

Saskatoon Opera  
presents

# ***Die Fledermaus***

## **(The Bat)**

by  
**Johann Strauss, Jr.**

Libretto by Carl Haffner and Richard Genée  
based on the play *Le Réveillon* by Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy

*Die Fledermaus* was first performed on April 5, 1874, Vienna, Austria

The performance will be sung in German with English dialogue  
with English surtitles projected above the stage.

The performance is approximately 2.5 hours in length with one 20 minute intermission

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# Welcome to Saskatoon Opera

This Study Guide has been created to assist you in preparing your students for their visit to the opera. It is our hope that you will be able to add this to your existing curriculum in order to expand your students' understanding of opera, literature, history, and the fine arts. Materials in the Study Guide may be copied and distributed to students. Some students may wish to go over the information at home if there is insufficient time to discuss in class. Make the opera experience more meaningful and enjoyable by sharing with them knowledge and background on opera and *Die Fledermaus* before they attend.

**Please Note:** *The Dress Rehearsal is the last opportunity the singers will have on stage to work with the orchestra before Opening Night. Since vocal demands are so great on opera singers, some singers choose not to sing in full voice during the Dress Rehearsal in order to preserve their vocal chords and avoid unnecessary strain.*

## A Short Introduction to Opera

An opera, like a play, is a dramatic form of theatre that includes scenery, props, and costumes. In opera, however, the actors are trained singers who sing their lines instead of speaking them. An orchestra accompanies the singers. A conductor coordinates both the singers on stage and the musicians in the orchestra pit.

Opera consists of many dimensions: the human voice, orchestral music, the visual arts (scenery, costumes and special effects), drama (tragedy or comedy), and occasionally dance. The melding of these elements can make you cry tears of joy or sadness, produce laughter or anger, and transport you to a magical land of music and song.

Opera has its roots in Greek drama and originated in Florence, Italy, in the late 1500's, with a small group of men who were members of a Camerata (Italian for society). The intellectuals, poets and musicians of the Camerata decided they wanted words to be a featured aspect of music. They used ancient Greek drama as their inspiration, including the use of a chorus to comment on the action. The Camerata laid down three principles for their new art form:

1. The text must be understood; the accompaniment must be very simple and should not distract from the words.
2. The words must be sung with correct and natural declamation, as if they were spoken, and must avoid the rhythms of songs.
3. The melody must interpret the feeling of the text.

The first significant composer to fully develop the ideas of the Camerata was Jacopo Peri (1561-1633), whose opera *La Dafne*, based on a Greek myth, was performed in 1594 and is regarded as the first opera. Operas continue to be composed today.

Operas are divided into scenes and acts that contain different types of vocal pieces for one or many singers. An aria is a vocal solo that focuses on a character's emotions rather than actions. A recitative is sung dialogue or speech that occurs between arias and ensembles.

Composers write the score or the music for the opera. Sometimes the composer will also write the text of the opera, but most often they work with a librettist. The story of the opera is written as a libretto, a text that is easily set to music. In the past, the libretto was also bound and sold to the audience. Today, the audience can easily follow the plot with the use of surtitles. Surtitles are the English translation of the libretto, and are projected onto a screen above the stage.

There are several differences between opera and musicals like *Phantom of the Opera*. One significant difference is the 'partnership' between the music and the drama in an opera. Musicals use songs to help tell a story while in an opera, the music contributes to the drama, it does not only accompany it. The musical style is another important difference between the two art forms; opera is usually classical and complex, while musicals feature pop songs and sometimes rock and roll. Also, singers in musicals have microphones hidden in their costumes or wigs to amplify their voices. The voices of opera singers are strong enough that no amplification is needed, even in a large venue. Furthermore, operas are almost completely sung, while musicals commonly use spoken words. Some operas have spoken words. These are called singspiels (German) and opera-comique (French). Examples are Mozart's *The Magic Flute* and Bizet's *Carmen*, respectively.

# Audience Etiquette

Information to help you, and those around you, to enjoy the opera experience.

- Dress to be comfortable. Many people enjoy dressing up in formal attire.
- Arrive on time. Latecomers disturb the singers and others in the audience. Latecomers will only be seated at suitable breaks — often not until intermission.
- Find your seat with the help of your teacher or an usher.
- Remove your hat. This is respectful to the artists and to people sitting behind you.
- Turn off cell phones, pagers, digital watch alarms, and all electronic devices.
- Leave your camera at home. A flash is very disturbing to the artists and audience members.
- Save all conversations for the intermission. The audience is critical to the success of the show — without you, there can be no performance.
- Get comfortable before the performance begins. Read your program before the performance — rustling through the program during the show can disrupt everyone.
- Clap as the lights dim and the conductor appears and bows to the audience. Watch as the conductor then turns to the orchestra and takes up his or her baton to signal the beginning of the opera.
- Listen to the prelude or overture before the curtain rises. It is part of the performance and is an opportunity to identify common musical themes that may reoccur in the opera.
- Sit still during the performance. Only whisper when absolutely necessary, as a whisper is heard all over the theatre, and never, except in an emergency, stand during the performance.
- Applaud (or shout Bravo!) at the end of an aria or chorus piece to show your enjoyment. The end of a piece can be identified by a pause in the music.
- Laugh when something is funny — this is a performance and you are expected to respond!
- English surtitles are projected above the stage to help the audience understand the story.
- Listen for subtleties in the music. The tempo, volume, and complexity of the music and singing often depict the “feeling” or “sense” of the action or character.

