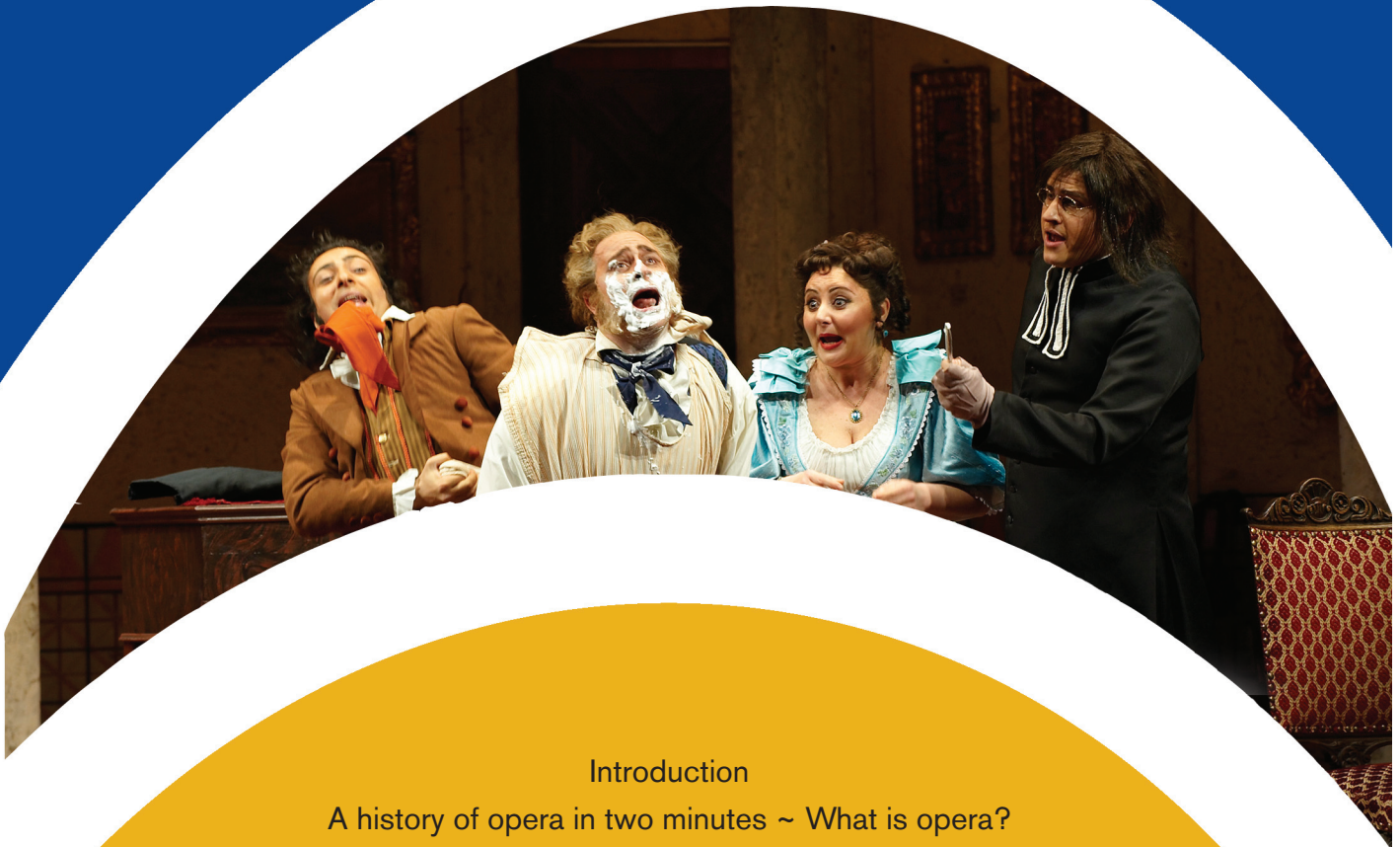




canadian **OPERA** company

THE BARBER OF SEVILLE

A Study Guide to accompany the Xstrata Ensemble Studio School Tour



Introduction

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About the COC's education and outreach department

How does a 400-year-old art form remain relevant to students today?

Students must put in practice the co-operation and problem solving skills necessary to work artistically while language, media literacy, math, science and history naturally blend with the music, drama and design components of opera. Our programming enriches Ontario Curriculum expectations and applies skills you are already teaching your students.

