The Elixir of Love
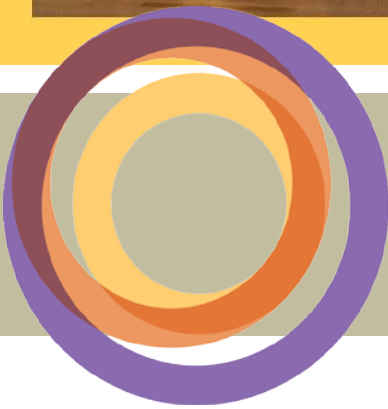
OPERA
COLORADO

An Opera Colorado touring production with English libretto by Brett Sprague and Cherity Koepke

A Letter to the Teachers

Dear Teachers,

Opera Colorado is pleased to provide engaging educational programs and performances for students across Colorado. What follows is a guide that we hope you and your students find useful, as we explore Gaetano Donizetti's *The Elixir of Love.* In the spirit of exploration, we have included various lessons that connect *The Elixir of Love* with different subjects of learning. The lessons reference the new Colorado Department of Education's Academic Standards: specifically, focusing on the fourth grade expectations. This does not mean, however, that these lessons should be limited to this age group. While we would be very pleased if you used these lessons in the exact format provided, we encourage you to expand, alter, and adapt these lessons so that they best fit your students' abilities and development. After all, the teacher knows their student's needs best. We would appreciate your feedback on our teacher evaluation form found at the end of this guide, and we hope that you enjoy all that Opera Colorado has to offer!

thank you!

Opera Colorado makes every effort to ensure that the information provided in this guidebook is as accurate as possible. With the exception of materials used for educational purposes, none of the contents of this guidebook may be reprinted without the permission of Opera Colorado's Education & Community Programs department. Dictionary definitions were taken from www.Merriam-Webster.com, and unless marked otherwise, educational information was gathered from www.Wikipedia.com . Unless otherwise noted, the materials in the Elixir of Love guidebook were developed and compiled by Assistant Director of the Opera Colorado Young Artists, Brett Sprague.

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The Elixir of Love

Music by Gaetano Donizetti – Libretto by Felice Romani
English libretto by Brett Sprague and Cherity Koepke
Premiered in Milan, Italy, in 1832

Nemorino……………………………………………………tenor……………………………………………………Nathan Ward
(neh-mo-REE-no)

Adina……………………………………………soprano……………………………………………Vanessa Naghdi
(ah-DEE-nah)

Giannetta……………………………………mezzo soprano……………………………………Nicole Keeling
(jah-NET-tah)

Belcore…………………………………………baritone…………………………………………Heath Martin
(bel-KO-reh)

Dulcamara………………………………bass baritone………………………………………Andrew Hiers
(dool-ka-MAH-rah)

Chorus……………………………………mezzo soprano……………………………………Katherine Beck
………………………………………………baritone……………………………………Nicholas Kreider

Director: Cherity Koepke
Assistant Director: Brett Sprague
Accompanist: Jordan Ortman

Nemorino, a poor ranch hand, is in love with Adina, a beautiful owner of a root beer saloon, who torments him with her indifference. When Nemorino hears Adina reading the story of a hero searching for the woman of his dreams, he is convinced that a magic potion will help him to gain Adina's love. The self-important Sergeant Belcore appears with his regiment and immediately sets about courting Adina in front of everyone. Nemorino becomes anxious (although, Adina meanwhile secretly derides Belcore's complacency) and, alone with Adina, reveals his love for her. Yet Adina rebuffs him, saying she wants a different lover every day and following her example would do Nemorino better. Nemorino declares that his feelings will never change. The travelling quack doctor, Dulcamara, arrives, selling his bottled cure-all to the townspeople. Nemorino innocently asks Dulcamara if he has any of Isolde's love potion. Feigning understanding about the love story and magic elixir, Dulcamara's commercial talents enable him to sell a bottle of the cure-all - in reality only cheap Bordeaux wine - to Nemorino, costing him all of his money.