**Have fun and enjoy the show!!**

# About the Composer – Johann Strauss, Jr.

Johann Strauss, Jr. was the first of five children born in Vienna to the musician, Johann Strauss, Sr., and his wife Anna. Strauss Sr. discouraged his children from pursuing music as a career but Anna supported Johann Jr. in his musical ambitions and, like his two younger brothers (Josef and Eduard), he became very successful.

Strauss, Jr. had to attend the Polytechnic school, but his academic career was short-lived. He secretly studied the violin and at the age of 19, performed in his first concert where the audience demanded 19 encores.

Strauss, Jr., with his two brothers, truly developed what is known as the classical Viennese Waltz. The early death of their father, however, helped Johann Jr. establish his musical career, since Johann Sr. had been such a dominant force in Viennese music. Strauss, Jr.'s music became popular throughout Europe and North America and he performed concerts to very appreciative crowds on both continents.

Strauss married the singer Jetty Treffz when he was in his late 30s. While some claim that Jacques Offenbach encouraged him to write operetta, others suggest it was his first wife, Jetty. Strauss called his work 'comical operas.'

For many, Strauss is best known for his waltz, the Blue Danube, but he was a prolific composer, writing over 500 works including waltzes and at least 16 stage works. *Die Fledermaus* and *The Gypsy Baron (Der Zigeunerbaron)* remain the most popular of his stage works today.

Despite having been single for almost 40 years before marrying the first time, Strauss could not tolerate being alone after the sudden death of Jetty in 1878. His second marriage, to actress and singer Anglika "Lili" Diettrich, came just seven weeks after Jetty had died. The second marriage ended when Diettrich left him in 1882. For several years he lived with Adele Deutsch, unable to marry her because the Roman Catholic Church did not recognize Strauss' divorce from Diettrich. Deutsch and Strauss, Jr. were married in 1887 and she, like his first wife, was considered to have been an inspiration to him.

Born in October 1825, Johann Strauss died in June 1899. At the time, he was working on a ballet.

*Adapted from San Diego Opera's Operapedia.org, About Vienna.org, and the Johann Strauss Society of Great Britain*

## The Librettists – Carl Haffner and Richard Genée

The original source for *Die Fledermaus* is a farce by German playwright Julius Roderich Benedix (1811– 1873), *Das Gefängnis* (The Prison). Another source is a French vaudeville play, *Le Réveillon*, by Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy. Their play was first translated by Carl Haffner (1804–1876) as a play to be produced in Vienna but was adapted into a libretto for Strauss, Jr. by Richard Genée (1823–1895). Genée took credit for the translation of the play and claimed he never knew Haffner.

## Background to Die Fledermaus

The Strauss family was Vienna's leading musical family from the 1830s to the 1960s. It was Johann Strauss the elder and his oldest son, Johann, who essentially created what is now known as the "Viennese waltz."

*Die Fledermaus* is an operetta, a musical form similar to operas but telling the story with 'popular' music and more spoken dialogue. The operetta is considered to have originated in the 1850s in Paris by the composer Jacques Offenbach. He wrote one act comedies mocking the political and social climate of the time.

The story of *Die Fledermaus* is based on a German play, *Das Gefängnis* (The Prison) and on the French vaudeville play, *Le Réveillon*, by Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy.

*Adapted from San Diego Opera's Operapedia.org*

## Synopsis

**ACT I.** Vienna, 1890s. Through the windows of the Eisenstein home floats the serenade of Alfred, a tenor still in love with his old flame Rosalinde, now the wife of Gabriel von Eisenstein. Adele, a chambermaid, saunters in reading an invitation to a masked ball; Rosalinde, bedeviled by a headache and believing she has heard Alfred's voice, enters but finds only Adele. The maid asks for the evening off to visit a "sick aunt," a plea her mistress dismisses. Alfred steps into the room and begins to woo Rosalinde, who resists his verbal blandishments but melts on hearing his high A. The suitor leaves as Eisenstein and his lawyer, Blind, arrive from a session in court: Eisenstein has been sentenced to a fortnight in jail for a civil offence. No sooner does he dismiss the incompetent advocate than his friend Falke comes to invite Eisenstein to a masquerade, suggesting he bring along his repeater stop-watch, which charms all the ladies, so he can accumulate pleasant memories to sustain him during his confinement in jail. Rosalinde joins Adele in a bittersweet farewell to Eisenstein before he goes off to prison, to his wife's surprise, in full evening dress. Sending Adele to her "aunt," Rosalinde receives the ardent Alfred. Their tête-à-tête is interrupted by the warden Frank, who mistakes Alfred for the man he has come to arrest. Rosalinde persuades Alfred to save her name by posing as her husband, and Frank carts him off to jail.

