return to Teatro dell'Opera di Roma as Pobeatrice in Janacek's *From the House of the Dead*, and debut in Finland at the Savonlinna Opera Festival as Stéphano in *Roméo et Juliette*.

A native of Montréal, Canada, Carolyn Sproule is a graduate of The Juilliard School (BM 2010), and Rice University (MM 2012). She also participated in residencies at the Merola Opera Program, Wolf Trap Opera (Filene Young Artist), the Houston Grand Opera Studio, Aspen Opera Theater, and The Banff Centre. She is a winner of a 2019 George London award, the Marcello Giordani memorial prize in the 2019 Premiere Opera Foundation Competition, as well as a recipient of grants from the Jacqueline Desmarais foundation, HGO studio, Wolf Trap Opera, and Merola.

Matthew Treviño as DR. BARTOLO Hailed as "a bass of rare talent" (San Francisco Chronical), bass Matthew Treviño is captivating audiences on both opera and concert stages. Recent engagements include Ferrando in *Il trovatore* and Bonze in *Madama Butterfly* (Opera de Montréal), Frère Laurent in *Romeo et Juliette* (Florentine Opera), Dottore Grenvil in *La Traviata* (Calgary Opera), Bartolo in *Le nozze di Figaro* (Austin Opera), Sparafucile in *Rigoletto* (Vancouver Opera, English National Opera), and The Ghost in *The Centerville Ghost* (Opera Leipzig). A Texas native, Treviño enjoys an active career, marked by numerous studio recordings of new works including *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat* by Michael Nyman (Naxos), which he looks forward to reprising with Nashville Opera in 2023/2024.



Justine Ledoux as MARCELLINA Quebec mezzo-soprano Justine Ledoux is known for the sincerity of her singing, her velvety tone and her extraordinary charisma on stage. She obtained her master's degree from the Conservatoire de musique de Montréal and is in her second year of the McPhee Artist Development Program. Operatic roles have included The Stepmother in *The Juniper Tree* (P. Glass); Dorabella in *Così fan tutte* (W.A. Mozart); Dorothee in *Cendrillon* (J. Massenet). During her 2022-2023 season with Calgary Opera, she performed the roles of Mercedes in *Carmen* (G. Bizet), Cinderella and Rubella in alternating performances of *Cinderella* (adaptation of the operas *Cinderella* by J. Massenet and

Artist Biographies

CONT. of Justine Ledoux–*La Cenerentola* by G. Rossini), as well as Béatrice and Ursule in alternating performances of *Béatrice & Bénédicte* (H. Berlioz), a McPhee Artist Production.



Arieh Sacke as DON BASILIO/DON CURZIO Toronto-born tenor Arieh Max Sacke is establishing himself as a versatile performer of opera and concert repertoire. Recent stage credits include Urizen in Allan Bevan's *Perfectly Mad* (Orpheus Choir of Toronto / Chorus Niagara), Ferrando in *Così fan tutte* (Opera by Request), Don Ramiro in *La Cenerentola* (COSA Canada), the Narrator in a co-produced performance of Bach's *Coffee Cantata*, and Alexis in *The Sorcerer* (MADS). Arieh is a 2023 Manitoba Opera Digital Emerging Artist, has sung with the Cincinnati Opera chorus, and was previously a Festival Artist with Opera Saratoga, with whom he portrayed Elder Three in *Sky on Swings* and covered Pirelli in *Sweeney Todd*. Arieh is a regular oratorio and concert soloist throughout Ontario and beyond. He attained his Master of Music at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music following undergraduate studies at the University of Toronto.

Nicole Leung as BARBARINA Nicole Leung is a McPhee Artist at Calgary Opera, where she was seen as Frasquita in their main stage production of *Carmen* and Delia in Joe Ilick's *Stone Soup*. A graduate of the Yale School of Music, she was seen in the roles of Adina (*L'elisir d'amore*), Morgana (*Alcina*), and Rosalba (*Florenzia en el Amazonas*). She also sang the role of Amy in a workshop production of the world-premiere opera *The Snowy Day* by Joel Thompson, commissioned by Houston Grand Opera. Notable concert works include Mozart's *Requiem* (Waterbury Symphony Orchestra), Beethoven's *Chorale Fantasie* (Yale Philharmonia), and Vaughn Williams' *Dona Nobis Pacem* (NEC Symphony Orchestra). She is a grant recipient of both the Jacqueline Desmarais Foundation and Art Song Foundation of Canada.



