

# RIGOLETTO



**OPERA**  
COLORADO

**2013-2014 GUIDEBOOK**

Dear Teachers,

Opera Colorado is pleased to provide engaging educational programs and performances for students across Colorado. We look forward to seeing you at the *Rigoletto* student dress rehearsal.

The performance will take place on Thursday, March 13th, 2014 at 7:00pm in the Ellie Caulkins Opera House.

What follows is a guide that we hope you and your students find useful, as we explore Giuseppe Verdi's *Rigoletto*. In the spirit of exploration, we have included various lessons that connect *Rigoletto* with different subjects of learning. The lessons reference the new Colorado Department of Education's Academic Standards. 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!

**See you at the opera!**

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## ***Contact us to learn more!***

Opera Colorado's Education & Community Engagement department offers many more programs to assist your students as they continue to discover the world of opera. We have programs that take place at the Ellie Caulkins Opera House as well as programs that we can bring directly to your classroom. We even have opera education specialists that can teach lessons directly to your students. Let us know how we can support the amazing work you are doing!

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# Rigoletto

Composed by Giuseppe Verdi  
 Libretto by Francesco Maria Piave  
 Based on the play *Le Roi S'Amuse* by Victor Hugo

Debuted at *Teatro La Fenice*, Venice, March 11, 1851  
 Conductor: Gaetano Mares



Original Rigoletto Design, Image Courtesy of Wikipedia

Role	Voice Type	Artist
Rigoletto, <i>the Duke's jester</i> ree-go-LEH-toh	Baritone	Felice Varesi
Gilda, <i>his daughter</i> GHIL-dah	Soprano	Teresa Brambilla
Duke of Mantua Maun-TU-ah	Tenor	Raffaele Mirate
Sparafucile, <i>an assassin</i> Spar-ah-foo-CHEE-leh	Bass	Paolo Damini
Maddalena, <i>his sister</i> ma-da-LEH-nah	Contralto	Annetta Casaloni
Giovanna, <i>Gilda's Nurse</i> Gee-o-VAH-nah	Mezzo-soprano	Laura Saini
Count Ceprano che-PRAH-noh	Bass	Andrea Bellini
Countess Ceprano, <i>his wife</i> che-PRAH-noh	Mezzo-soprano	Luigia Morselli
Matteo Borsa, <i>a courtier</i> BOUR-sa	Tenor	Angelo Zuliani
Count Monterone Mon-ta-ROH-neh	Baritone	Feliciano Ponz
Marullo Mar-OO-loh	Baritone	Francesco De Kunnerth
A Court Usher	Bass	Giovanni Rizzi
A Page	Mezzo-soprano	Unknown
Male Chorus: towns people	All Types	

# Full Plot Synopsis And Musical Highlights

The opera takes place in Mantua in the sixteenth century.

## Act 1, scene 1

A festive ball is taking place at the ducal court in Mantua; several different dance tunes are heard. The Duke speaks of his amorous adventures, in the manner of a *Don Giovanni*, who also saw a masked ball as an ideal opportunity for seduction. The Duke's desire for the moment is set on the Countess Ceprano. He explains in his tuneful manner ("Questa o quella"), that he is not bound to one woman. As the Duke joins the Countess, Rigoletto, his court jester, who entertains the Duke with his venomous tongue, mocks the jealous husband, Count Ceprano.

Meanwhile, Marullo whispers to his fellow courtiers, all of who despise Rigoletto, that the hunchback has a secret sweetheart. They plan a long-desired revenge against Rigoletto, who feels secure under the protection of the Duke. Monterone enters. His daughter is among the Duke's conquests.

For the first time since the opera began, the dance music ceases. Rigoletto heavily mocks Monterone. Monterone levels a father's curse against Rigoletto, which terrifies him, for he too is a loving father, a situation that no one at court realizes. Monterone is arrested and led away, repeating his curse.



## Act 1, scene 2

Rigoletto is returning home, with the curse still vivid in his memory (the first music example is heard again). His house stands in a garden surrounded by a wall, for security; one can see the second floor from the street. A corner of Ceprano's palace can be seen on the other side of the street. As Rigoletto is unlocking the door leading into his garden, Sparafucile, who announces that he is an assassin for hire and offers his services, approaches him. He suggests that Rigoletto might have a rival for the girl who lives in his house. Sparafucile describes how his sister, Maddalena, lures prospective victims to their house, to be met with death by stabbing.

Rigoletto is horrified and refuses Sparafucile's offer, but makes sure he can locate the assassin if need be. Alone, Rigoletto sings one of Verdi's great baritone soliloquies, in style somewhere between recitative and aria, "Pari siamo" (We are equals), in which he ruminates that he destroys with his tongue and Sparafucile with his sword. Rigoletto curses his deformity, which has left him bitter and forced him to make his living by making the Duke laugh at the misfortune of others.

As he enters his garden, however, his mood changes dramatically. His beloved daughter, Gilda, who has until very recently been in a convent, greets him and they sing a duet, "Figlia!—Mi Padre!" (Daughter!--My Father!) Gilda begs for information about their family, such as what her father does for a living. He avoids such questions, and speaks lovingly of her dead mother. Gilda attempts to console him and he tells her that she is his sole loved one on earth.

Rigoletto tells the nurse Giovanna to take great care to protect his daughter. He is interrupted by a noise at the gate. He opens the gate to look out and the Duke of Mantua, disguised as a poor student, slips in, unnoticed by either Rigoletto or Gilda. Throwing a purse to Giovanna, the Duke hides. Rigoletto continues imploring Giovanna to watch carefully over his daughter and then leaves. Gilda begins telling her nurse about the young man who has been following her on her way to church. The Duke, who in fact is this very young man, motions to Giovanna to leave. She does and he approaches Gilda singing a soaring love melody.

## **Act 2**

The Duke enters the antechamber of his suite at the palace. He is greatly disturbed, for he had returned to Gilda's house and found her gone. He is tortured by thoughts of what can have happened to her. He sings his only full-blown aria in the opera, "Parmi veder le lagrime" (Are you weeping in loneliness?), showing that he had true feelings for Gilda. The courtiers come to tell him of their revenge against Rigoletto, informing him they have brought Gilda to the palace. The Duke's mood changes radically.