**ACT II.** In an antechamber at the palace of Prince Orlofsky, the nobleman's guests, Adele and her sister Ida among them, await the arrival of their host. Orlofsky enters, quite bored — even with Falke's promise of a comedy of errors. The prince proclaims his guests free to do anything that suits their fancy — "Chacun à son gout." Adele, dressed in one of Rosalinde's most elegant gowns, laughs off Eisenstein's suggestion that she resembles his wife's chambermaid. Frank enters, and Rosalinde, also invited by Falke, arrives disguised as a temperamental Hungarian countess; she is soon wooed by her own husband, whose pocket watch she steals to hold as proof of his philandering. Rosalinde agrees to sing a song about her "native" land, a spirited czardas, after which the guests move on to a magnificent dining area to toast the joys of wine, good fellowship and love. Champagne flows, and the guests dance wildly until dawn. When the clock strikes six, Eisenstein staggers off to keep his appointment at the jail.

**ACT III.** Moments later at the prison, Frosch, a drunken jailer, tries to keep order among the inmates, who are unable to sleep because of Alfred's singing. Frank arrives, still giddy with champagne, followed shortly by Ida and Adele, who, thinking him a theatrical agent, believes he might further her stage aspirations. Frank, hearing someone at the door, hides the girls in a cell and then admits Eisenstein, who has come to begin his sentence. The new prisoner is surprised to learn his cell is already occupied by a man who claims to be Eisenstein and who was found supping with Rosalinde; to obtain an explanation from the impostor, Eisenstein snatches a legal robe and wig from his astonished lawyer. No sooner is he disguised than Rosalinde hurries in to secure Alfred's release and press divorce charges against her errant husband. With her would-be paramour, she confides her flirtation to the "lawyer." Enraged, Eisenstein removes his disguise and accuses his wife of promiscuity, at which Rosalinde whips out the watch she took from him at the ball. Orlofsky and his guests arrive to celebrate the reconciliation of Rosalinde and Eisenstein, singing a final toast as Eisenstein is taken away.

*Courtesy of Opera News*

## What to Listen For

The overture of *Die Fledermaus* perfectly captures the spirit of the entire score. Virtually every note of this operetta was inspired by the rhythms of the dances that were wildly popular all over Europe in 1874. Strauss was prolific in the composition of dances like the polka and the *galopp* or can-can. The polka was a Bohemian dance introduced in Prague in 1837. There are almost as many polkas in *Die Fledermaus* as there are waltzes, for example, the polkas that appear in Act I accompanying Adele's reading of her sister's letter inviting her to Orlofsky's party, Rosalinde's "own" polka at the very end of Act I as she diffuses the suspicions of Frank the jailer and sends Alfred off to prison in the place of her husband. Act II begins with a polka and, most famously, the finale of Act II is centered on another polka, the "Champagne Trio" and chorus, the text of which celebrates the inebriating effects of this sparkling beverage.

It is the lilt of the Viennese waltz that gives *Die Fledermaus* its soul and each waltz matches the sentiments of the text. When Alfred invites Rosalinde to drink away their cares as he attempts to seduce her, Strauss accompanies the seduction with a waltz. In Act II, the disguised Eisenstein approaches the similarly disguised Adele, absolutely sure that this woman is his wife's maid; Adele puts him off with the famous waltz, "My dear Marquis." One almost wants to say that whenever one hears a waltz in *Die Fledermaus*, a character is involved in the seduction of another!

There are waltzes that we don't consciously think are waltzes, such as the lovely "Brüderlein" introduced by Dr. Falke at the climax of the ball to toast brotherhood and love. Suddenly we realize that the waltz is capable of being melancholy, sentimental, and wistful, not just danceable. But then, of course, there is the sparkling exuberance of the "Fledermaus" waltz itself, first heard in the overture and then again as the culmination of the masked ball at the end of Act II.

This score is infectious. The tunes and rhythms carry us away. That is, of course, what the producers hoped in 1874 at the Theater an der Wien when *Die Fledermaus* premiered. The "Black Friday" Stock Exchange crash had occurred the year before (in 1873), the Imperial house of Hapsburg was beginning to crumble and already the elements that would bring about the First World War were appearing as microscopic rips in the glittering fabric that was Vienna. In the same way that the Busby Berkeley film musicals of the 1930s helped Americans deal with the Depression, operettas like *Die Fledermaus* gave contemporary Viennese audiences a way to escape their very real fears about the decaying world around them.

