



**OPERA**  
COLORADO

## 2018-2019 GUIDEBOOK

# THE MARRIAGE *of* FIGARO



# 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 Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*. In the spirit of exploration, we have included various lessons that connect *The Marriage of Figaro* 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 students' 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!*

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# The Marriage of Figaro

**Music by W.A. Mozart – Libretto by Lorenzo Da Ponte**

Adapted from a stage comedy by Pierre Beaumarchais

Premiered in Vienna, Austria on May 1, 1786

Count Almaviva.....baritone  
(ahl-mah-VEE-vah)

Countess Rosina.....soprano  
(ro-ZEE-nah)

Susanna .....the Countess's maid.....soprano  
(soo-ZAH-nah)

Figaro.....the Count's personal valet.....bass-baritone  
(FEE-gah-ro)

Cherubino.....the Count's page.....mezzo-soprano  
(keh-roo-BEE-no)

Marcellina.....Dr. Bartolo's housekeeper.....mezzo-soprano  
(mahr-che-LEE-nah)

Bartolo.....a doctor and lawyer.....bass  
(BAHR-to-lo)

Basilio.....a music teacher.....tenor  
(bah-ZEE-lee-oh)

Don Curzio.....a judge.....tenor  
(KOOR-tsee-oh)

Barbarina.....Antonio's daughter ..... soprano  
(bahr-bah-REE-nah)

Antonio.....the Count's gardener.....bass  
(an-TO-nee-oh)

## ACT I

Figaro is measuring a space for his nuptial bed while his fiancée, Susanna, tries on her bridal hat. She doesn't like their new bedroom. Figaro doesn't understand why, as it's very convenient to the bedrooms of the Count and Countess. But Susanna warns Figaro that it's too convenient for the Count, who is plotting with her music-master, Don Basilio, to get her to sleep with the Count. Susanna goes off when the Countess rings for her. Alone, Figaro vows revenge ("Se vuol ballare") and storms off in a cold rage.

Dr. Bartolo enters with his housekeeper, Marcellina. Figaro once promised to marry her, and Bartolo promises to find a way to make him do it. It would be the perfect revenge on Figaro, who blocked his marriage to Rosina. Bartolo goes off to put his scheme into effect. Susanna returns, and Marcellina jealously spars with her, making Marcellina go off in a huff. The teenaged page Cherubino now enters. He tells Susanna that he is in love with the Countess, but the Count has caught him with young Barbarina (Susanna's cousin and the gardener Antonio's daughter). Cherubino can't contain his romantic desires ("Non so più").

Cherubino hides behind a chair when the Count arrives to beg Susanna for a meeting before he goes to London with Figaro on diplomatic business. But his wooing is interrupted by the arrival of Don Basilio, and it's the Count's turn to hide. He heads for the same chair where Cherubino is hiding, forcing the boy to jump into the seat. Susanna hastily covers him with a cloth. Hearing Basilio's insinuating gossip about Cherubino and the Countess, the jealous Count reveals himself. Basilio of course concludes that the Count and Susanna are an item. This is all too much for Susanna, who begins to faint. The Count and Basilio rush to her aid and try to get her into the chair, but she revives just in time and orders them away. The Count vows to make Cherubino leave the castle. When Susanna expresses sympathy for the boy, the Count tells her that it's not the first time Cherubino has been caught with a female. Recalling how he found the page hiding under a tablecloth in Barbarina's room, he lifts the cloth concealing Cherubino. The Count now accuses Susanna of dallying with the boy.

But their argument is interrupted by the arrival of Figaro and a group of peasants, who, at Figaro's instigation, are singing the Count's praises for having abolished the feudal right of the lord of the manor to sleep with his servant's bride. Figaro invites the Count to place the bridal veil on Susanna as a symbol of his blessing on their marriage, which is to take place later that day. The Count is forced to agree, but privately vows to help Marcellina marry Figaro instead. He also gets Cherubino out of the way by drafting him into his regiment. Figaro teases the boy, for he'll have to sacrifice his love-making and enjoy instead the "glories" of war ("Non più andrai, farfallone amoroso").

## ACT II

In her boudoir, the Countess bemoans the Count's infidelity ("Porgi, amor"). Susanna has told her about the Count's plans to seduce her. Figaro arrives. He knows that the Count is plotting to help Marcellina. He has his own plan: through Basilio, he will send the Count an anonymous note about the Countess's "lover." This is sure to drive him to distraction. Meanwhile, Susanna is to agree to meet the Count in the garden, only it will be Cherubino, disguised as Susanna, he will be wooing. The Countess can then surprise him *in flagrante delicto*. Figaro goes off to get the boy.