Filled with joyous anticipation, he enters his apartments; the courtiers are mystified by his behavior. Rigoletto appears and is mocked by the courtiers, but he tries to appear nonchalant, all the while looking for signs of his daughter. Eventually Rigoletto realizes that Gilda is with the Duke in his apartments. He tries to force his way in but is prevented from doing so by the courtiers. Furiously he turns on them, calling them a "damned vile race," but then ends up pleading with them. Suddenly the door opens and a disheveled Gilda runs into her father's arms. Rigoletto commands the courtiers to leave then listens as Gilda relates to him how she met the Duke (who she thought was a poor student) at church. This encounter between father and daughter is extremely painful for both of them, as Rigoletto finds out his daughter has been defiled and Gilda discovers that her father is a court jester at the ducal court. Gilda's aria turns into a duet as Rigoletto tries to console his daughter. Monterone is led past them under guard and Rigoletto, in a violent cabaletta to his duet with Gilda, threatens him with revenge, despite Gilda's pleading for forgiveness.

### Act 3

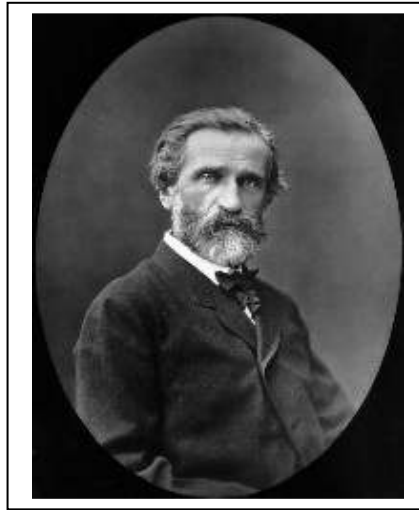
Rigoletto and Gilda are seen looking through a crack in the wall of Sparafucile's house, located on the banks of the Mincio River. The Duke enters, ordering wine and a room, singing of his thoughts on the fickleness of women in one of the greatest hit tunes in all opera (*la donna e mobile*). Maddalena, Sparafucile's sister, joins the Duke, and the two join together in mutual seduction. Gilda, watching from outside, is shattered by the Duke's unfaithfulness. Rigoletto joins in, singing of vengeance, making this a quartet of four dissimilar musical lines. Rigoletto tells Gilda to precede him to Verona, wearing male clothing ready for her at home.

A fierce storm is brewing and just before its outbreak, Sparafucile comes out of the house where Rigoletto pays him the customary half the fee for the assassination. Rigoletto is to return at midnight to pay the other half and to receive the body, which he himself wants to throw into the river. The storm approaches; thunder, lightning, and moaning of the wind are heard. Verdi suggests the moaning with male voices humming a chromatic line. The Duke is shown to a bedroom where he lies down, singing his favorite tune. Maddalena is sent to take his sword. She has, however, developed affection for him and begs her brother not to harm him. Gilda, dressed in a male riding habit, has meanwhile reappeared and hears Maddalena and Sparafucile bargaining for the Duke's life. As the storm rises in intensity, Sparafucile agrees that the Duke may live if someone whose body can be substituted arrives before midnight. Gilda, asking God's forgiveness, determines to substitute her life for the Duke's.

At midnight, when Rigoletto arrives with money, he receives a corpse wrapped in a sack, and rejoices in his triumph. Weighting it with stones, he is about to cast the sack into the river when he hears the voice of the Duke singing a reprise of his "*La donna è mobile*" aria. Bewildered, Rigoletto opens the sack and, to his despair, discovers his mortally wounded daughter. For a moment, she revives and declares she is glad to die for her beloved: "*V'ho ingannato*" ("Father, I deceived you"). She dies in his arms. Rigoletto's wildest fear materializes when he cries out in horror: "*La maledizione!*" ("The curse!")



# Meet the Composer!



19th century portrait of Giuseppe Verdi, Image Courtesy of Wikipedia.com

Giuseppe Verdi was an Italian Romantic composer known for his operas. Verdi is considered with Richard Wagner the most influential composer of operas of the nineteenth century and dominated the Italian scene after Bellini, Donizetti and Rossini. His works are frequently performed in opera houses throughout the world and, transcending the boundaries of the genre, some of his themes have long since taken root in popular culture.

Verdi was born the son of Carlo Giuseppe Verdi and Luigia Uttini in Le Roncole, a village near Busseto, then in the Département Taro, which was a part of the First French Empire after the annexation of the Duchy of Parma and Piacenza.

Verdi went to Milan when he was twenty to continue his studies. He took private lessons in counterpoint while attending operatic performances and concerts, often of specifically German music. Milan's beaumont association convinced him that he should pursue a career as a theatre composer. During the mid-1830s, he attended the *Salotto Maffei* salons in Milan, hosted by Clara Maffei.

Returning to Busseto, he became the town music master and gave his first public performance in 1830 in the home of Antonio Barezzi, a local merchant and music lover who had long supported Verdi's musical ambitions in Milan.

The production by Milan's La Scala of his first opera, *Oberto*, in November 1839 achieved a degree of success, after which Bartolomeo Merelli, La Scala's impresario, offered Verdi a contract for three more works.<sup>[7]</sup>

It was while he was working on his second opera, *Un giorno di regno*, that Verdi's wife died. The opera, given in September 1840, was a flop and he fell into despair and vowed to give up musical composition forever. However, Merelli persuaded him to write *Nabucco*, and its opening performance in March 1842 made Verdi famous.

A period of hard work – producing 14 operas in all – followed in the fifteen years after 1843, right up through the composition of *Un ballo in maschera*, a period which Verdi was to describe as his "years in the galleys" in a letter to Countess Clara Maffei: "From *Nabucco*, you may say, I have never had one hour of peace. Sixteen years in the galleys". These included his *I Lombardi* in 1843, and *Ernani* in 1844. For some, the most original and important opera that Verdi wrote is *Macbeth* (1847). It was Verdi's first attempt to write an opera without a love story, breaking a basic convention of 19th-century Italian opera. In 1847, *I Lombardi*, which was revised and renamed *Jérusalem*, was produced by the *Paris Opera*. Due to a number of Parisian conventions that had to be honored (including extensive ballets), it became Verdi's first work in the French Grand opera style.



Editorial illustration of Giuseppe Verdi, Image courtesy of Wikipedia.com

As he was still laboring through his "years in the galleys", Verdi created one of his greatest masterpieces, *Rigoletto*, which premiered in Venice in 1851. Based on a play by Victor Hugo (*Le roi s'amuse*), the libretto had to undergo substantial revisions in order to satisfy the epoch's censorship, and the composer was on the verge of giving it all up a number of times. The opera quickly became a great success.