***Adapted from San Diego Opera – Operapedia.org***

## The Operatic Voice

Operatic singing developed in Europe during the 17th century. The vocal demands are far greater on an opera singer than on any other singer. Opera singers rarely use microphones, and therefore must develop their voices to make a sound that will project and be heard above an orchestra and be heard throughout a large theatre.

After years of practice and study, an opera singer learns to use his or her body as an amplification device. By controlling the muscles of the diaphragm (a muscle beneath the lungs and above the stomach) the singer can regulate the amount of breath used. By tightening the diaphragm the singer can push out the right amount of air to make the vocal cords vibrate. The speed at which the cords vibrate determines the pitch. As the sound passes through the mouth it resonates in the upper chest cavities and the sinus cavities of the face and head. These cavities act as small echo chambers and help amplify the sound. The shape of the mouth and the placement of the tongue near the lips contribute to the tone and sound of the words.

Many singers begin their operatic training in university. Opera students study singing, music history, composition and vocal pedagogy (voice teaching). In addition to music classes, they study diction and often study at least one foreign language. After university, singers begin to work in the professional world. Their first roles are usually small parts, but if they continue to study and train, they may move on to the bigger principal roles.

Professional singers develop a number of roles in their repertoire. Since the principal artists are required to have their parts memorized before rehearsals begin, singers must prepare well in advance of each contract. Singers have voice teachers who help them refine their singing techniques and many will also have an acting coach. Even a well-established singer will have a vocal coach to teach singing and acting techniques for specific roles.

Each person's vocal tract is constructed differently. The roles that a singer performs are dependent mostly upon their vocal range, but within the vocal ranges, there are many colours and weights of voice that further determine which roles he or she can sing safely. Vocal colour refers to the richness of the sound and vocal weight refers to how powerful a voice sounds.

After the role has been studied intensely and the singer is hired to perform, they arrive at the opera company for the rehearsals. This time is spent refining the music with the conductor and staging the action with the stage director. Each director has a different idea of how the character should be played, and each conductor has a different idea of how the character should sound, therefore the singer must modify his or her techniques to reach the desired result.

Physical health is a major priority to a singer. Contrary to popular belief not all opera singers are overweight. Conventional wisdom used to state that excessive weight gave added volume and richness to the voice however, in recent years, people have discovered that physical fitness can give similar benefits to a voice. Plus, the overall health benefits of being in shape overshadow any loss of vocal power. Most singers, like professional athletes try to avoid such substances as tobacco, alcohol and caffeine.

### **There are six basic vocal categories:**

- Women:**
- Soprano:** The highest female voice. Usually plays the heroine in the opera.
  - Mezzo-Soprano:** The middle-range female voice. Called an alto in choral arrangements, mezzo-sopranos can play a wide variety of characters including gypsies, mothers and even the part of a young man (trouser role).
  - Contralto:** The lowest female voice. Usually plays unique roles including fortune-tellers, witches and older women. Not very common.
- Men:**
- Tenor:** The highest male voice, similar to a trumpet in range, tone color and acoustical “ring.” Usually plays the hero or the romantic lead in the opera.
  - Baritone:** The middle-range male voice, often plays the leader of mischief in comic opera or the villain in tragic opera, sometimes even the hero.
  - Bass:** The lowest male voice. Usually portrays old, wise men, or foolish, comic men.

### **The following terms can be used to describe special characteristics in a vocal range:**

- Coloratura:** a light, bright voice that has the ability to sing many notes quickly, usually with an extended upper range.
- Countertenor:** male singer with the highest male voice range, generally singing within the female contralto or mezzo soprano range.
- Lyric:** A light to medium weight voice, often singing beautiful sweeping melodies.
- Dramatic:** Dark, heavy and powerful voice, capable of sustained and forceful singing.