Education and Outreach at the Canadian Opera Company works with your school to provide appropriate programming for your teachers and students. The array of workshops ensures that you will find something that fits your schedule, your budget and your needs.

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Find resources, activity sheets and lesson plans at coc.ca/education.html

Opera programs for your school

If you and your students are interested in further exploring opera, Education and Outreach at the COC offers an array of programs and workshops to enhance classroom activities! **Call 416-306-2307 or e-mail education@coc.ca to find out more about the COC's educational opportunities.**

Grades K to 6

- ◆ Opera Storytime: A one-hour workshop led by professional artists which explores the stories and music of famous operas
- ◆ Create-an-Opera: An eight-week artist residency during which students create their very own opera
- ◆ Tours: See the inner workings of an opera company

Grades 7 to 12

- ◆ Living Opera Workshop: An intensive and fully interactive afternoon workshops focusing on the opera presented on the main stage and includes a visit from an opera singer and director and a backstage tour

Programs for Educators

- ◆ Opera Brings Life to the Classroom: DIY Opera! Teachers can learn from experienced artists and artist-educators on how to incorporate opera in their classroom. A joint venture between the Creative Arts Learning Partnership and the COC, these three professional development workshops aim to provide teachers the tools to link opera to various subjects in the Ontario Curriculum.

We're taking opera on the road!

Each year the Canadian Opera Company produces two touring operas suitable for students in Grades K to 6, introducing over 15,000 young people to this all-encompassing art form. The operas are designed with the young student in mind: no more than one hour in length, sung in English, visually stimulating with creative props and sets, and concluding with an interactive Q&A session with the performers.

This Study Guide provides teachers with general information about opera, as well as specific information related to the production. This guide is an introductory resource to complement our full unit plans and lesson outlines found at coc.ca. This guide and the online lesson plans easily integrate our school tour into the Ontario Ministry of Education Curriculum.

The Most Curtain Calls! On February 24, 1988, Luciano Pavarotti received 165 curtain calls and was applauded for one hour and seven minutes after a performance of Donizetti's L'elisir d'amore at the Deutsche Oper in Berlin, Germany. The greatest recorded number of curtain calls ever received at a ballet is 89 by Margot Fonteyn and Rudolf Nureyev after a performance of Swan Lake in Austria, in October 1964.

A history of opera in two minutes

Opera started in the late 16th century in Florence, Italy, at the beginning of the Baroque period of music. Early opera composers took many of their ideas from the ancient Greeks, who combined music and drama to tell a story more effectively. The Greeks also used a chorus to further the plot and comment on the action of the story.

Early operas recreated Greek tragedies with mythological themes. During the 17th and 18th centuries, opera used many different stories: some serious (called *opera seria*) and some light-hearted (called *opéra comique* or *opera buffa*). These stories include topics such as cultural clashes (*Madama Butterfly*), comedic farce (*The Barber of Seville*), politicians on foreign visits (*Nixon in China*), the celebration of Canadian heroes (*Louis Riel*), or the adaptation of children's stories (*The Little Prince*).

What is opera?

The term "opera" comes from the Italian meaning "work" or "piece," and it is usually applied to the European tradition of grand opera. Opera is a story told through music, drama and design. Musical equivalents to European opera can be found in Japan at the Peking Opera and in Africa where it is called Epic Storytelling. The Canadian Opera Company presents works in the western European tradition.

***Musical theatre is similar to opera in many ways, but very different in two specific ways:
1) Opera rarely has dialogue
2) Opera singers don't use microphones***