With *Rigoletto*, Verdi sets up his original idea of musical drama as a cocktail of heterogeneous elements, embodying social and cultural complexity, and beginning from a distinctive mixture of comedy and tragedy. *Rigoletto's* musical range includes band-music such as the first scene or the aria "La donna è mobile", Italian melody such as the famous quartet "Bella figlia dell'amore", chamber music such as the duet between Rigoletto and Sparafucile and powerful and concise declamatos often based on key-notes like the C and C# notes in *Rigoletto* and *Monterone's* upper register.

There followed the second and third of the three major operas of Verdi's "middle period": in 1853 *Il trovatore* was produced in Rome and *La traviata* in Venice. The latter was based on Alexandre Dumas, fils' play *The Lady of the Camellias*, and became the most popular of all Verdi's operas, placing first in the Operabase list of most performed operas worldwide.

Between 1855 and 1867 there was an outpouring of great Verdi operas, among them such repertory staples as *Un ballo in maschera* (1859), *La forza del destino* (commissioned by the Imperial Theatre of Saint Petersburg for 1861 but not performed until 1862), and a revised version of *Macbeth* (1865). Other somewhat less often performed include *Les vêpres siciliennes* (1855) and *Don Carlos* (1867). Verdi's last opera, *Falstaff*, whose libretto was also by Boito, was based on Shakespeare's *Merry Wives of Windsor* and Henry IV, Part 1 via Victor Hugo's subsequent translation. It was an international success and is one of the supreme comic operas which shows Verdi's genius as a contrapuntist. Verdi passed away in 1901, but remains one of the most renowned operatic composers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.



# Meet the librettist!

## Francesco Maria Piave

An Italian opera librettist, Francesco Maria Piave was born in Murano in the lagoon of Venice, during the brief Napoleonic Kingdom of Italy. His career spanned over twenty years working with many of the significant composers of his day. In addition to Giuseppe Verdi, for whom he was to write 10 librettos, other composers include Giovanni Pacini, Saverio Mercadante, Federico Ricci, and even one for Michael Balfe.



19<sup>th</sup> century portrait of Francesco Maria Piave, Image courtesy of Wikipedia.com

Piave was not only a librettist, but a journalist and translator. He was resident poet and stage manager at La Fenice in Venice, and later at La Scala in Milan. His expertise as a stage manager and his tact as a negotiator served Verdi well over the years, who bullied him mercilessly for his pains. For example, in the struggle to have the Venetian censor(s) approve *Rigoletto*, he goaded Piave: "Turn Venice upside down to make the censors permit this subject." He followed this up with the admonition not to allow the matter to drag on: *If I were the poet I would be very, very concerned, all the more because you would be greatly responsible if by chance (may the Devil not make it happen) they should not allow this drama [to be staged].*

But Piave nonetheless became Verdi's lifelong friend and collaborator, "someone Verdi loved", following Salvatore Cammarano as Verdi's main mid-career librettist for *Ernani* (1844), *I due Foscari* (1844), *Attila* (1846), *Macbeth* (first version 1847), *Il Corsaro* (1848), *Stiffelio* (1850), *Rigoletto* (1851), *La traviata* (1853), *Simon Boccanegra* (first version 1857) and *La forza del destino* (first version 1862). Like Verdi, Piave was an ardent Italian patriot, and in 1848, during Milan's "*Cinque Giornate*," when Radetzky's Austrian troops retreated from the city, Verdi wrote to Piave in Venice addressing him as "Citizen Piave."

Piave would have also prepared the libretto for *Aida* when Verdi accepted the commission for it in 1870, had he not suffered a stroke which left him paralyzed and unable to speak. Verdi helped to support his wife and daughter, proposing that "an album of pieces by famous composers be compiled and sold for Piave's benefit"<sup>[4]</sup> and paid for his funeral when he died nine years later in Milan at age 65 and was interred there in the Cimitero Monumentale.

# Historical Background

Premiering in Venice in 1851, *Rigoletto* is an opera in three acts composed by Giuseppe Verdi. The opera's libretto, written by Francesco Piave was based on the play *Le roi s'amuse* by Victor Hugo which depicted the escapades of Francis I of France which was almost immediately banned by censor at the time for its insulting references to the king of France.

Verdi was commissioned to write a new opera by the La Fenice opera house in Venice in 1850. By this time he was already a well-known composer and had a degree of freedom in choosing the works he would prefer to set to music. Verdi soon stumbled upon Victor Hugo's *Le roi s'amuse*. He later explained that "The subject is grand, immense, and there is a character that is one of the greatest creations that the theatre can boast of, in any country and in all history." It was a highly controversial subject.

As Austria at that time directly controlled much of Northern Italy, it came before the Austrian Board of Censors. The play depicted a king (Francis I of France) as an immoral and cynical womanizer, something that was not accepted in Europe during the Restoration period. From the beginning, Verdi was aware of the risks, as was Piave.



La Fenice Opera House, 19<sup>th</sup> century etching, Image Courtesy of Wikipedia.com

At the beginning of the summer of 1850, rumors started to spread that Austrian censorship was going to forbid the production. The censors would never permit such a scandalous work to be performed in Venice. In August, Verdi and Piave prudently retired to Busseto, Verdi's hometown, to continue the composition and prepare a defensive scheme. They wrote to the theatre, assuring them that the censor's doubts about the morality of the work were not justified, but since very little time was left, very little could be done.

In order not to waste all their work, Piave tried to revise the libretto and was even able to pull from it another opera, *Il Duca di Vendome*, in which the sovereign was with a duke and both the hunchback and the curse disappeared. Verdi was completely against this proposed solution and preferred instead to have direct negotiations with censors, arguing over each and every point of the work. At this point, Brenna, La Fenice's secretary, showed the Austrians some letters and articles depicting the bad character, but the great value of the artist, helping to mediate the dispute.

By January 1851 the parties were able to agree that the action of the opera would be moved from the royal court of France to a duchy of France or Italy, and some of the characters would have to be renamed.