*Compiled from Opera Columbus Study Guide*

# Glossary: Important Words in Opera

<b>Act</b>	a section of the opera that is then divided into scenes.
<b>Aria</b>	means “air” in Italian. This is a piece of music written for a one singer (soloist), usually with instrumental accompaniment.
<b>Aside</b>	a secret comment from an actor directly to the audience that the other characters cannot hear.
<b>Basso buffo</b> ( <i>Italian</i> )	a bass singer who specializes in comic characters.
<b>Basso profundo</b> ( <i>Italian</i> )	the most serious bass voice.
<b>Baton</b>	short stick that the conductor uses to lead the orchestra.
<b>Bel Canto</b>	Italian phrase literally meaning “beautiful singing.” A traditional Italian style of singing emphasizing tone, phrasing, coloratura passages, and technique. Also refers to the operas written in this style.
<b>Blocking</b>	directions given to the performers for movement on stage.
<b>Bravo</b> ( <i>Italian</i> )	a form of appreciation shouted by audience members at the end of a particularly pleasing performance. Technically, Bravo refers to a male performer, Brava refers to a female performer and Bravi refers to many performers.
<b>Buffo</b>	from the Italian for “buffoon.” A singer of comic roles (basso-buffo) or a comic opera (opera- buffa.)
<b>Cadenza</b>	a passage of singing, often at the end of an aria, which shows off the singer’s vocal ability.
<b>Castrato</b> ( <i>Italian</i> )	a castrated male prized for his high singing voice.
<b>Choreographer</b>	the person who designs the steps of a dance.
<b>Chorus</b>	a group of singers of all vocal ranges, singing together to support the vocal leads.
<b>Classical</b>	the period in music which comes after the Baroque and before the Romantic, roughly from the birth of Mozart to shortly after the death of Beethoven. It represents the greatest standardization in orchestral form and tonality.
<b>Coloratura</b>	elaborate ornamentation of music written for a singer using many fast notes and trills. Also used to describe a singer who sings this type of music.
<b>Composer</b>	the individual who writes all the music for both voice and instrument.
<b>Comprimario</b> ( <i>Italian</i> )	a nineteenth century term referring to secondary or supporting roles such as confidantes, messengers, and matchmakers.
<b>Conductor</b>	the person responsible for the musical interpretation and coordination of the performance. The conductor controls the tempo, the dynamic level and the balance between singers and orchestra.
<b>Crescendo</b>	a build in the volume or dynamic of the music.
<b>Cue</b>	a signal to enter or exit from the stage, to move or to change lighting or scenery; or a signal given by the conductor to the musicians.
<b>Curtain Call</b>	occurs at the end of the performance when all the cast members and the conductor take bows. This can occur in front of the curtain or on the open stage.
<b>Designer</b>	a production can have two or three designers: a lighting designer, a costume designer, a set designer, or someone who is both costume and set designer. They work closely with the stage director to give the production a distinctive look.

<b>Diva</b>	literally, “goddess” in Italian. An important female opera star. The masculine form is divo.
<b>Dress Rehearsal</b>	the final rehearsal before opening night, includes costumes, lights, makeup, etc. Sometimes it is necessary to stop for adjustments, but an attempt is made to make it as much like a regular performance as possible.
<b>Encore</b>	a piece that is performed after the last scheduled piece of a concert. because the audience wants to hear more music even though the concert is over.
<b>Ensemble</b>	a part of the opera written for a group of two or more singers i.e, duet, trio, quartet, quintet, etc. This may or may not include the chorus.
<b>Falsetto</b>	the upper part of a voice in which the vocal cords do not vibrate completely. Usually used by males to imitate a female voice.
<b>Finale</b>	the last musical number of an opera or an act.
<b>Grand Opera</b>	spectacular French opera of the Romantic period, lavishly staged, with a historically- based plot, a huge cast, an unusually-large orchestra, and ballet. It also refers to opera without spoken dialogue.
<b>Helden</b>	German prefix meaning “heroic”. Usually used in ‘heldentenor.”
<b>House</b>	the auditorium and front of the theatre excluding the stage, backstage areas.
<b>Impresario</b>	the proprietor, manager, or conductor of an opera or concert company; one who puts on or sponsors an entertainment; manager, producer.
<b>Interlude</b>	a short piece of instrumental music played between scenes and acts.
<b>Intermission</b>	a break between acts of an opera. The lights go on and the audience is free to move around.
<b>Libretto</b>	Italian for ‘little book’: the opera’s text. Librettist: writer of the opera’s text.
<b>Lyrical</b>	used to describe a light to medium weight voice with an innocent quality, capable of both sustained, forceful singing and delicate effects.
<b>Maestro</b>	Italian for master. A courtesy title for the conductor (male or female).
<b>Mark</b>	to sing, but not at full voice. A full-length opera is very hard on a singer’s voice so most performers mark during rehearsals. During the Dress Rehearsal singers try to sing at full voice for part if not all of the rehearsal.
<b>Motif or Leitmotif</b>	a recurring musical theme used to identify an emotion, person, place, or object.
<b>Opera</b>	a dramatic presentation that is set to music. Almost all of it is sung, and the orchestra is an equal partner with the singers. Like a play, an opera is acted on stage with costumes, scenery, makeup, etc. Opera is the plural form of the Latin word opus, which means “work.”
<b>Opera buffa (Italian)</b>	an opera about ordinary people, usually, but not always comic. First developed in the eighteenth century.
<b>Opera seria (Italian)</b>	a serious style of opera usually about gods, goddesses, or ancient heroes.
<b>Opera-comique (French) or Singspiel (German)</b>	opera that has spoken dialogue.
<b>Operetta</b>	lighthearted opera with spoken dialogue
<b>Orchestra</b>	an ensemble, led by a conductor, that is comprised of string, woodwind, brass and percussion instruments.
<b>Orchestra pit</b>	sunken area in front of the stage where the orchestra sits.
<b>Overture</b>	an orchestral introduction to the opera played before the curtain rises.