Branden Olson as ANTONIO Branden Olsen is a rising Atlantic Canadian bass-baritone in his second year of the McPhee Artist Development Program, and is a pedagogical clinician, and conductor of exceptional promise. In 2021 Branden won first place (voice) at the Federation of Canadian Music Festivals National Competition. He has a master's in both choral conducting and voice performance and is currently studying under renowned Canadian tenor David Pomeroy. Branden was honoured to workshop the newly commissioned *February* with Opera on the Avalon, and also to conduct the Atlantic Boychoir in Cornwall, UK. He was most recently seen on the Calgary Opera stage as the servo and medico in *Macbeth*, and is excited to sing Papageno with the Little Opera Company in Winnipeg this summer. Branden is proudly sponsored by ArtsNB.

Artistic Staff—Who's Who

Staging an opera is a big project. There are so many people behind the scenes that the audience never sees, however, the audience does get to see the work of these talented people with the costumes, lights, set, in the music that is played, hair and makeup—there is a person or people that work on every aspect of the opera to present it to the audience. There are also music staff, carpenters, electricians, sound and lighting designers and technicians, load in and out crew and more. On average, an opera has about 150 people working behind the curtains to make the opera look and feel effortless. Here are some of the talented people that worked to bring *Marriage of Figaro* to life for you:



DIRECTOR Aria Umezawa is a director, producer, writer, and co-founder of Amplified Opera, an organization that places equity-seeking artists at the centre of public discourse. In the 2022-2023 season, Umezawa directed *The Raven* with Opera Philadelphia, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with Vancouver Opera, *Madama Butterfly* with New Orleans Opera, *Turandot* with Opera Colorado, and *Acis & Galatea* with Philharmonia Baroque. Upcoming directorial engagements in the 2023-24 season include making a return to Opera Philadelphia for their *Madama Butterfly*, Opéra de Montréal for *L'incoronazione di Poppea* and Sacramento Opera and

Philharmonic for *Die Fledermaus*. Umezawa recently completed a two-year tenure as an Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera – the first stage director to be awarded the fellowship in fifteen years.



CONDUCTOR JONATHAN BRANDANI is an Italian born conductor appreciated for his "fine regard for the score's details ... his clear, purposeful indications" and "his enthusiasm" (*Seen and Heard International*).

Recent engagements include *L'elisir d'amore* at the Teatro Comunale di Bologna, *La Bohème* at Calgary Opera (Canada), *L'elisir d'amore* and *Don Pasquale* at the Deutsche Oper am Rhein (Düsseldorf, Germany), *Il mondo della luna* at the Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia (Valencia, Spain).

In 2018 he made his debut at the Wexford Festival Opera (Ireland) conducting Mercadante's *Il Bravo* (whose score he had previously restored and co-edited) His interpretation of this hidden Bel Canto gem was awarded as Best Opera Production by the Irish Times. Between 2015 and 2019 Jonathan was Associate Conductor of Minnesota Opera, where he has conducted *Tosca*, *La Bohème*, *Don Pasquale* *Il Cappello di paglia di Firenze* and he is slated to conduct *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*.

His performances of *Aida* at the 15th Daegu International Opera Festival 2017 (South Korea) were hailed with such enthusiasm that they earned him the Grand Prix. Since then he is a regular guest conductor of Daegu Opera House where he has conducted *Il Trittico*, *Madama Butterfly*, *L'Elisir d'amore*, *La Traviata* and

Chorus Master: Mark Morash

Head Chorus Coach: Emily Hamper

Repetiteur: Evan Mounce

Set Designer: Allen Charles Klein

Costume Designer: Deborah Trout

Lighting Designer: David Fraser

Stage Manager: Shelby-Jai Flick

Assistant Stage Manager: Jennifer Yeung

Assistant Stage Manager: Staci Hanley

Head of Wardrobe: Heather Moore

Head Make Up Artist: Gail Kennedy

Head Wig and Hair Artist: Franca Vaccaro

Head of Props: Kate Greggerson

Director of Production: Cody Stadel

Technical Director: Murray Palmer

Associate Technical Director: Brett Johnson

A Brief History of Opera

The word opera comes from the Italian “opera in musica,” which means “works or plays in music.” Simply put, opera is a play in which the characters sing their lines rather than speak them, with music as its driving force. It is a mixture of many different types of art, combining music, drama, dance, elaborate costumes and scenery.