Glossary

A capellavocal music without instrumental accompaniment
Aria a song for one singer, often reflective in nature
Arioso aria-like, lyrical and expressive passage
Bawdy humour that is obscene or gross
Bel canto Italian for “beautiful singing” (also a style of music)
Chorus a group of singers who act and sing together as a unit
Coloratura ornamental vocal music where several notes are sung for each syllable of the text
Composer the individual who writes music
Conductor the musical director of the orchestra; sometimes referred to as “Maestro” (see below)
Dowry Money or property brought by a bride to her husband at marriage
Duet a musical piece written for two singers
Elopement to suddenly and secretly run away to get married
Ensemble connected singing by a number of performers
Finale the final musical number of an opera
Genre a category of art with distinct style or content
Gesture A motion of the limbs or body made to express or help express thought or to emphasize speech.
Improvisation .. a type of theatre where the acting and creating happens in the moment, there is not a formal script, often just some basic information like the setting or a prop.
Intoxicated to have too much alcohol, to be drunk
Lazzi pieces of well-rehearsed comic action commonly used in the Commedia dell’arte. During improvised performances, lazzi may be used to fill time or to ensure laughter in a show.
Legato flowing transition from one note to another
Librettist the individual who writes the libretto (story) of an opera
Libretto the words and story of the opera set to the composer’s music
Maestro a great composer or master of music; a title of respect for the conductor
Notary an official witness when there is a legal document to be signed
Octave the distance between one tone of scale and the next higher or lower tone of similar pitch (e.g., middle C and the C above are an octave apart)
Opera Buffa comic or funny operas
Opera Seria heroic or tragic operas
Overture the introductory musical passage played by the orchestra
Pitch the highness or lowness of sound
Recitative a type of singing unique to opera when words are delivered in a way that imitates speech
Scale music arranged in order of rising and falling pitches
Score music in written form with all the parts set down in relation to each other
Script The text of a play, broadcast, or movie
Serenade A love song, or music traditionally performed below a loved one’s window in the evening
Tempo the speed at which a piece of music moves
Timbre the quality of tone (vocal or instrumental)

Voice types

Just as each person’s speaking voice has a certain range and sound, each singer’s voice falls within a certain range and possesses a unique tone or quality. In the same way that no two people are physically identical, no two voices sound the same. There is a tremendous variety within each vocal range.

FEMALE VOICES

Soprano: The soprano is the highest of the female voices. Some are able to sing very high notes and skip through rapid passages with ease (coloratura soprano). Others specialize in singing with great intensity and power (dramatic soprano). Still others have voices of exceptional beauty that can sustain long melodies (lyric soprano). Sopranos tend to play the heroines in opera.

Mezzo-soprano: These are the lower female voices. Mezzo-sopranos have a darker sound and can reach low notes beneath the range of the soprano. Mezzo-sopranos are often the mothers, the witches, the friend and the helper, or even young male characters.

Contralto: This is the lowest female voice in the range between soprano and tenor. Canadian Maureen Forrester is a famous contralto. This voice type is often written for a very strong character, such as a goddess.

MALE VOICES

Tenor: The tenors are the highest male voices, and like the soprano, cover a wide variety of vocal colours. Luciano Pavarotti was an example of a “lyric tenor” with his ability to soar through melodies, while Plácido Domingo exemplifies the darker-hued intensity of the “dramatic tenor.” They often play the hero, and compete with the baritone for the soprano.

Countertenor: These male singers sing in a very high register, so much so, that at first hearing they can sound similar to a female voice.

Baritone: These are the middle male voices. Composers only began to write for this range in the 19th century. As with all the ranges, there are a number of vocal types of baritones. Many have extremely flexible wide-ranging voices. They play the villains or fools, the friends, the fathers and character parts.

Bass: The lowest of all voice types, the bass has a rich sound particularly suited to the wise, older characters in opera. Composers often challenge basses by writing notes at the extreme low end of their range.

The Cast

Figaro.....Jesse Clark (baritone)
Count Almaviva.....Michael Barrett (tenor)
Rosina.....Erin Fisher/Teiya Kasahara (mezzo-soprano or soprano)
Dr. BartoloJon-Paul Décosse (bass-baritone)

Director.....Brent Krysa
Musical DirectorSusan Ball
Designer.....TBA
Stage Manager.....Lesley Abarquez

All cast members are part of the COC's Ensemble Studio program.

Meet the singers
and creative team
online at
COC.ca

Biographies



Michael Barrett (*Count Almaviva*): Canadian tenor and new COC Ensemble Studio member Michael Barrett returns to the COC after singing Lieutenant Bonnet and the Aide de Camp to General Compans in *War and Peace*, Duca Ottavio/Lanterna and Tenor 2 respectively in the Ensemble Studio production of *Don Giovanni/Renard*, the Young Convict in *From the House of the Dead*, the Peasant in *Luisa Miller* and the Coachman in *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*. At the University of Toronto Opera School he recently performed Eisenstein in *Die Fledermaus*, and regularly appears with the Aldeburgh Connection, where he performed in *Our Story* for the 25th anniversary celebrations. Repertoire includes Handel's *Messiah*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Puccini's *Messa di Gloria*, as well as roles in *The Rape of Lucretia*, *La Bohème*, *Ariadne auf Naxos* and *Semele* and leading roles in *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Die lustigen Weiber von Windsor*, *Savitrì* and *The Pirates of Penzance*. With the COC this season he will perform the Gamekeeper in *Rusalka*, Captain of Archers in *Simon Boccanegra*, Parpignol in *La Bohème*, Snout in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Ferrando in the Ensemble Studio production of *Così fan tutte*.