# Historical Background Continued



La Fenice. Modern Day Image courtesy of Wikipedia.com

Verdi finally completed the composition of the opera on 5 February 1851, a little more than a month before the premiere, although as he worked on the final stages of Act 3, Piave had already arranged for the sets to be designed. The singers were given some of their music to learn on 7 February. For the première, La Fenice had cast Felice Varesi as Rigoletto, the young tenor Raffaele Mirate as the Duke, and Teresa Brambilla as Gilda. Due to the high risk of unauthorized copying, Verdi had demanded the maximum secrecy from all his singers and musicians.

*Rigoletto* was a great box-office success for La Fenice and Verdi's first major Italian triumph since the 1847 premiere of *Macbeth* in Florence. It initially had a run of 13 performances and was revived in Venice the following year, and again in 1854.

Despite a rather disastrous production in Bergamo shortly after its initial run at La Fenice, the opera soon entered the repertory of Italian theatres. By 1852, it had premiered in all the major cities of Italy, although sometimes under different titles due to the vagaries of censorship.

From 1852, it also began to be performed in major cities worldwide, reaching as far afield as Alexandria and Constantinople in 1854 and both Montevideo and Havana in 1855. The UK premiere took place on 14 May 1853 at what is now the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden in London with Giovanni Matteo Mario as the Duke of Mantua and Giorgio Ronconi as Rigoletto. In the US, the opera was first seen on 19 February 1855 at New York's Academy.

# Introduction to Opera

**Opera.** Do you know what it is? Most people think they do. In fact, people have some really strong opinions about opera. So, let's be honest and talk about opera. What do you think of when you hear the term "Opera"?



For everyone who had an opinion of what opera is... how many of you have actually seen an opera? (*Phantom of the Opera* doesn't count, it's a musical). Pretty interesting isn't it? We form really strong opinions about things that we have no direct experience with. This is largely because we buy in to what we're told or shown. When people believe in a generalization that may or may not be true, is called a STEREOTYPE.

**ster·e·o·type**

[sterēōtīp] Noun

*A widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing*

Some of the things think about opera are probably TRUE, some are probably FALSE and some and more than likely STEREOTYPES – things you thought were true or false but really aren't. There are a lot of stereotypes about opera. Why is that? When people think about opera, they usually think about a big woman, wearing a horned helmet; something...

## LIKE THIS...?



Not a real opera singer

## OR MAYBE THIS...?



Bugs Bunny and Elmer Fudd in *What's Opera Doc*  
by Warner Brothers

What about this...?



Madame Lillian Nordica, 1898  
(now SHE'S a real opera singer)

Guess what? It is TRUE, that's right, it's a FACT that opera has a Viking woman! Actually she's a goddess; a real warrior princess. Her name is Brünnhilde. There is a famous cycle (or set) of four opera written by Richard Wagner, a German composer; it's called the *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (*The Ring of the Nibelung*). In the opera world, it's known as The Ring Cycle. It's all about Norse mythology. The character of Brünnhilde appears in the last three operas (*Die Walküre*, *Siegfried*, and *Götterdämmerung*). Here's some other information about her:

- She's the daughter of Wotan, the king of the gods in Valhalla.
- She's called a valkyrie.
- She's a shieldmaiden; a female warrior and protector of the gods and mortal soldiers.
- She's got sisters. Together as valkyries, they decide which soldiers die in battle and which soldiers live.
- She falls in love with a mortal man named, Siegfried. He's a brave warrior.
- It's a long story, but in the end, Siegfried dies, Brünnhilde is devastated and builds a huge pyre, sets fire to it and dies. The fire from it becomes the signal by which Valhalla and all the gods also die.

*FYI – opera can be dramatic!*

Now that you know a bit more about our Viking lady, here's our question for you...

There have been more than 10,000 operas written since the art form was created. In fact, over 395 new operas premiered from 2000-2007 alone! If the character of Brünnhilde appears in only 3 of the thousands of operas that have been written, why is that the image we think of when we think about opera?

# WHY?

Let's talk about that.

We're going to get all of the opinions of opera, true, false or stereotype, out in the open. To make the discussion work, there are some rules.

1. Be respectful of people's opinions.
2. Everyone's voice is heard.
3. Be honest, but fair.
4. Have an open mind.

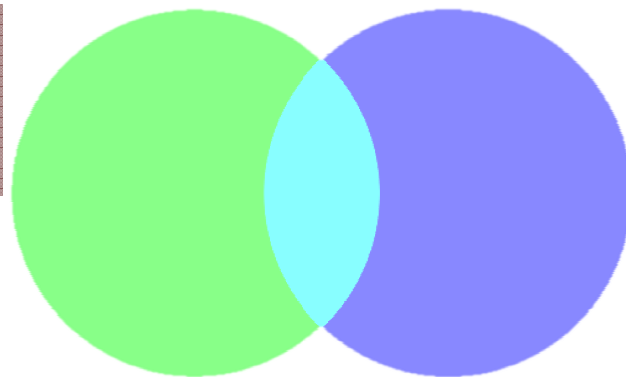
Remember, this isn't about making comments that make people laugh, or picking on someone for what they say. So... here we go.

# Opera IS...

# Opera IS NOT...



# Diagramming Differences -Instructor Guide-



## Supplies:

- Large sheets of butcher paper
- Colored pencils or markers
- White board & markers

## Preparation:

- Divide the white board into three columns – “True,” “False” and “Stereotype”

## Directions:

- Have students break into groups of 4 or 5. Instruct them to work together to list what they think opera is. What does an opera singer look like? Who goes to the opera? What happens at an opera? Encourage them to be as detailed as possible.
- Give students 20 to 30 minutes to work on their lists.
- When they’re done, have the students explain their thoughts to the rest of the class.
- *You can also do this as a whole group activity.*

## Discussion:

- Start out with a brief reminder of what a stereotype is (an oversimplified standardized image of a person or group). Ask the students to identify any stereotypes in their lists. Write these on the board.
- Have the students now list what they think is “true” or “false” for opera. Write these down in the appropriate categories on the board.
- Next, go back through the list of stereotypes and determine if they are, in fact, “true” or “false.” Finding the truth or fiction behind each stereotype may take some time and students may have to do some research. *For example, if students thought that all opera singers are old, that’s false. Opera singers can be young and old.*
- Keep finding the answers to your lists until they are completely listed in the appropriate categories.

## **WHAT DID YOU LEARN?** Did this activity help you learn what opera really is?

## 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 can be both tragic and comedic
- Operas were written a long time ago	- Operas are still being written today



# Compare and 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 and similarities between Miley Cyrus's "Party in the USA" and the aria "Vissi D'Arte" from Puccini's opera *Tosca*.)