The first completely sung musical drama (or opera) developed as a result of discussions held in Florence in the 1570s by a group of intellectuals, poets, artists, scientists and humanists who called themselves The Florentine Camerata. One particular point of their focus was the joint belief that music, in particular vocal works, had become over-embellished and complex, and that returning to a more pure form would be a powerful way to tell stories and express emotions. Gathering inspiration from Classical Greece, its’ dramas, and the idea of the Greek chorus, evolved the idea of a single vocal line with simple instrumental support. They called this new style of singing *recitativo* – At the time, it was argued that



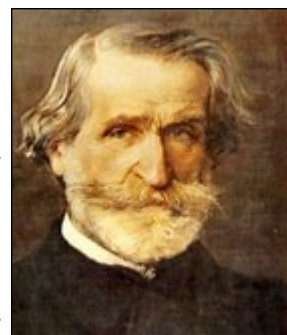
recitativo was far superior to spoken verse since the musical inflections intensified the emotions. In English, we use the word recitative.

The first opera, *Dafne*, was composed by Jacopo Peri in 1597 and tells the story of the nymph who fled from Apollo and was turned into a laurel tree as a way to save her virtue. The opera was a through-composed musical work comprised of recitative sections (to reveal the plot of the drama) and arias, which develop the emotions of the character. Sadly, most of the music for the opera has been lost. However, Claudio Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo*, composed in 1607 and based on the Orpheus myth, was very successful. To this day we can hear the music in performance and recordings: <https://youtu.be/jUep3sqe35o>—performed here by the Liceu Opera

Barcelona.

While opera was initially written for the noble courts, once it moved to Venice in the mid-17th C it exploded in popularity and became an art form for all people.

Opera continued in Italy with Puccini who composed through to his death in 1924. Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti, Verdi and Leoncavallo, all who developed the art form through clearly defined periods that produced *opera buffa*, *opera seria*, *bel canto* and *verismo* are well-known compos-



Giuseppe Verdi

ers of that time. While Italians were the originators of opera as we know it, many other countries quickly excelled in their own right. Mozart (1756-1791) wrote operas in Italian as well as German and championed the *Singspiel* (sing play), which combined the spoken word with music (*The Magic Flute* 1791, *Abduction from the Seraglio* 1782), a form also used by Beethoven in his opera *Fidelio*.

Bizet (*Carmen*), Offenbach (*Les Contes D'Hoffmann*), Gounod (*Faust*) and Meyerbeer (*Les Huguenots*) led the adaptation by the French which ranged from the *opéra comique* to the grand full-scale *tragédie lyrique*. German composers von Weber (*Der Freischütz*), Richard Strauss (*Ariadne auf Naxos*) and Wagner (*Der Ring des Nibelungen*) developed diverse forms such as *Singspiel* to through-composed spectacles unified through the uses of *leitmotif*, a musical



Scott Joplin

component that repeats itself throughout the opera. The English *ballad opera*, Spanish *zarzuela* and Viennese *operetta* helped to spread opera as a form of entertainment which continues to enjoy great popularity throughout the world.

At the beginning of the 20th century, composers in

A Brief History of Opera

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North America diverged from European traditions in order to focus on their own roots while exploring and developing America and Canada's vast bodies of folk music and legends. Composers such as the Gershwin brothers with *Porgy and Bess*, Scott Joplin's *Treemonisha*, Douglas Moore with *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, Carlisle Floyd with *Suzanna*, and more recently John Adams with *Nixon in China* and Terence Blanchard's *Fire Shut up in my Bones*, all crafted operas that have been presented throughout the world to great success.

In Canada, composer John Estacio and librettist

John Murrell were commissioned by Calgary Opera to create *Filumena*, based on a true Canadian story of the last woman to be hanged in Alberta. It premiered in 2003 in Calgary to great success and is one of the most produced Canadian grand operas in the world.



Laura Whalen as the title character in Calgary Opera's *Filumena* (2003)

The Librettist—What is it and who is Lorenzo Da Ponte?