Cherubino arrives and, at Susanna's urging, sings the Countess a love song that he wrote for her ("Voi che sapete che cosa è amor"). He shows the Countess his regimental commission, which he had just gotten from Basilio. She and Susanna realize that it has no seal on it. Figaro has told Cherubino of the plan, and Susanna begins to dress the uncomfortable boy as a woman. When she goes into another room to get a ribbon, he takes advantage of her absence to declare his love for the Countess. At that moment, the suspicious Count bangs on the door, and Cherubino dives into the closet.

The Count demands to know to whom the Countess was speaking, and she tells him it was Susanna, who has gone into another room. He shows her the anonymous letter that Figaro had written about her "lover." A noise from the closet obliges the Countess to say that Susanna is in there, not in the other room. Susanna re-enters the room, unseen by the Count and Countess, and realizes that

there's some kind of problem, so she hides behind a screen. As Cherubino cowers, terrified, in the closet, the Count orders "Susanna" out, but the Countess forbids it. The Count is convinced that the Countess is hiding a lover in there. As they argue, they warn each other not to go too far and create a scandal. Susanna remains behind her screen, horrified by the situation. The Countess absolutely refuses to open the closet, so the Count brings her with him to get something to break the closet open, locking the door behind him. Susanna lets Cherubino out of the closet. In a panic, he escapes through the window, and Susanna hides in the closet.

When the Count and Countess return, she finally admits that Cherubino is in the closet, claiming that it was just a joke. He doesn't believe her protestations of innocence and threatens to kill Cherubino. Drawing his sword, he flings open the closet door. They are both astonished to find Susanna. The Count, abashed, is forced to beg his wife's forgiveness. She and Susanna explain that the episode with the closet, and the anonymous note, were all a prank. Figaro arrives to announce that the wedding is about to begin. Questioned by the Count, he denies writing the anonymous note, to the consternation of Susanna and the Countess. The Count is anxious for Marcellina's arrival so he can stop the wedding.

Now Antonio the gardener barges in, complaining that someone jumped from the Countess's balcony onto his flower garden. Susanna and the Countess warn Figaro, who had already seen Cherubino jump. He claims that he himself leapt from the balcony. But Antonio claims he saw a boy. The Count immediately realizes that it was Cherubino. Figaro, sticking to his story, claims that Cherubino was on his way to Seville. He explains that he was hiding in the closet waiting for Susanna. After overhearing the Count shouting, he decided to escape by jumping, and injured his foot. He suddenly develops a limp in order to prove his story. But Antonio produces Cherubino's military commission, which he found in the garden. Figaro, confounded, throws the gardener out. Prompted by the women, Figaro triumphantly explains that the page gave it to him because it lacks a seal. Marcellina, Bartolo, and Basilio now come to demand justice, claiming that Figaro entered into a contract to marry Marcellina in exchange for a loan. The Count agrees to judge the case, to the joy of Marcellina and the consternation of Figaro.

## ACT III

Alone, the Count ponders the confusing situation. Unseen by the Count, the Countess urges a reluctant Susanna to go ahead with the plan and tell the Count that she will meet him in the garden later. Because Cherubino is gone, the Countess will impersonate Susanna. The Countess takes herself off. Susanna overhears the Count talking to himself about Figaro marrying Marcellina. Emboldened, she approaches him, claiming that she has come to get some smelling salts for the Countess, who is having a fainting fit. He tells her that she should keep it herself, because she is about to lose her intended husband. She counters that she will repay Marcellina's loan with the dowry the Count had promised her. But the Count claims he can't remember any such promise. She has no choice but to flirt with him, and the pact is made. But as she is leaving, she runs into Figaro, and the Count overhears her saying that they have "won the case." Enraged, the Count threatens to punish them for their betrayal ("Vedrò mentr'io sospiro").

The judge Don Curzio arrives with Marcellina and Bartolo. He announces that Figaro must marry Marcellina or repay the loan. Figaro claims that he is of noble birth and cannot marry without his relatives' consent. When the Count asks who they are, Figaro replies that he was stolen as an infant, but hopes to find his parents in 10 years. Bartolo demands proof, so Figaro shows him a birthmark on his arm -- a birthmark that reveals that he is the love-child of Marcellina and Bartolo! The reunited family embraces as the frustrated Count rails against Fate. Meanwhile, Susanna, unaware of this development, arrives with the money to pay Marcellina, only to be enraged by the sight of Figaro and Marcellina fondly embracing. But peace reigns when all is explained to her. The Count storms off with Don Curzio. Bartolo now proposes to Marcellina. Marcellina tears up Figaro's I.O.U. Bartolo gives Figaro and Susanna a dowry, and Susanna adds to it the money she had come in with. The four, chuckling at the Count's frustration, go off to plan a double wedding.