To make a safe escape, Dulcamara tells Nemorino the potion needs 24 hours to take effect — by which time, the doctor will be long gone. Nemorino drinks the potion in a haste in order to watch the effect tomorrow. Emboldened by the "elixir" (in fact, drunk), Nemorino feigns indifference when he encounters Adina, as he expects that the elixir will facilitate his conquest of Adina the following day. She becomes increasingly annoyed; perhaps she has feelings for Nemorino after all? Belcore returns and proposes marriage to Adina. Still riled by Nemorino and wishing to give him a lesson, Adina falsely promises to marry Belcore in six days' time. Yet Nemorino only laughs in response: such confidence is sustained in the belief in the magic potion. However, when Belcore learns that his regiment must leave the next morning, Adina promises to marry him before his departure. This of course panics Nemorino, who cries out for Dr. Dulcamara to come to his aid. Adina, meanwhile, invites everyone to the wedding.

Belcore emerges, musing about why Adina has suddenly put off the wedding and signing of the contract. He spots Nemorino and asks his rival why he is depressed. When Nemorino says he needs cash, Belcore suggests joining the army, as he'll receive funds on the spot. Belcore tries to excite Nemorino with tales of military life, while Nemorino only thinks of getting the potion and thus winning Adina, if only for a day before departure. Belcore produces a contract, which Nemorino signs in return for the money. Nemorino privately vows to rush and buy more potion, while Belcore muses about how sending Nemorino off to war has so easily dispatched his rival.

After the two men have left, Giannetta gossips with Dulcamara. Swearing him to secrecy, she reveals that Nemorino's uncle has just died and left his nephew a large fortune. However, neither Nemorino nor Adina is yet aware of this. Nemorino enters, having spent his military signing bonus on - and consumed - a large amount of the fake elixir from Dr. Dulcamara. Hoping to share his fortune, Gianetta approaches Nemorino with overly friendly greetings. So out of character is this that Nemorino takes it as proof of the elixir's efficacy. Adina sees Nemorino and Gianetta, is rattled by his newfound popularity, and asks Dr. Dulcamara for an explanation. Unaware that Adina is the object of Nemorino's affection, Dulcamara explains that Nemorino spent his last penny on the elixir and joined the army for money to get more, so desperate was he to win the love of some unnamed cruel beauty. Adina immediately recognises Nemorino's sincerity, regrets her behavior and realizes that she has loved Nemorino all along. Although Dulcamara seizes the opportunity to try to sell her some of his potion to win back Nemorino, Adina declares that she has full confidence in her own powers of attraction.

Nemorino appears alone, pensive, reflecting on a tear he saw in Adina's eye when he was ignoring her earlier. Solely based on that, he convinces himself that Adina loves him. She enters and asks why he has chosen to join the army and leave the village. When Nemorino explains that he was seeking a better life, Adina responds that he is loved and that she has purchased back his military contract from Sergeant Belcore. She offers the cancelled contract to Nemorino and reassures him that, if he stays, he will be happy. As he takes the contract, Adina turns to leave. Nemorino believes she is abandoning him and flies into a desperate fit, vowing that if he is not loved he might as well go off and die a soldier. Deeply moved by his fidelity, Adina finally declares that she will love Nemorino forever. Nemorino is ecstatic. Adina begs him to forgive her, which he does with a kiss. Belcore returns to see Nemorino and Adina in an embrace. When Adina explains that she loves Nemorino, the Sergeant takes the news in stride, noting that there are plenty of other women in the world. Dulcamara returns and they all celebrate!

Gaetano Donizetti
COMPOSER

Map of Italy
ITALY IN 1799
The War with Naples 1798-9

Gaetano Donizetti

Paris Opera House (ca. 1800)

Gaetano Donizetti was an Italian composer. Along with Gioachino Rossini and Vincenzo Bellini, Donizetti was a leading composer of the *bel canto* opera style during the first half of the nineteenth century.