What is a librettist? A librettist is the person who writes the words for an opera. One could also call them the writer, however as we learned in the history of opera section, opera as we know it originated in Italy and libretto (the written words of the opera) translates from Italian as "little book". This references the little book that early opera houses printed off for the audience members that had all the words written inside, so that the audience could follow what was being sung. In modern-day opera houses, the words are projected above the stage in the language where the opera is being performed, so in Calgary, the words are projected in English above the stage, regardless of the language in which they are being sung. The person who writes the libretto is the librettist.

Lorenzo Da Ponte

The librettist for *La nozze di Figaro* is Lorenzo Da Ponte. He was an Italian writer and poet who lived from March 10, 1749 until August 17, 1838. He was born in Ceneda, Italy and died in New York, N.Y., USA.

Da Ponte was born as Emmanuele Conegliano. He was Jewish and first became a priest, however he

was a freethinking person who didn't agree with all of the moral restrictions of religion, proven by an adulterous relationship he had. As a result he was expelled from the Venetian State in 1779. He moved to Vienna and became the official court poet under Emperor Joseph II and also wrote several successful librettos for various musicians. It was in Vienna, in 1783 that he met Mozart. The work of these two men are considered among Da Ponte's best work and consisted of *Le nozze di Figaro* (1786), *Don Giovanni* (1787), and *Così fan tutte* (1790), all classics of the opera repertoire to this day.

After the death of Emperor Joseph II, without further financial support from the court, he began wandering Europe and eventually traveled to America to escape the creditors to whom he owed money. He ended up in New York City where he ran a bookstore and taught Italian at Columbia College. He built the first dedicated opera theatre, the Italian Opera House which, through mismanagement, he had to sell two years later. Nonetheless, it was the precursor to the NY Academy of Music and the Metropolitan Opera. He died in 1838 at the age of 89 and is buried in Queens, NY, USA.

The Composer—Who is Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart?

The Composer of *La Nozze di Figaro* is Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. The composer is the person who writes the music for the opera.

His early life Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (*Vohlf-gahng Ah-mah-day-us -Moht-sahrt*), Christened Johannes Chrysostomus Wolfgangus Theophilus Mozart was born in Salzburg, Austria January 27, 1756. His father, Leopold Mozart was a famous musician and composer in his own right, but he came to realize that his greatest work was his son, Wolfgang.

Wolfgang was definitely a child prodigy. At the age of three he sat in front of the harpsichord attempting to find harmonic successions of thirds, and his voice cried out joyfully when he succeeded. Soon he began producing minuets and sonatas for violin and harpsichord.

Wolfgang's older sister, Maria Anna (called Nannerl) was also strongly talented and Leopold presented them in an extensive tour of the concert halls and royal courts of Europe. Whenever he performed, the charm of his personality and his incredible genius conquered the hearts of music lovers.

His musical gifts The Frankfurt newspaper announced: "He will play a concerto for the violin, and will accompany symphonies on the clavier, the manual or keyboard being covered with a cloth, with as much facility as if he could see the keys: he will instantly name all the notes played at a distance, whether singly or in chords as on the clavier or any other instrument. He will finally, both on the harpsichord and the organ, improvise as long as may be desired and in any key."

By age thirteen, he found a job as concertmaster of the orchestra and organist of the court of the Archbishop of Salzburg where he worked for twelve years. Throughout his life he composed masterpieces of chamber music, choral works, and symphonies. When he moved to Vienna, the center of musical activity, he had a hard time finding steady work and



started taking on commissions to write Operas.

His Operas Beginning in 1766, Mozart composed over 20 operas. In 1780 he was commissioned to write an opera, *Idomeneo*, which was a great success. He followed with *The Abduction from the Seraglio* (1781-82) and went on to write *Don Giovanni* (1787), *Così fan Tutte* (1789-90), *La Clemenza di Tito* (1791) and *The Magic Flute* (1791), the final three all with Lorenzo DaPonte as librettist. His Operas have always been among the most popular in the repertoire.

Musically this was a time of change and exploration. Composer Franz Joseph Haydn first met Mozart in 1781 and they became life long friends. That same

year, an eleven year old boy was growing up in a little house in Bonn and six years later came to Vienna to study with Mozart and Haydn—his name was Ludwig van Beethoven.