<b>Pitch</b>	how high or low a note sounds.
<b>Prelude</b>	a short introduction that leads into an act without pause.
<b>Prima Donna</b>	Italian for 'first lady': the leading woman in an opera. Because of the way some of them behaved in the past, it often refers to someone who is acting in a superior and demanding fashion. The term for a leading man is primo uomo.
<b>Principal</b>	a major singing role, or the singer who performs such a role.
<b>Production</b>	the combination of sets, costumes, props, and lights etc.
<b>Props</b>	objects carried or used on stage by the performers.
<b>Proscenium</b>	the front opening of the stage which frames the action.
<b>Raked Stage</b>	a stage that slants downwards towards the audience.
<b>Recitative</b>	lines of dialogue that are sung, used to quickly advance the plot.
<b>Rehearsal</b>	a working session in which the singers prepare for public performance.
<b>Score</b>	the written music of an opera or other musical work.
<b>Soubrette (French)</b>	pert young female character with a light soprano voice.
<b>Spinto (Italian)</b>	a lyric voice with the power and incisiveness for dramatic climaxes.
<b>Stage Areas</b>	refers to the various sections of the stage as seen by those on stage. See section on "Stage Facts."
<b>Stage Director</b>	the person in charge of the stage action. He or she shows the performers where and when to move and helps them create their characters. The stage director develops a concept for how the entire performance should look and feel. He/ she works closely with the stage managers, lighting designer, set designers, costume designer and wig and make-up artists to make his / her vision into reality.
<b>Stage Manager</b>	the person who coordinates all elements of the performance.
<b>Supernumeraries (Supers)</b>	appear on stage in in non-singing/ speaking roles
<b>Surtitles</b>	the English translations of the opera's language, projected above the stage during a performance to help the audience follow the story. Much film subtitles.
<b>Synopsis</b>	a short summary of the story of the opera.
<b>Tableau</b>	occurs at the end of a scene or act, when all cast members on stage freeze in position and remain that way until the curtain closes. It looks as though that moment has been captured in a photograph.
<b>Tempo</b>	speed of the music.
<b>Trill</b>	very quick alternation between two adjacent notes. See coloratura.
<b>Trouser role</b>	the role of an adolescent boy or young man, written for and sung by a woman, often a mezzo-soprano. Also known as a pants role.
<b>Verismo</b>	describes a realistic style of opera that started in Italy at the end of the 19th century.

# Workshop #1 – Stage Business

**Objectives:** Students will be able to express and apply their knowledge of the areas of the stage through writing and movement. Students will investigate the historical background of stage positioning.

**Pre-class:** Tape a massive grid to the floor of the space you are working in. This can be used to physically point out the areas of the stage as well as be used for the game (“Director Says”).

## Activity #1 – Group Discussion

Have a group discussion with your class regarding why individuals might need to assign names for the different areas of the theatre, questioning the purpose that it serves.

## Activity #2 – Historical Significance of the Stage

Explain briefly the historical significance for the set-up of the theatre. Include such points as how the stage was originally raked so that the back portion of the stage was higher than the front portion. This was done because the audience’s seats were not raised as they usually are today. It enabled those individuals sitting in the back row of the theatre to see the players clearly. As a result the back of the stage is called up stage and the front of the stage is referred to as down stage.

You may also choose to discuss which areas of the stage are most important. For example, the strongest entrance is from stage left.

Distribute the “Stage Facts” on the next page, so that students can refer to it as you physically go to the taped area that you are explaining. You may choose to have them draw and copy the areas of the stage for themselves.

## Activity #3 – “Director Says” Game

The teacher designates one of the students as the director, or for the first round you can be the director. The remaining students are the performers.

The director gives out the directions: “Move upstage”, “Move stage right,” “Move to up centre,” etc. The director may give out directions to the entire group at once, small groups, or individuals eg: “All performers with red socks go to stage left.”

Students are out if they move in any direction other than the one the director gives. The director gives out directions more rapidly, and any performer who moves in the wrong direction or hesitates is out. You may need to have a judge.

## Stage Facts

Opera singers are required to act as well as sing and therefore they must understand the stage set-up. In rehearsals, the director will indicate to the singers what they should be doing and where they should do it. To do this they use a special vocabulary. Take a look at the diagram below in order to understand the different areas of the stage.