Donizetti was born in Bergamo in Lombardy. Although he did not come from a musical background, at an early age he was taken under the wing of composer Simon Mayr, who had enrolled him by means of a full scholarship in a school he had set up. There he received detailed training in the arts of fugue and counterpoint. Mayr was also instrumental in obtaining a place for the young Donizetti at the Bologna Academy, where, at the age of 19, he wrote his first one-act opera, the comedy *Il Pigmalione*, which may not have ever been performed during his lifetime.

Over the course of his career, Donizetti wrote almost 70 operas. An offer in 1822 from Domenico Barbaja, the impresario of the Teatro di San Carlo in Naples, which followed the composer's ninth opera, led to his move to that city and his residency there which lasted until the production of *Caterina Cornaro* in January 1844. In all, Naples presented 51 of Donizetti's operas.

Before 1830, success came primarily with his comic operas, the serious ones failing to attract significant audiences. However, his first notable success came with an *opera seria* called *Zoraida di Granata*, which was presented in 1822 in Rome. In 1830, when *Anna Bolena* was premiered, Donizetti made a major impact on the Italian and international opera scenes, and this shifted the balance of success

away from primarily comedic operas, although even after that date, his best-known works included comedies such as *L'eslisir d'amore* (also known as *The Elixir of Love* [1832]) and *Don Pasquale* (1843). Significant historical dramas did appear and became successful; they included *Lucia di Lammermoor* (the first to have a libretto written by Salvadore Cammarano) given in Naples in 1835, and one of the most successful Neapolitan operas, *Roberto Devereux*, in 1837. Up to that point, all of Donizetti's operas had been set to Italian libretti.

Donizetti found himself increasingly chafing against the censorial limitations which existed in Italy (and especially in Naples). From about 1836, he became interested in working in Paris, where he saw much greater freedom to choose subject matter, in addition to receiving larger fees and greater prestige. From 1838 onward, with an offer from the Paris Opera for two new works, he spent a considerable period of the following ten years in that city, setting several opera to French texts as well as overseeing staging of his Italian works. The first opera was a French version of the then-unperformed *Poliuto*, which in April 1840, was revised to become *Les martyrs*. Two new operas were also given in Paris at that time.

As the 1840s progressed, Donizetti moved regularly between Naples, Rome, Paris, and Vienna, continuing to compose and stage his own operas as well as those of other composers. But from around 1843, severe illness began to take hold and to limit his activities. Eventually, by early 1846, he was obliged to be confined to an institution for the mentally ill, and by late 1847, friends had moved him back to Bergamo, where he died in April 1848.

Felice Romani
LIBRETTIST

Felice Romani was an Italian poet and scholar of literature and mythology who wrote many librettos for the opera composers Donizetti and Bellini. Romani was considered the finest Italian librettist between Metastasio and Boito.

Born Giuseppe Felice Romani to a bourgeois family in Genoa, he studied law and literature in Pisa and Genoa. At the University of Genoa he translated French literature and, with a colleague, prepared a six-volume dictionary of mythology and antiquities, including the history of the Celts in Italy. Romani's expertise in French and antiquity is reflected in the libretti he wrote; the majority are based on French literature and many, such as *Norma*, use mythological sources.

After refusing a post at the University of Genoa, he appears to have travelled to France, Spain, Greece, and Germany before returning to Milan in either 1812 or 1813. There he became friends with important figures in the literary and musical world. He turned down the post of court poet in Vienna, and began instead a career as opera librettist. He wrote two librettos for the composer Simon Mayr, which resulted in his appointment as the librettist for La Scala. Romani became the most highly regarded of all Italian librettists of his age, producing nearly one hundred. In spite of his interest in

French literature, he refused to work in Paris.