Amadeus? As you see from his birth name above, Mozart was not given the name Amadeus. At its' root, it is the latin translation of his 4th name, Theophilus, but it was only ever a nickname that he liked to use, sometimes signing papers as Wolfgang Amade Mozart.

Mozart in popular culture Mozart's influence on the world is undeniable and shows up in many different ways like children's books, commercials, video games, theatre and movies. The stage play *Amadeus* by Peter Shaffer was performed at Calgary's Alberta Theatre Projects in 2005. The play was made into a movie in 1984 which was a box office hit and explored (both the play and the movie) the relationship between Mozart and his colleague Salieri. The composer was also the subject of the famous pop song by Falco in 1986, *Rock me Amadeus*.

Mozart's Death Mozart died in 1791 at age 35 when feverishly writing his *Requiem in D minor*, which remained unfinished. He was buried in an unmarked grave at St. Marx Cemetery in Salzburg, Austria.

History and Context of *La nozze di Figaro*

The source material for *La nozze di Figaro* was one of a trio of satirical plays by Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais, *La Folle Journée ou Le mariage de Figaro*. The play was a huge success in France but also a political firecracker when it was written in 1778 for portraying a count who is at odds with his servants and ultimately submits to their desires, showing that the lower class can assert their rights with a little common sense and craftiness over the nobility. Even Napoleon weighed in on the piece stating that "C'était la révolution en action!" (It was revolution in action!)

The trio of plays was meant as a commentary on life at the time and also inspired Rossini's *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* (*The Barber of Seville*), which was the predecessor of *La nozze di Figaro*.

The governing bodies in France in the late 1700s had reason to fear the message of a quick-talking servant outwitting his master. The nobility and upper class, which for generations had been ruling by virtue of old social status structures and birth right, were starting to lose power. Indeed revolution was in the air, as was seen across the sea in America and soon to be in France itself in the form of the French Revolution. The upper classes could see the writing on the wall and they worried the message in this opera would give further motivation to the lower classes to rise up and rebel. During those times, new and popular operas had the power to affect public opinion.

Louis XVI of France banned the play until 1784 because of these fears and his brother-in-law Emperor Joseph II of Austria followed suit. However, Emperor Joseph did allow the play to be circulated in print form, under the assumption

that lower classes could not read and therefore would not gain access to it. Someone who did access the print version was Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, who immediately saw the potential in the story. He was aware of the success of the operatic adaptation of the first story, *the Barber of Seville*, by Giovanni Paisiello, and eagerly began work on the opera in 1785 in order to give the public the sequel.

In order to make the work palatable for the nobility, he and his librettist, Lorenzo Da Ponte, stripped out the overtly political and revolutionary messages. Still Emperor Joseph refused and only after much convincing by Da Ponte, who was also his court poet, did the Emperor allow it to be performed.

The opera finally made its debut on May 1, 1786 at the Burgtheater in Vienna. Although the premiere was marred by hecklers that may have been planted, by the third performance the audience loved it, calling for so many encores that the Emperor decreed that only the arias could be sung in encore.

Despite this early adoration, it only played 9 times in Vienna, the audience quickly becoming enamored with the next opera to take the stage, Martín y Soler's *Una cosa rara*. In Prague it was a different story. The audience there loved it from the start and enduringly, leading directly to Mozart being commissioned for a new opera to be performed at the National Theatre in Prague, which was to be his masterpiece *Don Giovanni*, on October 29, 1787.

The Marriage of Figaro survives to this day and has only grown in popularity since it was first created. The story, which occurs all in one madcap day, is filled with beautiful music and is a prime example of the genius of Mozart.

What to Listen for

La Nozze di Figaro is an example of Mozart's greatest work and is filled with recognizable tunes that will leave you humming as you leave the Jubilee Auditorium, particularly the Overture which has been featured in many movies including Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange*, *Last Action Hero* featuring Arnold Schwarzenegger and Ang Lee's *The Wedding Banquet*.

As an opera buffa, one of the important elements is an ensemble piece to end an act. Mozart delivers in this opera as you can listen to below, along with all of the other pieces that we can recommend for your listening pleasure.

If you're wondering when someone is going to start singing "figaro, figaro, figaro, figaro.." keep waiting. That song is from the predecessor to *The Marriage of Figaro*, *The Barber of Seville*, the opera which introduces us to all of the characters in this sequel opera.