Jesse Clark (*Figaro*): Baritone Jesse Clark is a COC Chorus member and recently made his COC mainstage debut as the Aide de Camp to Prince Eugène in *War and Peace*. He is a graduate of both Queen's University with an honours degree in English literature, and the University of Toronto's Opera Division. Recent engagements include Henry Cuffe in *Gloriana* with the Aldeburgh Festival, which was recorded and aired by the BBC, Count Almaviva in *Le nozze di Figaro* with the Banff Centre, and concert engagements including the *Coronation Mass* with the Mississauga Choral Society. Operatic credits include *The Rape of Lucretia* with the University of Toronto's Opera Division, *Don Pasquale* with the Toronto Philharmonia, and *Die drei Pintos* with Opera in Concert. Last season with the COC he understudied the role of Pelléas in *Pelléas et Mélisande*.



Jon-Paul Décosse (*Doctor Bartolo*): Born in London, Ontario, COC Ensemble Studio graduate and baritone Jon-Paul Décosse performed with the COC as part of the Richard Bradshaw tribute concert and as Pasquariello in the Ensemble Studio production of Gazzaniga's *Don Giovanni*, the Convict/Don Juan in *From the House of the Dead*, Sciarrone in *Tosca*, and a Flemish Deputy in *Don Carlos*. He also appeared as the Steward/Sentry in the COC's production of *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, Smirnov in the Ensemble Studio production of *The Bear* and made his COC performance debut in the Ensemble Studio School Tour of *Isis and the Seven Scorpions*. After graduating from the University of Toronto Opera School in 2004, Mr. Décosse appeared with Calgary Opera, Vancouver Opera, Pacific Opera Victoria, as well as in the 2005 International Bach Festival. His recent engagements include Fauré's *Requiem* with the Okanagan Symphony, Don Alfonso in *Così fan tutte* with Vancouver's The Opera Project, and Marullo in *Rigoletto* with Pacific Opera Victoria. With the COC this season he will perform Schaunard in *La Bohème*.



Erin Fisher (*Rosina*): Born in British Columbia, mezzo-soprano and COC Ensemble Studio member Erin Fisher last performed with the COC as Donna Ximena in the Ensemble Studio production of Gazzaniga's *Don Giovanni*, Yniold in *Pelléas et Mélisande* as well as the Second Bridesmaid in *The Marriage of Figaro*, and understudied the roles of Cherubino, Thibault and Aljeja. She is a recent graduate of the University of British Columbia (UBC) with a bachelor of music degree. Operatic credits include Cherubino with the UBC Ensemble in the Czech Republic, the title role in Timothy Sullivan's *Florence: The Lady with the Lamp*, *Zo-Zo* in *The Merry Widow* with the Vancouver Symphony, and Tessa in Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Gondoliers*. She has also performed the title role in Burnaby Lyric's *The Italian Girl in Algiers*, made her solo debut with the Vancouver Symphony singing Vivaldi's *Gloria*, and sang Rosina in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* in Prague. With the COC this season she will perform the roles of the Third Wood Nymph in *Rusalka*, Amelia's Servant in *Simon Boccanegra* and Dorabella in the Ensemble Studio production of *Così fan tutte*.



Teiya Kasahara (*Rosina*): Born in Ottawa, Ontario, COC Ensemble Studio soprano Teiya Kasahara recently performed with the COC as French Actress 1 in *War and Peace*, Maturina in the Ensemble Studio production of Gazzaniga's *Don Giovanni*, the First Bridesmaid in *The Marriage of Figaro*, and understudied the roles of Susanna and Barbarina in *The Marriage of Figaro*, Thibault in *Don Carlos*, the Shepherd Boy in *Tosca*, and Yniold in *Pelléas et Mélisande*. She is a graduate of the University of British Columbia with a bachelor of music degree in opera performance. Ms Kasahara recently performed Zerbinetta in Toronto Summer Music's production of *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Gianetta in *The Gondoliers* at the Westben Arts Festival, and Rosina in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* and Queen of the Night in *The Magic Flute* in the Czech Republic. She has won awards from the Vancouver Women's Musical Society and the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. With the COC she will perform the First Wood Nymph in *Rusalka* and Despina in the Ensemble Studio production of *Così fan tutte*.