Romani wrote the librettos for Bellini's *Il pirata*, *La straniera*, *Zaira*, *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*, *La sonnambula*, *Norma* and *Beatrice di Tenda*, for Rossini's *Il turco in Italia* and *Bianca e Falliero*, and Donizetti's *Anna Bolena* and *L'elisir d'amore* (which he adapted from Eugène Scribe's *Le philtre*). He also wrote a libretto (originally for composer Adalbert Gyrowetz) that Verdi used for his early comedy *Un giorno di regno*.

Romani was considered an ideal match for Bellini, who is quoted as having said: "Give me good verses and I will give you good music". Dramatic, even extravagant "situations" expressed in verses "designed to portray the passions in the liveliest manner" was what Bellini was looking for in a libretto, according to a letter to Francesco Florimo, August 4, 1834, and he found them in Romani.

The two, however, had a falling out over missed deadlines for *Beatrice di Tenda*. After setting *I puritani* to a libretto by Carlo Pepoli, Bellini was determined not to compose any more Italian operas with anyone but Romani. *I puritani* was his last opera; he died less than a year after its première. Romani mourned him deeply and wrote an obituary in which he expressed his profound regrets over their disagreement.

In 1834 Romani became editor of the *Gazzetta Ufficiale Piemontese* to which he contributed literary criticism. He retained the post, with a break 1849–1854, until his death, in Moneglia, (in the region of Liguria, Italy). A volume of his lyric poems was published in 1841.

Introduction to Opera

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF when you hear the term "opera"? Do you think of people in funny hats with horns, or of singing that's very loud and hard to understand?

While you have probably moved beyond this point, most students are familiar only with these opera stereotypes. The goal of this first exercise is to help students recognize stereotypes about opera and to move on to a greater understanding and appreciation for the art form.

...to something like this!

moving away from this...

activity

DIAGRAMMING DIFFERENCES

Supplies

- Large sheets of butcher paper
- Colored pencils or markers

Directions

- Have students break into groups of 4 or 5. Instruct them to work together to draw what they think on opera singer looks like. Encourage them to be as detailed as possible.
- Give students 20 to 30 minutes to work on their pictures
- When they're done, have the students explain their choices to the rest of the class.

Discussion

- Start out with a brief definition of what a stereotype is (an oversimplified standardized image of a person or group). Ask the students to identify any stereotypes in their drawings. Write these on the board.
- Next, go back through the list and write down the truth behind each stereotype (for example, if students thought that opera singers are all old, write down that opera singers can be both young and old).

Additional Activities

- Have the students make their own T chart compiling the two lists of stereotypes and realities.
- Have the students write a short paragraph summarizing what they've learned.
- Have the students identify stereotypes in another area they've been studying (maybe a story they've been reading in class or a topic from history) and create a T chart for it.

Example

Stereotype	Reality
-opera is for old people	-opera is for everyone
-opera singers dress like Vikings	-opera singers dress according to the time period of the opera
-operas have to be serious	
-operas were written long ago	-operas can be both tragic and comedic
	-operas are still being written today

activity
COMPARE & CONTRAST

While the opera is more rich and varied than it is often given credit for, it is still a distinct musical form. As you've probably guessed, opera and pop music are genres with many differences! Singers such as Renee Fleming, Denyce Graves, and Joan Sutherland are much different than pop singers such as Bruno Mars and Taylor Swift. In this activity, we will listen to different examples of famous opera excerpts and famous pop songs. **Can you spot the differences?**

EXAMPLE #1:
"When I was your man"
by Bruno Mars
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ekzHIouo8Q4

EXAMPLE #2:
"Una furtiva Lagrima"
by Gaetano Donizetti
sung by Luciano Pavarotti
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2J7JM0tGgRY

activity

COMPARE & CONTRAST
instructor guide

Introduction
If time permits, let your students enjoy each song in its entirety. (Make sure they are taking notes on the differences between the pieces.)

Lesson
Using their individual notes, have the class break into small groups. Give the groups 5 to 10 minutes to discuss the differences they are noting.