1. Overture—performed here by the Wiener Symphoniker, conducted by Fabio Luisi—an appropriate opening to a wedding based opera, with all the joy and energy of a wedding party

https://youtu.be/Mp6UAGN_Ir4?si=PYOewoGTa-OwHuJ2

2. "Se vuol ballare" - Figaro's first aria sung here by Erwin Schrott with Royal Opera House, London—Figaro has just found out that the Count is planning on using his feudal right to have Susanna to himself for a night before she is married, and he is angry

<https://youtu.be/4oxPR1d6ONE?si=-tgZSlx6FNovx7OA>

3. "Porgi amor, qualche ristoro" - Countess Almaviva's first aria sung at the opening of Act II, sung here by Diana Damrau at Teatro alla Scala—The Countess is forlorn, her Count, who once moved the mountains to make her his wife has become indifferent to her, chasing after other women; in particular their servant Susanna

<https://youtu.be/G8cDwWh1RoU>

4. "Voi signor, che giusto siete" sung by seven characters, Figaro, Marcellina, Bartolo, Basilio, Susanna, the Count and the Countess—Susanna and Figaro think they have succeeded in tricking the Count but at the last moment Basilio, Bartolo and Marcellina burst in with their claim that Figaro must honour his agreement to marry Marcellina if he cannot repay his debt to her—sung here is a production by the Royal College of Music streamed on OperaVision

<https://youtu.be/TI22mYEj9Yw?si=DSqQ2rliszEwA3Uo>

5. As mentioned above, the finale scene in which all is made right with the unhappy couples: performed here in a production at the Teatro alla Scala in 2006. This is the entire production, please scroll forward to minute 2:58 to see the lead up and complete final scene in which peace is made and all is forgiven

https://youtu.be/_OYtIGpApc0?si=S11UmUCboT92f6GV

Activities & Ideas to Consider

There are many interesting aspects of *Le nozze di Figaro* that one can consider and discuss.

1. The opera's main theme of the servants gaining the upper hand over their employers was a shocking and disruptive one at the time of the opera's release. The American Revolution was boiling over and the French Revolution was on a slow simmer, waiting to erupt. In order for this opera to have the effect that royalty in France were worried it would have, opera would have to have been a very influential art form, which it was.

A) Can you present an example of a modern-day version of arts or culture that has this same kind of effect? What art form or social medium has the power to affect so many citizens that the government would worry about it? Come up with several examples and why you believe it to be so.

B) What are some current social or economic concerns that mirror the imminence of the French Revolution in the late 1700's and are there examples of social or cultural events that have influenced those concerns?

2. The character of Cherubino, the Count's young page, is played by a mezzo-soprano woman vocalist. The woman is portraying a young man, whose voice would naturally be higher than the tenor or baritone singers on the stage. Classically, these roles were written for the castrati, a group of young men opera singers who were castrated before puberty to maintain their low testosterone and high voices. As the tradition of the castrati fell out of favour, their roles were taken over by mezzo-sopranos. In these cases, the women are dressed as men and often have romantic relationships with the main women in the story, on stage.

A) Although the history of castrati seems barbaric now, in its time, to be considered for the castrati was an honour and could mean major success for a singer. How did such a practice begin? Do some research around the origins of the castrati and consider this tradition.

3. The Countess is heartbroken at the beginning of the opera, the Count, her husband, has lost interest in her and is openly chasing other women, including the Countess' own woman in waiting, Susanna. The Countess is attempting to maintain her important social standing while also craving the love that was once hers. To lose her position as Countess would mean certain poverty for her, as all possessions and money are in her husband's name, but she is not only interested in keeping up appearances, she wants to be in a loving relationship.

As well, in the beginning of the opera, the Count is planning on enacting his "Droit du seigneur", the right to be with his servant before she is married, and his sights are set on Susanna, who has no power to stop this act.

A) Women were in poor standing and had so few opportunities in the time of this opera. Do some research around the rights of women in the late 1700s in France. When did things begin to change? When were women free to own their own property and be the masters of their own fates?