## Lesson

Using their individual notes, have the class break into small groups. Give the groups 5 to 10 minutes to discuss the differences/similarities 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. It is also a skill that people need to have in order to be successful in the corporate world. 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 and Contrast

While the opera is more rich and varied than it is often given credit for, it is still a distinct musical form and something that many of us aren't used to. It sounds different. As you've probably guessed...Opera and pop music are genres with many differences! Singers such as Renee Fleming, Denyce Graves and Nathan Gunn are much different than pop singers such as Miley Cyrus, Rihanna and Justin Timberlake. In this activity, we will listen to an example of a famous opera aria and famous pop song. Can you spot the differences? What about the similarities?



### **EXAMPLE #1: “Party in the USA” Sung by Miley Cyrus**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M11SvDtPBhA>

### **EXAMPLE #2: “Vissi D’Arte” by Giacomo Puccini sung by Renee Fleming**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NNx6hh-cCa8>



## Compare and Contrast Pop and Opera worksheet



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

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

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3.) Notes from small group discussion.

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

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5.) After your second listening, what similarities did you pick up on that you may have overlooked the first time?

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

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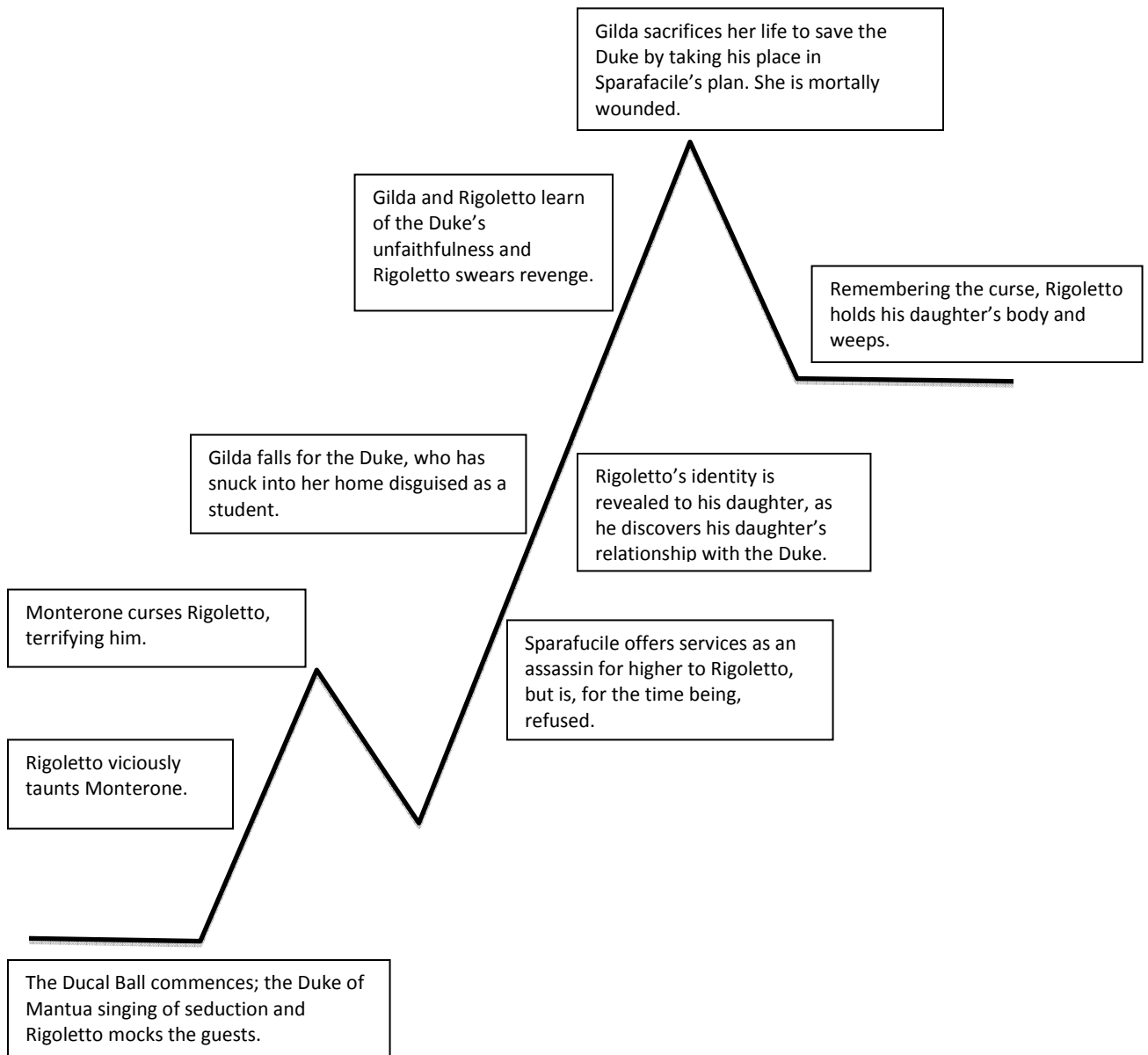
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# Activity: Story Line Analysis