After small group discussions, hand out the attached worksheet, and give students another 10 minutes to fill them out individually. Musicians must keep keen ears, and noting differences in instrumentation, language, and style/genre of music is critical for any performer, musicologist or critic. Suggest these factors to students who may be having trouble on their worksheets.

Recommended musical factors to cover:

1.) Forum
>   a.) Live or recorded?
>   b.) Microphone or no microphone?
>   c.) Types of audiences?

2.) Language
>   a.) Italian vs. English
>   b.) Are operas and popular songs written in other languages?

3.) Instrumentation
>   a.) Electric or acoustic?
>   b.) Differences in singing: is it speech-like or not?
>   c.) Concert hall vs. a recording studio

Conclusion
Listen to each song once again, and then have a class discussion, giving students time to finish their worksheets and share their ideas.

activity
COMPARE & CONTRAST
student worksheet

1.) After your first listening, what do you notice that is similar between each song?

2.) After your first listening, what do you notice that is different between each song?

3.) Notes from small group discussion.

4.) After your second hearing, what do you notice is different concerning language, instruments used, and performance setting?

5.) Notes from class discussion.

6.) Which piece of music do you like better? Use evidence from what you are hearing to back up your answer.

activity

STORYLINE ANALYSIS
instructor guide

There are few cooky and comedic love stories like *The Elixir of Love.* Using the worksheet on the following page, have students choose five scenes from the opera – one that illustrates each part of the story (exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution). Draw a picture of the scene, then summarize it on the side of the paper.

Definitions:

Exposition – Beginning of the story where the characters and setting are introduced

Rising Action – Conflict arises that the characters must confront

Climax – The final confrontation between the characters and the conflict, the turning point

Falling Action – The actions that occur as a direct result of the turning point

Resolution – When all the actions are complete and the story draws to a conclusion

activity

STORYLINE ANALYSIS
student worksheet

Exposition

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Rising Action

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Climax

_____
_____
_____
_____
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_____
_____

Falling Action

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Resolution

_____
_____

activity
VISUAL ART

SET DESIGN is a pivotal part of any opera production. The set provides the context and background for the story and each character that makes up the story. Certain designers and directors prefer simple sets, which puts more emphasis on the opera singers themselves. Other directors and designers create grandiose scenes with large sets and a large chorus of singers. See the examples on the next page.