The Countess enters, wondering if their plan to catch the Count will work, and recalling sadly the loss of their love ("Dove sono i bei momenti"). After she leaves, Antonio and the Count arrive. Antonio tells the Count that he knows that Cherubino is still in the vicinity, because he found at his house the woman's clothes that Cherubino

had been wearing. They run off to look for him. The Countess returns with Susanna, and the two concoct a note, from Susanna to the Count, asking for a meeting in the garden. They seal the note with a pin, which the Count is to return if he agrees to meet her. Barbarina and some peasant girls, including Cherubino in disguise, come to serenade the Countess. Antonio and the Count return to unmask Cherubino. The Count threatens to punish the boy, but Barbarina persuades the Count -- who had once, with kisses, promised her anything she wanted -- to let her marry Cherubino.

Figaro arrives, eager for the wedding preparations to begin. The Count begins to cross-examine him again, and Antonio produces Cherubino as proof that they've caught Figaro lying. But Figaro cleverly claims that it's possible that both he and Cherubino jumped into the garden. The wedding march begins, and everyone goes off to get ready, leaving the Count and Countess alone. She refuses to discuss the matter with him. The wedding party returns in procession, singing another paean to the abolition of the feudal right to sleep with the bride. Susanna slips the sealed note to the Count. As the couples dance the fandango, the Count opens the note, pricks his finger on the pin, and then drops it. Figaro watches him with great amusement, believing that it's a love-note from some unknown lady. The Count finds the pin, thrilled at the prospect of meeting Susanna later, invites everyone to magnificent wedding banquet.

## ACT IV

Barbarina, terribly upset, is searching the garden for something that she has lost ("L'ho perduta, me meschina!"). When Figaro arrives with Marcellina and asks the weeping girl what's wrong, she replies that she has lost the pin that the Count gave her to deliver to Susanna as a token of their tryst. Angry, but pretending that he already knows all about it, he plucks a pin from Marcellina's dress and gives it to Barbarina, who goes off to give it to Susanna. Figaro collapses into his mother's arms. She advises him to stay calm, but rage overtakes him and he vows to avenge all deceived husbands. Marcellina, afraid for Susanna, goes off to warn her. Figaro then enlists Basilio and Bartolo to help trap the lovers. Alone again, he denounces the perfidy of women ("Aprite un po' quegli occhi"). He hides as Susanna arrives, accompanied by Marcellina and the

Countess. Marcellina warns Susanna that Figaro is already in the garden. That suits Susanna just fine, as she can avenge herself on both Figaro for his jealousy and the Count for his philandering. Marcellina retires into the pavilion. The Countess is too nervous to remain, but allows Susanna to stay for a bit to enjoy the breezes. Susanna sings a love song to an unnamed lover to punish the spying Figaro ("Deh, vieni, non tardar, o gioia bella"). Then she hides nearby and puts on the Countess's cloak.

Figaro is furious, but he continues to lie in wait. Cherubino arrives, looking for Barbarina, who has meanwhile hidden herself in the pavilion. At the same time, the Countess enters, disguised as Susanna. Cherubino, not realizing who she really is, begins flirting with her. The Count comes in and receives the kiss meant for "Susanna." The Count slaps Cherubino for his impudence, and the boy flees into the pavilion. Now the Count does some flirting of his own with "Susanna", infuriating Figaro further. The Count tries to lure her into the dark pavilion, but, hearing Figaro's voice and fearing discovery, tells "Susanna" to go ahead into the pavilion without him. He exits, promising to meet her later.

Now the real Susanna arrives, disguised as the Countess. When Figaro hears her voice, he immediately realizes that she is Susanna. He pretends to court "the Countess." Susanna is furious until he reveals his joke, and they tenderly reconcile. When the Count returns, the couple replay the joke. The enraged Count seizes Figaro and calls for weapons. Susanna flees into the pavilion as Bartolo, Basilio, Antonio, and Curzio rush in. The Count demands that his wife come out of the pavilion. To everyone's amazement, out pop Cherubino, Barbarina, Marcellina, and Susanna, still dressed as the Countess. She and Figaro pretend to beg the Count's forgiveness. He is adamant until the real Countess reveals herself. The chastened Count humbly asks her pardon, she grants it, and everyone rejoices.

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Photo courtesy of Cincinnati Opera



# W.A. Mozart

## COMPOSER

**Wolfgang Amadues Mozart** was a prolific composer of the Classical Era. Born on January 27, 1756, Mozart was competent on keyboard and violin from a very early age. By the time Mozart was 13, he had written numerous symphonies, concertos and sonatas, and was known throughout the world of music. By the time of his death at age 35, he had produced more than 600 works of numerous genres, almost all of them with astonishing quality.