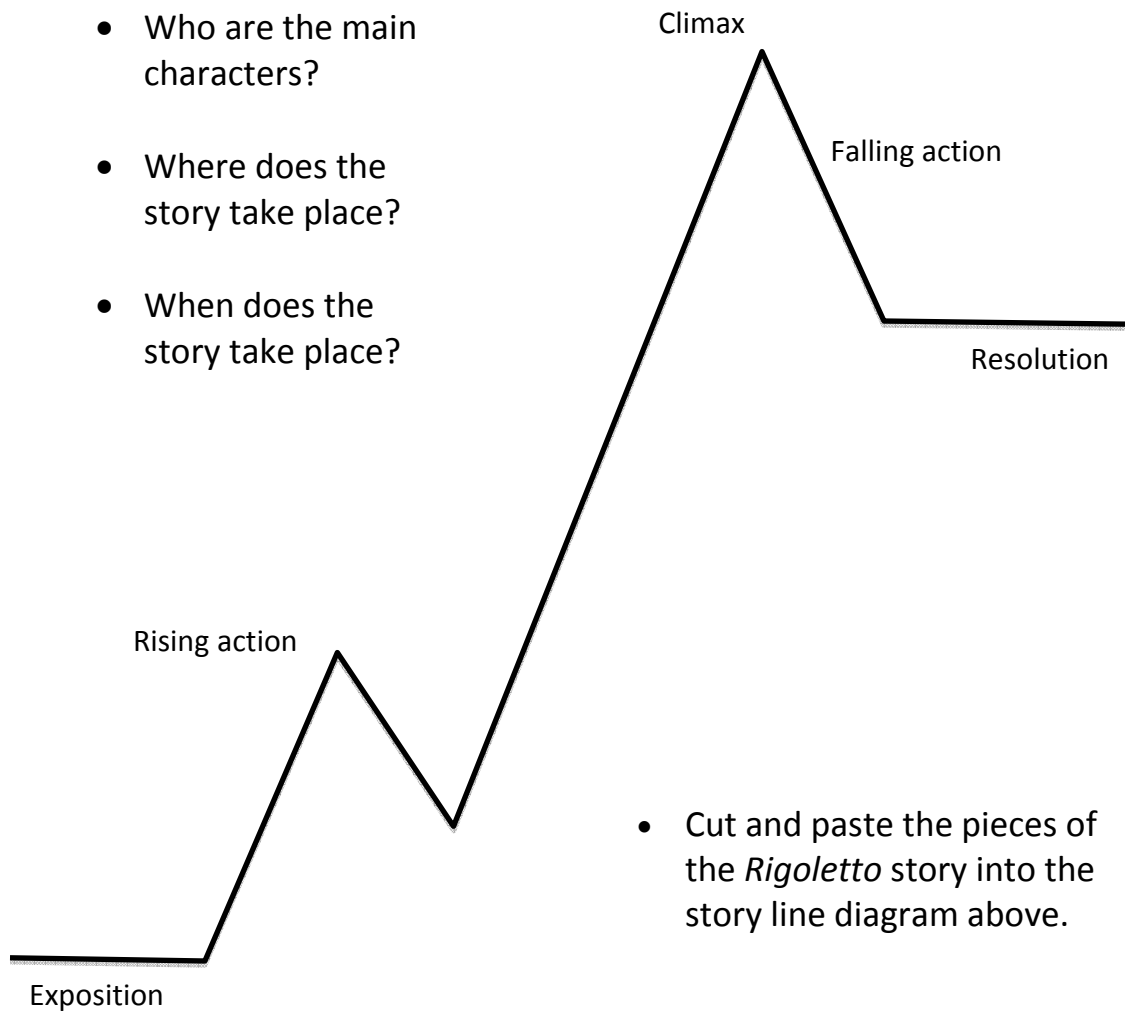
## Instructor's Guide (pg. 22)



# Activity: Story Line Analysis

## Worksheet

- Who are the main characters?
- Where does the story take place?
- When does the story take place?



## Alternate Activity: Story line Analysis

Using the worksheet on the previous pages, have students cut and paste the story line in the correct order. Next, choose five scenes from the opera – ones that illustrate each part of the story (exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution). Have younger students draw a picture of the scene, older students can summarize it in the box provided.



### Definitions:

Exposition:	Beginning of the story where the characters are 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: Story Line Analysis  
Illustration Worksheet

Exposition

Rising Action

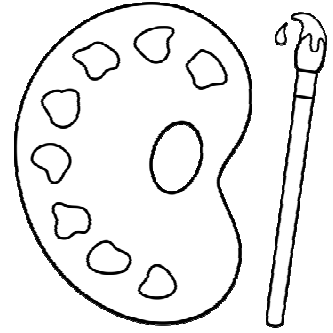
Climax

Falling Action

Resolution

# Activity: Visual Design

## Instructor's Guide



### Introduction

Hand out a worksheet to each student and read the introductory paragraph on set design.

### Lesson

Allow the students 20-30 minutes to design their sets. Encourage them to be as creative and as detailed as possible.

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 provided?
- 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).

### Additional Activities

Set design can also be a fun way to teach math skills. For an additional challenge, try placing certain parameters on what the students can draw (ex. There must be a building 3 cm high and 2 cm wide, there must be a prop 7 cm from the left side of the stage and 3 cm from the bottom).

## Activity: Visual design

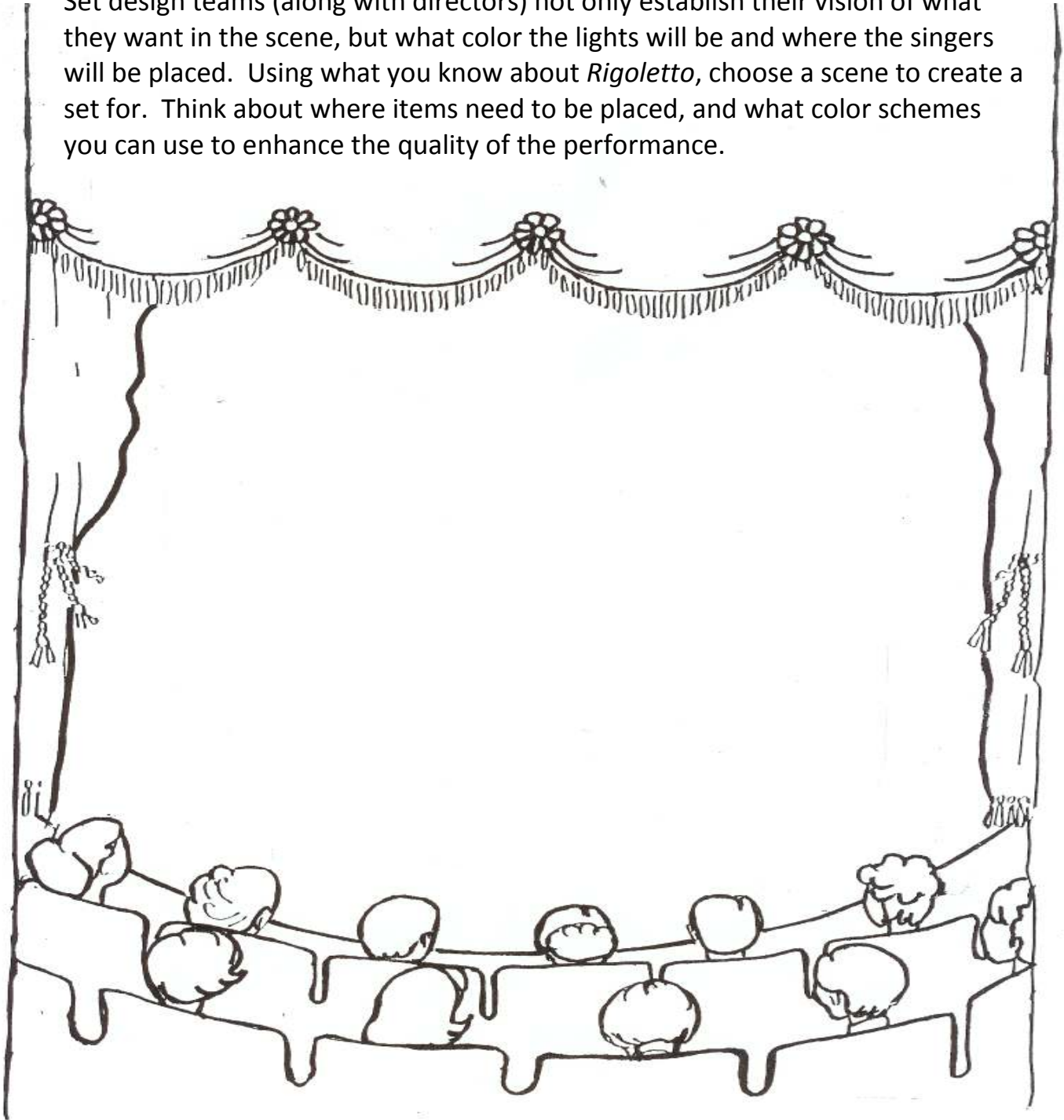
Set design is a pivotal part of any opera production. The set provides the context and background for the story and each character that makes up the story. Certain directors prefer simple sets, which puts more emphasis on the opera singers themselves. Other directors, as is often done with Verdi's opera *Rigoletto*, create grandiose scenes with large sets and a large chorus of singers.