Der Rosenkavalier
The Metropolitan Opera

*Orange County Register*
LA Opera

The Magic Flute
Opera Colorado

activity
VISUAL ARTS: SET DESGIN

Set design teams (along with directors) not only establish their vision of what they want in the scene, but what color the lights will be and where the singers will be placed. Using what you know about *The Elixir of Love*, choose a scene to create a set for. Think about what items will need to be placed where and what color schemes you can use to enhance the quality of the performance.
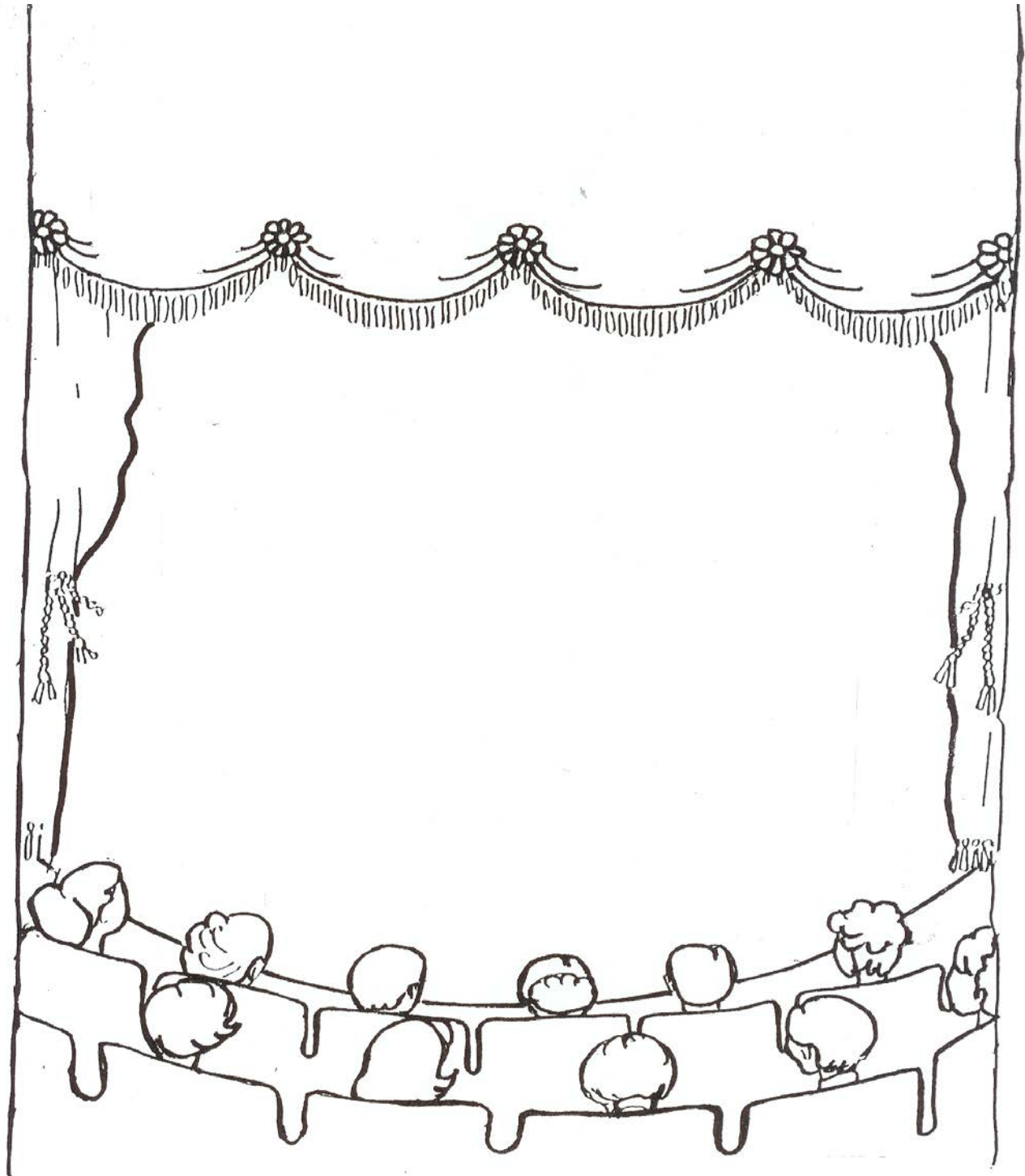
activity
VISUAL ARTS: SET DESGIN
instructor guide

Introduction

Hand out a worksheet (on previous page) to each student and read the introductory paragraph on set design. If time permits, you may wish to show the students pictures of different opera sets. Links can be found below.

http://extras.mnginteractive.com/live/media/site36/2011/0428/20110428__ae29cind3~p1.jpg
http://www.dallasartsrevue.com/ArtSpaces/opera/JR52038-svr-species-sets.jpg
http://www.operanews.com/uploadedImages/Opera_News_Magazine/2011/4(1)/Departments/BroadcastWalkBcst3hdl1511.jpg
http://www.operanews.com/_uploaded/image/article/orfeobcst2hdl14107.jpg

Lesson

Allow the students 20-30 minutes to design their sets. Encourage them to be as creative and as detailed as possible. The set should also tell a story, and should reflect what is going on in the opera.

When they are finished, bring the class back together. Ask for volunteers to describe their drawings. Encourage the students to explain why they made the choices they did. The goal of this project is to allow students to see all of the thought and planning that go into set designs.