Mozart's career in Vienna began promisingly, and he was soon commissioned to write *The Abduction from the Seraglio* (1782). His concerts were a great success, and the emperor, Joseph II, encouraged him. The now-popular Mozart married Constanze Weber. The young pair visited Salzburg in 1783; there, the "Kyrie" and "Gloria" of Mozart's great *Mass in C Minor*, composed in Vienna and never finished, were performed. Mozart's greatest success was *Le Nozze di Figaro* (1786), composed for the Vienna Opera.

Mozart's fame began to disappear after *Figaro*. The nobility and court grew increasingly nervous about his revolutionary ideas as seen in *Figaro*. His next greatest operatic success was *Don Giovanni* (1787), composed for Prague, where Mozart's art was especially appreciated. This was followed in 1790 by *Così fan tutte*, the third and final libretto provided by the Italian poet Lorenzo Da Ponte; and in 1791 by *Die Zauberflöte*, produced by a suburban theater in Vienna. During this period of financial strain, Mozart composed his last three symphonies in less than 7 weeks.

In 1791, Mozart was commissioned to write a requiem, but he was not able to finish it. He was quite ill at the time--he had never known very good health, mentally nor physically--and imagined that the work was for himself, which it proved to be. His death on December 5, 1791, which gave rise to false rumors of poisoning, is thought to have resulted from rheumatic fever, a disease which he had suffered from repeatedly during his life.



# Lorenzo Da Ponte

## LIBRETTIST



**Lorenzo Da Ponte** (10 March 1749 - 17 August 1838) was a Venetian opera librettist and poet. He wrote the librettos for 28 operas by 11 composers, including three of Mozart's greatest operas: *Don Giovanni*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, and *Così fan tutte*.

Lorenzo Da Ponte was born Emanuele Conegliano in Ceneda, in the Republic of Venice. Though Jewish by birth, Emanuele pursued a career in the Catholic Church. He took the name of Lorenzo da Ponte from the Bishop of Ceneda, who baptised him. Da Ponte travelled to Austria, and applied for the post of Poet to the Theatres. He was awarded this position, and as court librettist, he wrote texts in French, German, Spanish, and Italian, and collaborated with Mozart, Antonio Salieri, and Vicente Martín y Soler.

After the death of Joseph II, Da Ponte received little interest from the new Emperor. He moved to Prague briefly, and then to London. He started a new career there as an opera

producer. But Da Ponte had little head for business, and eventually found himself in bankruptcy. To escape his creditors, he fled to the United States.

In the United States, Da Ponte settled in New York. He became friends with Clement Clarke Moore, and, through him, gained an appointment as the first professor of Italian literature at Columbia College. He was the first Roman Catholic priest to be appointed to the faculty, and he was also the first to have been born Jewish. Da Ponte was a great champion of opera in the US and even produced a performance of *Don Giovanni*.

In 1828, at the age of 79, Da Ponte became a naturalized U.S. citizen. He died in 1838 in New York; an enormous funeral ceremony was held in New York's old St. Patrick's Cathedral on Mulberry Street.



# Pierre Beaumarchais

## PLAYWRIGHT

**Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais** (January 24, 1732 – May 18, 1799) was a watch-maker, inventor, musician, politician, invalid, fugitive, spy, publisher, arms-dealer, and revolutionary (both French and American). He was best known, however, for his dramatic works, especially the three Figaro plays. *The Marriage of Figaro* served as the basis for the great opera of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. His life and works reflect the tumultuous period in which he lived, including the period to and through the first phase of the French Revolution. His Figaro cycle covers the breakdown of the old, Medieval world and the birth pangs of the new, democratic world.

Beaumarchais was born "Pierre-Augustin Caron," the only boy among the six children of a watchmaker. The family was comfortable and Caron had a peaceful and happy childhood—in contrast to his adult life. Caron left school at age 13 to apprentice under his father. His watch-making days were short-lived, as other endeavors soon catapulted him to fame and fortune. In 1758-59, Caron was the harp tutor to King Louis XV's daughters. In 1759-60, Caron met Joseph Pâris dit Duverney, a wealthy, older entrepreneur who saw great potential for business in the young Caron. The two became very close friends and collaborated on many business ventures. Caron began using the name "Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais" in 1756-57. He derived *Beaumarchais* from the name of a piece of land, "le Bois Marchais," inherited by his first wife.