## Activity: Visual Design Worksheet

### Directions:

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 *Rigoletto*, choose a scene to create a set for. Think about where items need to be placed, and what color schemes you can use to enhance the quality of the performance.





## Activity: Creative writing

### Instructor's Guide

When writing a story, an author has to consider many details. 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, students will practice manipulating the setting and characters of the story.



The Rigoletto Quartet. 19<sup>th</sup> century etching, image courtesy of Corbis.com  
WATCH THE PERFORMANCE! <http://youtu.be/Q5NEOh-XhyA>

## Activity: Creative Writing Worksheet



*Rigoletto* takes place in Mantua in the 1500s. Imagine instead that it took place in America, or Morocco or Japan! Another century, another country, the possibilities are endless! Think about the various details of the plot and setting that would have to change. For example: What would the court of *Rigoletto* look like? Where would the characters live? How could you rewrite the characters and setting in *Rigoletto* to be contemporary or fantastical while still making sure that the conflict and resolution make sense? Use the space below to outline your thoughts.

### Story Outline:

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- 
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# Activity: Logic Puzzles

## Instructor's Guide

This activity is a great addition to any math lesson. It emphasizes logic and reasoning, while simultaneously encouraging students to read critically. The activity also includes a brief explanation about the history of masquerade balls.

### Topics of Discussion:

1. The history of masquerades
2. Probability, logic, and reasoning.

### Instructions:

1. As a class, read the handout on masquerades.
2. Answer any questions the students might have.
3. Give the students time to complete the worksheet.
4. Use the key provided below to check answers.

### Additional Activities

1. The information on bullfighting could also be used to launch further discussion on Italian history and culture, or of history and culture in general.

	Drinking Punch	Dancing	Talking	Eating	Dragon Mask	Horse Mask	Pirate Mask	Bird Mask
The Duke								
Rigoletto								
Countess Ceprano								
Monterone								
Dragon Mask								
Horse Mask								
Pirate Mask								
Bird Mask								

# Information on the Masquerade



In the opera *Rigoletto*, the snide jester is cursed at a ducal party. One type of party that was particularly popular in Italy in the 1500s was the masquerade.

## ***What is a masquerade?***

The term masquerade means to disguise oneself, or to take the appearance of someone else. It can also apply to a social gathering where the guests are wearing masks, costumes or both. Originally, a masquerade party, or masquerade ball, implied the guests were wearing elaborate masks, but today a masquerade party can mean the guests are wearing costumes but not necessarily masks.

## ***History:***

Masquerade balls were popular with the Italian elite in the 16th century, eventually evolving into carnivals or festivals where the participants wore elaborate masks. The Swiss Count John James Heidegger introduced the masquerade ball to England in the early 1700s when he sponsored a masquerade ball at the Haymarket Opera House. Masquerade balls and the carnival became popular throughout the 18th century.

## ***Features:***

Traditional masquerade balls often featured a game, in which the guests intentionally wore unrecognizable masks and costumes. The game throughout the evening was to try to deduce the identity of the other guests. Occasionally masquerade balls set the scene for the murder of a guest by an assassin hidden behind a costume. Gustav III of Sweden was assassinated at a masquerade ball.

## ***Significance:***

The terms masquerade and carnival have been interlaced since the first Carnival di Venezia. This Venetian Carnival is believed to be the oldest carnival and may have begun in the 11th Century. A fundamental feature of the carnival was the mask. Mask makers, called mascareri, were given their own guild in 1436. There were various types of Venetian masks. There were fantasy masks, commedia dell' Arte masks, modern and traditional and angel masks. Harlequin and Pierrot masks were commedia dell' Arte, and the half-white, nose-covering masks are considered traditional.

# Activity: Logic Puzzles Worksheet

**Directions:** Suppose the Dukes party was a masquerade, a popular social event in the 1500's. Use the clues below to figure out which guest is doing what activity, and what kind of mask they are wearing. Shade in the correct answers completely, and mark an X in all of the other boxes.

	Drinking Punch	Dancing	Talking	Eating	Dragon Mask	Horse Mask	Pirate Mask	Bird Mask
The Duke								
Rigoletto								
Countess Ceprano								
Monterone								
Dragon Mask								
Horse Mask								
Pirate Mask								
Mask								

## Clues:

1. The Duke is not eating.
2. The person who is talking is not wearing an animal mask.
3. Monterone is having fun doing his activity with such a long snout.
4. Rigoletto doesn't like dancing at parties.
5. The person who is drinking punch likes animal masks but dislikes birds.
6. Monterone is drinking punch.
7. The person who is talking loves mythical stories.
8. The mask that Countess Ceprano is wearing makes her feel like she can fly – and maybe like she can catch some worms.