Language of Opera & Voice Types

ACT:	A portion of an opera designated by the composer, which has a dramatic structure of its own, not unlike a chapter in a novel
ARIA:	Italian for an 'air' or 'song'. The big number where the singer expresses feelings and shows off the voice
BEL CANTO:	Italian for "beautiful singing", refers to a style of opera that developed in Italy and was characterized by a small but dynamic vocal range requiring much vocal control
BUFFA/O:	From the Italian for 'buffoon.' A singer of comic roles (basso-buffo) or a comic opera (opera-buffa)
BRAVO:	Literally, a form of applause when shouted by members of the audience at the end of an especially pleasing performance. Strictly speaking, "bravo" is for a single man, "brava" for a woman, and "bravi" for a group of performers
CHORUS:	A group of singers, singing together, who sometimes portray servants, party guests or other unnamed characters who usually comment on the action and help to support the storyline
COMPOSER:	The person who writes the music for the opera
DIVA:	A famous female opera singer, sometimes used to denote one who is demanding or difficult
DUET:	An extended musical passage performed by two singers. They may or may not sing simultaneously or on the same musical line
DRESS REHEARSAL:	A final working rehearsal where all characters are in full costume with full set and live musical accompaniment
ENCORE:	Literally, French for "again"- Is shouted from the audience after a particularly well sung passage or, more commonly, at the end of a well-done performance
ENSEMBLE:	Principal singers singing mostly together, expressing similar or different opinions and emotions
LIBRETTIST:	The person who writes the text for the opera, known as the Libretto
LIBRETTO:	Italian for "little book", the written text of the opera without music
MAESTRO:	The conductor of the orchestra
OPERA COMIQUE:	A French genre of opera, contains spoken dialogue and arias. Need not be funny or shallow, can be dramatic as well
OVERTURE:	An orchestral piece at the beginning of the opera, a musical introduction to the opera
PREMIERE:	Opening night of a performance, the first public performance in the theatre
OPERA SERIA:	"Serious" opera, a term developed in Italy to refer to operas from the 17th century with themes of mythology, ancient history and no comedic elements
OPERETTA:	A short opera usually of a light and amusing character, often with patriotic themes
RECITATIVE:	Speech-singing where the singer chants the words in rhythm of free speech, used to further the plot or set up an aria
SUPERNUMERARIES:	Extra, small, supporting roles in the opera in which the characters do not sing, such as people in a crowd
SITZPROBE:	The first rehearsal where the orchestra and singers rehearse together with the purpose of focusing attention on integrating the two groups

Language of Opera & Voice Types

(Opera Terminology continued)

THROUGH-COMPOSED: A piece of music that has no repetition of musical passages throughout, but has different music for each ensuing section

TOI TOI TOI: An expression used in the performing arts to wish the performers a good performance which exists because of the superstition that to wish a performer good luck is actually bad luck

TRAGÉDIE LYRIQUE: A completely sung tragic opera, developed by French librettists, in which the music plays a central role, with a heroic and tragic storyline

VERISMO: An artistic style from 19th Century Italy that dealt with themes of common people and daily lives set in a dramatic style

Voice Types in Opera

SOPRANO The highest female voice

MEZZO-SOPRANO Female voice between Soprano and Contralto

CONTRALTO The lowest female voice and darkest in timbre

TENOR The most common and higher pitched male voice

COUNTER TENOR Higher than a tenor. The voice range is that of a male singer who can sing higher than a soprano or mezzo-soprano and is rare

BARITONE Male voice between Tenor and Bass

BASS The lowest male voice

Further distinctions in voice types:

COLORATURA Typically a voice with a very high range with the ability to sing complicated passages with great agility, usually associated with soprano

DRAMATIC A heavy, powerful voice with a steely timbre, associated with all of the voice types

LYRIC An average size voice, but capable of singing long beautiful phrases, associated with all voice types

HELDEN A German term referring to a powerful voice capable of singing very demanding roles, mostly associated with tenor voices and often with Wagnerian roles

FALSETTO The upper part of a voice, more often used in reference to male voices

SPINTO A somewhat more powerful voice than that of a lyric, but not as heavy as a dramatic, Spinto is capable of large musical climaxes without straining, usually applied to both soprano and tenor

To see a descriptive video of the main voice types, watch this video by the Royal Opera House in London, England as they present "An Introduction to Opera's Voice Types": <https://youtu.be/hLfvkwTnJVM>

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