Generously assisted by Pâris-Duverney, Beaumarchais purchased the office of *secretary-councillor to the King* in 1760-61, thereby becoming a French noble. In 1763, Beaumarchais purchased a second office, the office of Lieutenant General of Hunting. In 1764, Beaumarchais began a 10 month sojourn in Madrid, supposedly to help his sister, Lisette, who had been abandoned by her fiancé, Clavijo. In fact, he was mostly concerned with striking business deals for Pâris-Duverney. Although Beaumarchais returned to France with little profit, he had managed to acquire new experiences, musical ideas, and, most important, ideas for theatrical characters.

Beaumarchais's characters of *Figaro* and *Almaviva* first appeared in his *Le Sacritan*, which he wrote around 1765, dubbing it "an interlude, imitating the Spanish style." His fame began, however, with his first dramatic play (*drame bourgeois*), *Eugénie*, which premiered at the Comédie Française in 1767. This was followed in 1770, by another drama, *Les Deux amis* (*The Two Friends*).

Beaumarchais's Figaro plays comprise *Le Barbier de Séville* (*The Barber of Seville*), *Le Mariage de Figaro* (*The Marriage of Figaro*), and *La Mère coupable* (*The Guilty Mother*). *Le Barbier* premiered in 1775. Its sequel, *Le Mariage*, was initially passed by the censor in 1781, but was soon banned from performance by Louis XVI after a private reading. The King was unhappy with the play's satire on the aristocracy. Over the next three years Beaumarchais gave many private readings of the play, as well as making revisions to try to pass the censor. The King lifted the ban in 1784. The play premiered that year and was enormously popular even with aristocratic audiences. Mozart's spectacularly successful opera on *The Marriage of Figaro* premiered just two years later. *The Barber of Seville* was turned into a successful comic opera by Rossini in 1816. The final play, *La mère*, was premiered in 1792, in Paris. All three plays enjoyed great success, and they are still frequently performed today.





# LISTENING

activity

Listen to some of the excerpts from *The Marriage of Figaro* listed on the next page.

See if you can guess what they're about before you read the descriptions provided. Did you guess any of them correctly? What tools did you use to understand even though the words are sung in Italian?



>> “Se vuol ballare” (“If you want to dance”)

Figaro sings this aria, swearing revenge on the Count for his plot to win over his wife-to-be, Susanna.



>> “Non so piu” (“I no longer know”)

Cherubino’s aria, in which he describes his newfound infatuation with women, particularly the Countess.

>> “Hai gia vinta la causa” (“You’ve already won the case”)

The Count overhears that Susanna and Figaro plan to turn the tables on him. This aria is a telling of Susanna’s betrayal, and the Count’s vow to punish Figaro.



>> “Dove sono” (“Where are they”)

A heartbroken Countess sings an aria lamenting the loss of love between her and her husband.

# 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:**  
**"Dear John"**  
**by Taylor Swift**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JPTTrHajnKBk>



**EXAMPLE #2:**  
**"Porgi amor"**  
**by W.A. Mozart**  
**sung by Renee Fleming**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SKG3BnHae\\_o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SKG3BnHae_o)



# 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 following worksheet and give students another 10 minutes to fill it 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.

# STORYLINE

activity

The wily Figaro and his love, Susanna, are set to marry, but Count Almaviva is intent on winning over the bride-to-be. What unfolds is hilarious chaos set to a sparkling score. Cut the following scenes from *The Marriage of Figaro* out from the paper below and paste them in order of events onto the following page.

## Definitions:

<i>Exposition</i>	Beginning of the story where the characters and setting are introduced
<i>Rising Action</i>	Conflict arises that the characters must confront
<i>Climax</i>	The conflict turning point, and the final confrontation between the characters.
<i>Falling Action</i>	The actions that occur as a direct result of the turning point
<i>Resolution</i>	When all the actions are complete and the story draws to a conclusion.

Susanna tells her fiancée, Figaro, that she is being pursued by the Count.

The Count sees and tries to kill Figaro.

Marcellina plots to get Figaro to marry her.

Susanna is disguised as the Countess, and Figaro, who knows this, flirts with her.

Figaro overhears and gets angry with Susanna, who then punishes him for doubting her.

The Count comes and flirts with "Susanna" (the Countess).

Figaro, Susanna, and the Countess make a plan.

Marcellina claims that Figaro promised to marry her and sues him. Marcellina almost wins, until it is discovered that Figaro is really the lovechild she had with Bartolo.

Figaro tricks the Count into blessing his and Susanna's marriage.

All identities are revealed and the Count apologizes for being so foolish.

Cherubino is in love with the Countess.

Everyone lives happily ever after.