## Activity: Word Search

**Instructions:** Find all the Word Bank words in the Word Search above.

L	E	Z	C	X	J	C	Y	E	G	G	G	B	U	A
O	B	C	C	Z	O	W	S	N	I	X	R	Z	D	C
R	T	Y	A	S	L	J	A	O	O	R	D	L	U	V
E	J	T	T	L	W	E	E	R	V	C	I	R	Q	G
T	A	U	E	H	A	C	R	E	A	G	S	E	J	K
S	M	S	V	L	M	P	A	T	N	E	F	O	C	H
E	Q	F	S	E	O	B	O	N	N	X	I	A	H	L
J	T	T	R	A	R	G	P	O	A	O	B	M	P	W
X	E	L	X	M	S	D	I	M	Q	H	L	K	V	L
X	N	U	O	T	Q	S	I	R	C	E	K	U	D	T
N	O	S	R	F	Q	X	I	N	O	P	E	R	A	L
A	R	J	T	C	P	Z	U	N	V	H	H	V	P	O
A	U	T	N	A	M	H	X	J	W	H	G	X	O	O
S	E	T	D	E	S	I	G	N	J	O	L	Y	T	L
L	B	E	L	I	C	A	F	A	R	A	P	S	K	M

### Rigoletto Vocabulary

ASSASSIN   COSTUME

JESTER   LOVE

MANTUA   OPERA

PALACE   RIGOLETTO

SETDESIGN   SPARAFACILE

HUNCHBACK   VERDI

CURSE   DUKE

GILDA   GIOVANNA   TENOR



# Activity: Word Search Instructor's Guide

Hone your students' vocabulary and perceptive skills with a Rigoletto Word Search!

+	E	+	+	+	+	C	+	E	G	+	+	+	+	A
O	+	C	+	+	O	+	+	N	I	+	+	+	D	C
R	T	+	A	S	+	+	+	O	O	+	+	L	U	+
E	+	T	T	L	+	+	+	R	V	+	I	R	+	+
T	A	U	E	+	A	+	+	E	A	G	S	+	+	K
S	M	S	V	L	+	P	+	T	N	E	+	+	C	+
E	+	+	S	E	O	+	+	N	N	+	+	A	+	+
J	T	+	+	A	R	G	+	O	A	+	B	+	+	+
+	E	+	+	+	S	D	I	M	+	H	+	+	+	+
+	N	+	+	+	+	S	I	R	C	E	K	U	D	+
+	O	+	+	+	+	+	I	N	O	P	E	R	A	+
+	R	+	+	+	+	+	U	N	+	+	+	V	+	+
A	U	T	N	A	M	H	+	+	+	+	+	+	O	+
S	E	T	D	E	S	I	G	N	+	+	+	+	+	L
+	+	E	L	I	C	A	F	A	R	A	P	S	+	+

## Answer key

(Over,Down,Direction) ASSASSIN(2,5,SE)  
COSTUME(7,1,SW) CURSE(15,2,SW) DUKE(14,10,W)  
GILDA(11,5,NE) GIOVANNA(10,1,S)  
HUNCHBACK(7,13,NE) JESTER(1,8,N) LOVE(15,14,NW)  
MANTUA(6,13,W) MONTERONE(9,9,N) OPERA(10,11,E)  
PALACE(7,6,NW) RIGOLETTO(9,10,NW)  
SETDESIGN(1,14,E) SPARAFACILE(13,15,W)  
TENOR(2,8,S) VERDI(4,6,SE)

## Activity: Classroom at Play



### The Duke's Party Guests, Improv Game

This light-hearted drama exercise is a great way to explore characterization, improvisation and physicality in theatre, not to mention a chance to get your students active in their studies. In order to orient the activity toward *Rigoletto*, have the students that play the "guests" pick a main character from the opera, and have them test both the "host's" and the audience's knowledge of the *Rigoletto* cast. Be it trickster or king, baritone or soprano, the paths this hilarious exercise can take are endless!

#### Set Up:

One person volunteers to play "Host." The Host leaves the room. Three performers serve as the "Surprise Guests." Each one asks the audience, "Who am I?" Remember, as with any improv game, encourage the audience to generate creative suggestions; the more outlandish the better!

#### Surprise Guest Examples:

Guest #1: Sparafacile with a splinter in his toe

Guest #2: The Duke trying to conceal a large frog in his sleeve

Guest #3: A narcoleptic Gilda

#### The Rules:

Once the Guests have been established, the Host returns and the improv game begins.

First, the Host pantomimes getting ready for the party, then Guest #1 "knocks" on the door. The Host lets him/her inside and they begin to interact. A new Guest will arrive in about sixty seconds, so that in a very quick amount of time the Host will be interacting with three different "guest characters."

The Host wants to figure out the identity of each Guest. However, this isn't just a guessing game. The Guests should offer discreet clues that become more and more obvious as the improv game continues. The main point of the activity is to generate humor and to develop quirky, unusual characters.

Have fun! And remember, this and any other explanation of an improv game is just a blue print. Feel free to add your own style to make it work best for your drama classroom, theater troupe, or



## Live Simulcasts!

There's nothing better than attending the opera and seeing it LIVE! But what do you do if you can't join us? Or maybe you have tickets but you just can't get enough opera? We are pleased to be able to offer you an additional chance to hear this amazing art form right here in Denver, Colorado.

Opera Colorado is excited to announce that, in partnership with Colorado Public Radio, a LIVE simulcast of Opera Colorado's 2014 season will be broadcast. Tune in to 88.1 FM, or listen online at [www.CPR.org](http://www.CPR.org), as the operas are presented in entirety. Listeners will also be invited backstage as interviews are conducted during intermission with artists, the production team and key members of the Opera Colorado staff. Please tune in and join us!

### SIMULCAST SCHEDULE

## **Verdi's *Rigoletto*: March 15, 2014**

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 hearing from your students! We would be happy to receive letters or artwork from them. Thanks for your support!

Follow the link below to fill out the Opera Colorado Education Survey!

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/viewform?formEmail=true&formkey=dGfKOGdNelkzLUh6ZUZNUTdEb01tUFE6MQ>