<b>UP RIGHT</b>	<b>UP CENTRE</b>	<b>UP LEFT</b>
<b>STAGE RIGHT</b>	<b>STAGE CENTRE</b>	<b>STAGE LEFT</b>
<b>DOWN RIGHT</b>	<b>DOWN CENTRE</b>	<b>DOWN LEFT</b>
<b>AUDIENCE</b>		

# Workshop #2 – Die Fledermaus

**Objectives:** Students will be able to express their knowledge of the storyline of Die Fledermaus through verbal and written expression. Students will be able to express their knowledge of character through writing a character sketch.

## Activity #1 – Story

Have the students read a version of Die Fledermaus. You can use the synopsis found in the Study Guide or most CD versions include a synopsis and often the libretto. You can choose to read it aloud to the students or have them read it silently. Have the students discuss what happens to the characters and why they think each character behaved the way they did. Do they think a similar story could be told in modern times or can they think of contemporary stories that have a similar theme?

For a more dramatic approach, read the libretto as a reader’s theatre, having students take turns speaking the different roles. If done in this manner, ask the students to put emotion into their voices and encourage exaggeration. You might have to start them off, but this will provide an interesting way of reading the story.

Another approach is to convert the synopsis into an improvised play. Have students create the dialogue between characters at key points in the story.

Incorporate the music. Have the students discuss what they hear. Some discussion topics include:

What mood does the music create? What does the music say about the character? How does it say it? What emotions are conveyed through the music?

## Activity #2 – Sharing with a group

After viewing the Dress Rehearsal, have the students discuss what they saw. To help focus conversations, get the students to create a list of qualities that they feel are key to understanding Die Fledermaus and its characters.

## Activity #3 – Creating a journal from point of view of a character

Allow students to pick a specific moment in the opera, preferably a point of conflict for the character. Have the students write a journal of those events from the point of view of their character. Explain to the students that they are to take on the persona of that character and should refer to the character through personal pronouns. Also, remind students that they are only to express information that their character would know.

## Character Profile

Name and role \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Physical Characteristics (their style and physical attributes) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Psychological Characteristics (mental aspects of character, how do they think about things?)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Emotional Characteristics (are they generally cheerful, sad, snobby, "off-balance" etc.?)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Family \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Career/Income (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Interests and Hobbies \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other interesting facts \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Workshop #3 – Writing a Review of Die Fledermaus

**Objectives:** Students will be able to write clear and well-supported expository essays. Students will utilize observation and critical thinking skills based on real-life, real-time experiences. Students can submit their writing for school publication or you can send to Saskatoon Opera. We would love to hear what the students thought.

## Activity #1 – Think-Group-Share

Individually students will write, in point form, the answers to the following questions:

1. What did you like about the opera? What did you dislike?
2. What did you think about the sets, props and costumes?
3. Would you have done something differently? Why?
4. What were you expecting? Did it live up to your expectations?
5. What did you think of the singers' portrayal of their characters?

Break the students into groups to discuss their feelings and reactions to the production. Have the students write on poster papers their answers or important points of their discussion. Encourage the students to go beyond the questions posed. Place their poster papers on the walls.

## Activity #2 – Gallery Walk

Have the groups travel around the room to examine the discussion poster papers. During the walk, students must write down one thing that surprised them, one thing that they didn't think of, and one thing that they would like explained. Once this is done, have a large group discussion about the different ideas that they encountered on their walk.

## Activity #3 – Outlining your review

Go over the essential aspects of a review including:

- a clearly stated purpose
- a coherent comparison/contrast organizational pattern
- a summary paragraph
- capturing the interest of the reader
- precise nouns
- revision for consistency of ideas You might give your students a few samples of reviews for fine arts events from the newspaper as examples, or ask them to bring in some reviews they find themselves. Have the students fill out the Review Outline worksheet. Once this has been completed, students may write their rough draft.

## Activity #4 – Peer Conferencing

Students will exchange reviews to critique and edit. Have the students use the "Peer Evaluation" worksheet to help guide them. Encourage the students to focus on effective coordination of ideas in sentences and the correct use of grammar and punctuation.

**Activity #5 – Creating the final draft**

Have students make the appropriate adjustments to their reviews. You could also have the students type the pieces up and organize them into a newspaper. Also have the students complete the “Self- evaluation” worksheet. Include this in the total mark.

Purpose (why are you writing this and who is your audience?)

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Plot Synopsis (including who sang what role, etc.)

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Paragraph #1 (compare and contrast, things you liked or didn't like)

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Paragraph #2 (compare and contrast, things you liked or didn't like)

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Paragraph #3 (compare and contrast, things you liked or didn't like)

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Summary/Closing Paragraph

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# Optional Activity/Approach

Be a music critic in the 1870s. Students imagine they are living at the time of the first performance of Die Fledermaus, in 1874.

## Activity #1 – Historical Research

Students will need to learn about the historical context in Europe in the 1870s. This will include understanding the political situation (eg, the Hapsburg Dynasty and its role in Europe), social norms, and cultural life, for example, the importance of dance in Europe.