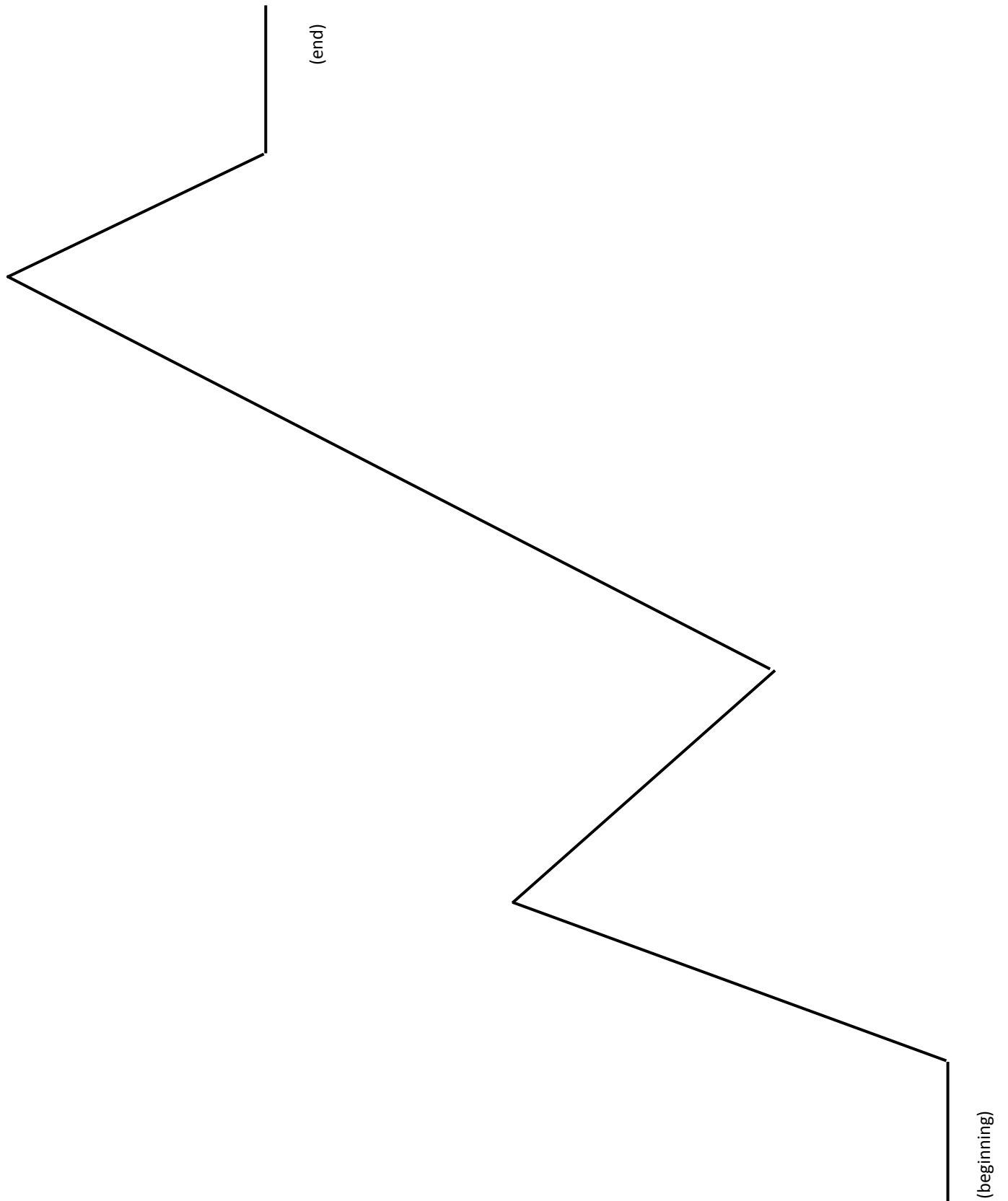
The Count swears to break Figaro and Susanna's engagement and to send Cherubino away.

The Count agrees to meet the Countess (who he thinks is Susanna) in the garden.

The Count finds Cherubino with Susanna and tries to send him away.



## storyline activity, cont'd.



# VISUAL ARTS

## activity

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 Mozart's opera *The Marriage of Figaro*, create grandiose scenes with large sets and a large chorus of singers.