Recommended discussion questions

1.) Setting

    a.) Is the scene inside or outside? Can you tell what types of people might inhabit that space by looking at it (rich or poor, workers, a king, a family)?
    b.) What props and backdrops are necessary to convey a sense of place?

2.) Color

    a.) What colors were used?
    b.) How does color and lighting affect the mood of the scene?

3.) Planning

    a.) Was it difficult to include everything in the amount of space given?
    b.) What problems would set designers face in having to create a set for a big theater (directing audience attention to the appropriate spot, time of making such big sets)? What problems would designers face in having to create a set for a little theater (consolidation, utilizing every inch, not making it too crowded).

activity
CREATIVE WRITING

When writing a story, an author has to consider many things. Like a good detective, an author must consider who, what, when, where, and why – who the characters are, what the plot line is, when and where the story takes place, and why the characters behave the way they do (or, in other words, the setting, characters, conflict, and resolution). In this exercise, you will practice manipulating the setting and characters of the story.

Opera Colorado's touring production of *The Elixir of Love* takes place right here in Colorado during the old west days. Imagine instead that it took place today. Think about the various details of the plot and setting that would have to change. How could you rewrite the characters and setting in *The Elixir of Love* to be contemporary while still making sure that the conflict and resolution make sense? Use the space below to outline your thoughts.

activity
SALES PITCH

After you see the opera (and/or listen to selections of the opera), get in groups of 3-4 students and write a sales pitch for your own elixir, just like Dulcamara. Your sales pitch should be about one to two minutes long and should feature everyone in your group. Use your pitch to sell your elixir to the class!

If you need more inspiration, check out the following Youtube clips:

Dulcamara's Sales Pitch Aria: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EmGQQC0m1QU
Visit Denver Commercial: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hz4yTXdT11o

Program Evaluation

Opera Colorado strives to provide quality programs that meet the needs of students and teachers across the state. Please take a few minutes to complete this evaluation and give us feedback on your experience. **Opera Colorado is also interested in your students' response to the programs. We would be happy to receive any letters or artwork from them!**

Program:

          ____***La Boheme*** (dress rehearsal)
          ____***Falstaff*** Please circle one: (dress rehearsal / matinee)
          ____**Backstage Workshops** (Please circle one: Nov. 7 | Nov. 9 | Nov. 10 | May 7 | May 8 | May 11)
          ____**Touring Opera Performance** (Please circle one: *Cinderella* **/** *Elixir of Love*)
          ____**Opera in a Trunk** (Please name which trunk: _____)
          ____**In-School Workshop** (Please specify: _____)
          ____**Other** (Please specify: _____)

Is this your first time participating in Opera Colorado's Education programs? YES / NO
If YES, what made you participate this year?   If NO, how many years have you been a participant?

Were you able to incorporate opera into your curriculum? YES / NO
If YES, please share how.   If NO, do you have suggestions?

Please estimate the percentage of your students who had never been exposed to Opera prior to this event:_____

How would you describe your students' initial attitude toward exposure to Opera?
        1………2……...3………4……….5……….6……….7
  negative/unwilling   *neutral*   *positive/excited*

Did their attitude change after learning more about opera and attending the event? If so, please show on the scale:
        1………2……...3………4……….5……….6……….7
  negative/unwilling   *neutral*   *positive/excited*

Was the Opera Colorado Teacher Guidebook helpful in preparing your students to attend the event?
        1………2……...3………4……….5……….6……….7
  not helpful   *very helpful*

On a scale of 1 to 7, how would you rate the priority of Arts Education in your school?
        1………2……...3………4……….5……….6……….7
  not important   *very important*

Please share with us any additional comments you have. We especially love stories of how Opera impacted your students. Please use space on bac needed.

_____
_____
_____
_____

Thank you for your time and comments!

Name_____   School/Subject _____

Teacher_____   Administrator_____   Paraprofessional_____   Parent / Chaperone_____   Other_____
My students are: K-2   3-5   6-8   9-12   College