## Activity #2 – Writing the review

Students may want to create a periodical from the time in which their review will be published. The review itself could incorporate quotes and/or headlines from actual historical reviews. The students' reviews can follow a similar outline to that for the activity above, but they must remember the time period in which they are pretending to write.

As with the previous activity, peer and self-evaluations of the reviews can be completed, using the outlines in the following page

## Peer Evaluation

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Name of peer evaluator: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Reviewer: \_\_\_\_\_ Review Title: \_\_\_\_\_

## Process & Product Assessment:

Scale: 5–Outstanding 4–Above Average 3–Average 2–Needs improvement 1–Unclear 0–Has not been done

- \_\_\_\_\_ Purpose of the piece clearly identified
- \_\_\_\_\_ Reader clearly taken into account (background, word choice)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Engaging to the reader (was it interesting to read?)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Complete sentence structure (grammar, spelling and punctuation)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Varied length and types of sentences used
- \_\_\_\_\_ Strong word choices (adjectives, adverbs and nouns)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Originality and creativity
- \_\_\_\_\_ Attention to detail and support of beliefs with examples
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ /40 (Total)

## Comments and Questions:

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**Self-Evaluation**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Reviewer: \_\_\_\_\_ Review Title: \_\_\_\_\_

**Process & Product Assessment:**

*Scale: 5–Outstanding 4–Above Average 3–Average 2–Needs improvement 1–Unclear 0–Has not been done*

- \_\_\_\_\_ Purpose of the piece clearly identified
- \_\_\_\_\_ Reader clearly taken into account (background, word choice)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Engaging to the reader (was it interesting to read?)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Complete sentence structure (grammar, spelling and punctuation)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Varied length and types of sentences used
- \_\_\_\_\_ Strong word choices (adjectives, adverbs and nouns)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Originality and creativity
- \_\_\_\_\_ Attention to detail and support of beliefs with examples
- \_\_\_\_\_ **/40 (Total)**

**Comments and Questions:**

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# Opera Comprehension Test

## General Opera

1. \_\_\_\_\_ A theatrical production incorporating both vocal and instrumental music, drama, and sometimes dance.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ The lowest male vocal range.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ An instrumental introduction to an opera.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ The area where the orchestra is seated.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ The female vocal range lying between soprano and contralto.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ A song for solo voice in an opera.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ The highest female vocal range.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ A song for two voices.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ The lowest female vocal range.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ The Italian word meaning "little book."
11. \_\_\_\_\_ The middle male vocal range.
12. \_\_\_\_\_ He/she has the artistic view for the performance of the opera.

## Die Fledermaus

1. The operetta Die Fledermaus takes place in \_\_\_\_\_ (give the location and approximate date).
2. Adele is chambermaid to \_\_\_\_\_.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ is mistakenly taken to jail instead of Eisenstein in the first act.
4. In the second act, Eisenstein gives his \_\_\_\_\_ (name the item) to a woman he doesn't realize is Rosalinde at the masked ball.
5. Die Fledermaus was composed by \_\_\_\_\_.
6. The libretto (words) for Die Fledermaus was written by \_\_\_\_\_.
7. The role of Prince Orlofsky is sung by a \_\_\_\_\_ (vocal category).

# Answers

## General Opera

1. opera
2. bass
3. overture
4. pit
5. mezzo-soprano
6. aria
7. soprano
8. duet
9. contralto
10. libretto
11. baritone
12. director

## Die Fledermaus

1. Vienna, 1890s
2. Rosalinde
3. Alfred
4. Stop watch
5. Johann Strauss, Jr.
6. Carl Haffner and Richard Genée
7. Mezzo-soprano

# Teacher's Evaluation Sheet

Please return this form to:

**Executive Director**  
Saskatoon Opera  
Box 25114 RPO River Heights  
Saskatoon, SK S7K 8B7  
(306) 374-1630

Your comments and suggestions are greatly appreciated. Please take a few minutes to fill out this questionnaire and return it to the address at right. Thank you for your comments and suggestions.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade(s) you teach: \_\_\_\_\_ Subjects: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you attended other performing arts events with your students in the past year?  Yes  No

If yes, what were they? \_\_\_\_\_

How did you find out about Saskatoon Opera's Student Dress Rehearsal? \_\_\_\_\_

Were you able to apply the Teacher's Study Guide in your classroom activities prior to coming to the opera?

Yes  No If no, please elaborate: \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, which sections of the Study Guide did you find most useful? \_\_\_\_\_

What would you add/delete to the Study Guide? \_\_\_\_\_

Did you spend classroom time discussing the performance after your students attended the opera?  Yes  No

Do you have any comments about the performance itself? \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to receive information on our future Student Dress Rehearsals?  Yes  No

How would you like to receive information?  Fax  Email  Letter  Other \_\_\_\_\_

Further comments and suggestions \_\_\_\_\_