# VISUAL ARTS ACTIVITY

## 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?

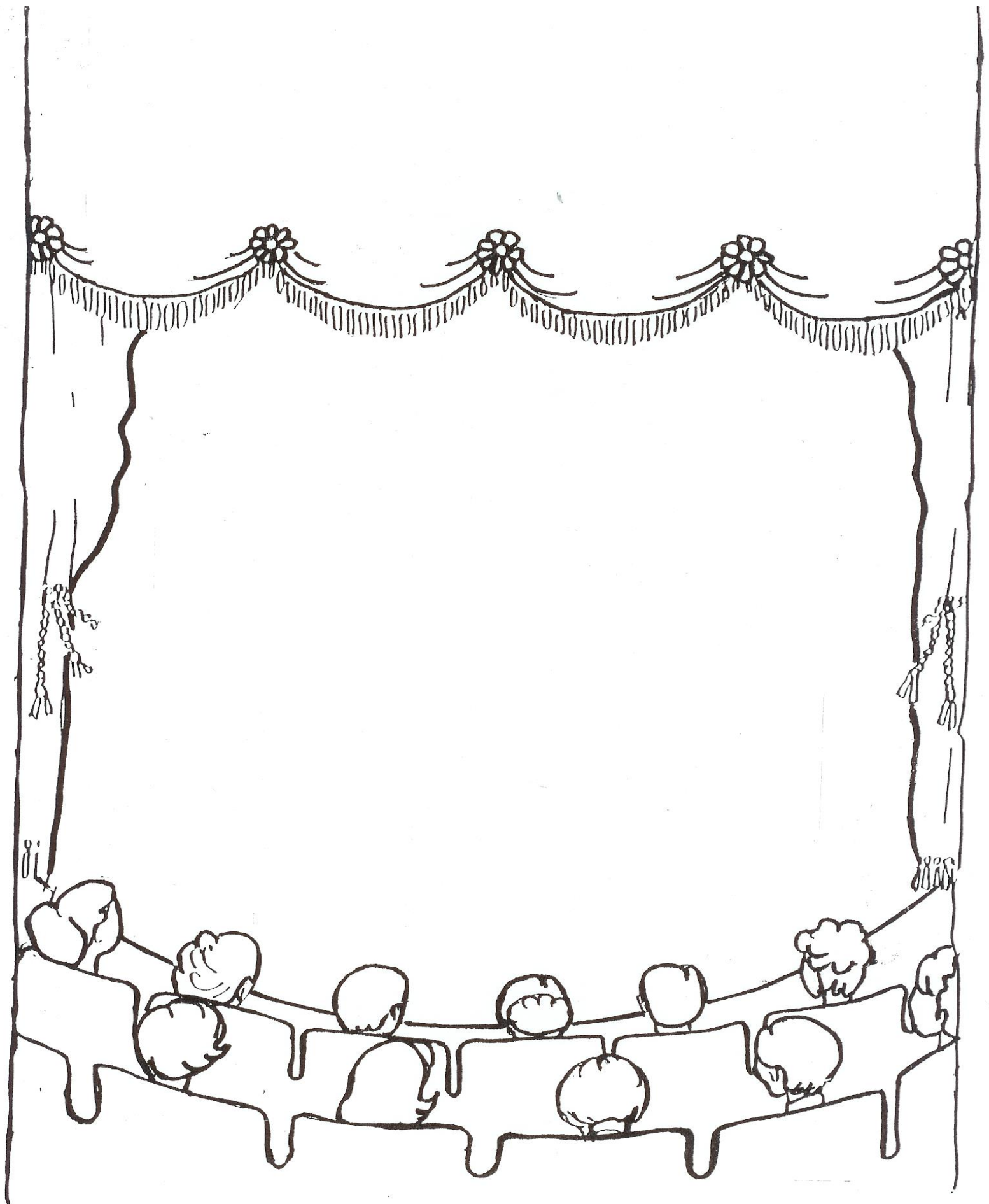
### 3.) Planning

- a.) Was it difficult to include everything in the amount of space 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)?

## 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).







# CREATIVE WRITING

## activity

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.



# CREATIVE WRITING WORKSHEET

*The Marriage of Figaro* takes place in Spain in the 1700s. Imagine instead that it took place in America today. Think about the various details of the plot and setting that would have to change. For example: What plot would Marcellina have to break up Susanna and Figaro? Who would the Count be? How would Cherubino know the Countess? How could you rewrite the characters and setting of *Figaro* to be contemporary while still ensuring that the conflict and resolution make sense? Use the space below to outline your thoughts.

# LOGIC PUZZLES

*activity*

This activity is a great addition to any math lesson. It emphasizes logic and reasoning, while simultaneously encouraging students to read critically. The worksheet also includes a brief explanation about wedding customs in Spain.





# LOGIC PUZZLES ACTIVITY

## INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDE

### Topics of Discussion:

1. Spanish history and culture
2. Probability, logic, and reasoning

### Instructions:

1. As a class, read the handout on wedding customs in Spain.
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 Spanish history and culture, or of history and culture in general.
2. The math worksheet would be a good way to warm up at the beginning of a math class, or as a filler activity between subjects.

	Ynes	Alicia	Camila	Renata	Church 1	Church 2	Church 3	Church 4
Paulo								
Raul								
Esteban								
Leon								
Church 1								
Church 2								
Church 3								
Church 4								

*\*Teal boxes indicate correct answer.*

# **LOGIC PUZZLES ACTIVITY**

## **SPANISH WEDDING CUSTOMS HANDOUT**

Spain is a nation of many regions, most of which were once independent countries, so wedding customs sometimes vary from area to area. Traditionally, the groom gives a watch to the bride's father when his proposal is accepted.

Though some brides still uphold custom by embroidering their groom's wedding shirt, today's Spanish brides generally choose white wedding dresses for themselves rather than the black lace or silk gowns that were once popular. No matter what color the dress, lacey mantillas secured with combs often complete the ensemble. In Andalucia (Andalusia), a few brides wear a frilled, flamenco style dress in homage to the distinctive regional dance.

Flower selections vary from region to region. In Seville (Sevilla), where richly-scented orange trees abound, brides wear orange blossom wreaths or carry generous bouquets to represent the promise and fulfillment of the orange tree. Brides in Andalusia prefer pink and white rose garlands, while Castilian brides wear white flowers.

Because dining late is a Mediterranean custom, wedding ceremonies often aren't scheduled until evening. According to tradition, the bride's father escorts his daughter to the church after having ensured that the groom has not seen her the night before the ceremony. The groom's mother walks down the aisle with her son.

Spanish wedding ceremonies are marked by an exchange of 13 gold coins in a special purse or box. Details of this custom vary from source to source, but even today it is readily possible to buy reproduction coins to honor the tradition. Whether gold or imitation, these coins are blessed by the officiating priest. They are said to represent Jesus Christ and his apostles, so they not only have a religious connotation but also a practical one since they represent a dowry, a pledge of the new groom's willingness to support his wife. The bride and bridegroom exchange wedding rings as well. These are worn on the ring fingers of their right hands.

As they emerge from the church, the newlyweds are often greeted with firecrackers. Once the reception begins, the festivities continue into the night with dining and dancing. The wedding dance is called "sequidillas manchegas." Guests who dance with the bride, traditionally give her money, but pieces of the groom's tie and/or the bride's garter may also be auctioned off for good luck.

Though the Spanish bride throws her bouquet to whomever will be next to marry, she also hands out pins with a flower motif to unmarried ladies who attach them to their clothing upside down. The hope is the pins will be lost during the dancing, and therefore indicate the lady will soon marry. Other favors for wedding guests are cigars for the gentlemen and something nicely scented for the ladies.

Area delicacies are always on the reception menu. Paella, a delicious seafood and rice stew, is popular along the coast while sangria, a red wine punch, is found at most Spanish gatherings. The wedding sponge cake is rich with fruit and almonds.

*-Courtesy of [www.worldweddingcustoms.com](http://www.worldweddingcustoms.com)*

# LOGIC PUZZLES ACTIVITY

## SPANISH WEDDING CUSTOMS HANDOUT

**Directions:** Use the clues below to figure out which man is marrying which woman, and what church they're getting married in. Shade in the correct answers completely, and mark an X in all of the other boxes.

	Ynes	Alicia	Camila	Renata	Church 1	Church 2	Church 3	Church 4
Paulo								
Raul								
Esteban								
Leon								
Church 1								
Church 2								
Church 3								
Church 4								

### Clues:

1. Paulo is not marrying Renata.
2. Camila, who will be in marrying Esteban, is not in an even numbered church.
3. Leon's wedding is in stall 2.
4. Raul is glad that he did not propose to Alicia because he loves his own bride so much.
5. Ynes didn't like church 4, so she and her fiancée moved two churches to the left.
6. Leon is marrying Ynes.
7. Camila's church number can only be divided evenly by one.
8. The girl that Paulo is marrying is in the church that equals 2x2.



# Marriage of Figaro Word Search

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

ALMAVIVA  
 BARBARINA  
 BARTOLO  
 BASILIO  
 CHERUBINO  
 COMEDY  
 COUNTESS

MARCELLINA  
 MOZART  
 PIN  
 SPAIN  
 SUSANNA  
 TRICKERY  
 WEDDING

# 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 Traviata** (dress rehearsal)  
☐ **Marriage of Figaro** (Please circle one: dress rehearsal / matinee)  
☐ **Backstage Workshops** (Please circle one: Nov. 5 | Nov. 9 | May 2 | May 6 | May 7 | May 10)  
☐ **Touring Opera Performance** (Please circle one: *Hansel and Gretel* / *Romeo & Juliet*)  
☐ **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 back if 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