The Story of *The Barber of Seville*

Act I: A Street in Seville, Spain

While Count Almaviva and a hired band of musicians are serenading the beautiful Rosina, Figaro the barber enters, boasting of his many talents.

Pretending to be a poor man, and assuming the pseudonym "Lindoro", Almaviva sings another melody, in which he tells Rosina that he has no wealth and can offer her only love. The Count, who is actually quite wealthy, offers Figaro a generous reward if the barber were to arrange for him a meeting with Rosina. Figaro confidently agrees, and describes a plan to Count Almaviva: the Count must disguise himself as a soldier in order to gain entry to the home of Dr. Bartolo, Rosina's guardian.

Later, at Dr. Bartolo's house, Rosina reads a love letter from "Lindoro." Figaro overhears the elderly Bartolo muttering that he intends to marry his Rosina.

Figaro tells Rosina that "Lindoro" is in love with her and that he will arrange a meeting between the pair. When Figaro has departed, Bartolo re-enters and accuses Rosina of trying to deceive him. When Bartolo has finished his lecture, Count Almaviva enters Bartolo's house disguised as an intoxicated army doctor. Bartolo angrily protests the presence of the army doctor in his house and has Count Almaviva arrested. When Count Almaviva secretly reveals his true name to the arresting officer, he is immediately released.

Act II: The home of Dr. Bartolo

Count Almaviva appears once again, now in the disguise of a music teacher. During the singing lesson the Count and Rosina succeed in exchanging words of endearment. While Figaro is cutting Bartolo's hair, the lovers plan their elopement. They are overheard by Bartolo, who at last recognizes that Rosina is deceiving him. He throws Figaro and Count Almaviva out of his house and sends for a notary (lawyer) in order to marry Rosina himself without delay.

That night, Count Almaviva and Figaro return with a ladder. Count Almaviva enters Rosina's second-storey room, where he reveals his true identity to the delighted girl. The notary arrives with the marriage contract. At Figaro's instruction, the notary enters the name of Count Almaviva in the contract instead of Bartolo. Bartolo arrives only to find that Rosina is now Almaviva's wife. He is consoled when Almaviva allows him to keep her dowry. And they all live happily ever after.

N.B. This performance is an adapted version of the complete opera

**The Barber of Seville
is one of the top
10 most performed
operas in the world.**

Meet the Composer

Rossini was the composer of *The Barber of Seville*. He composed his first opera at the age of 18. He was born in Italy and began playing in a band at age six. Rossini produced 20 operas between 1815 and 1823. *The Barber of Seville* is his most famous opera and was written in only two weeks. It was first presented in Rome in 1816.



This same year the world was very concerned about "Global Cooling." 1816 is known as The Year Without A Summer. The cause was excessive volcanic eruptions throughout Europe. In Italy the snow had a reddish tinge and fell all year.

Commedia dell'Arte

The characters in *The Barber of Seville* are based on traditional characters from an early style for Italian theatre called *commedia dell'arte*. Commedia began in the 16th century and was a form of early improvisational theatre. The troupe of actors – usually 10 – had a cast of characters that they put in a variety of loose plots. The actors developed specific comic business called *lazzi* that they would improvise around. The humour was often bawdy and coarse. The stock characters were performed in half masks and included: two old men who are foolish, greedy know-it-alls (Pantalone and Il Dottore); a comic servant who is lazy, intelligent and a trickster (Arlecchino); and two young lovers called the Innamorati. In *The Barber of Seville*, Count Almaviva and Rosina are the Innamorati, Dr. Bartolo is based on Pantalone and Don Basilio is developed from Il Dottore. More information is available on Commedia dell'Arte online in our Teacher Resource section at www.coc.ca.

Barbers in the 13th to 18th centuries had to do more than just cut hair – they were the “jack-of-all-trades” of their day: they delivered messages, extracted teeth, and performed blood-letting surgeries.

Visit <http://www.maryrose.org/lcity/barber/barber.htm> to learn more about the history of barbering through the ages!

The character of Figaro was a hit – partially because he provided the basis for a commentary on the social structure of Pre-revolutionary France. Much of the humour in *The Barber of Seville* comes from the servant class pulling one over on the aristocracy.



Lesson plans

A selection of lesson plans, reproducible activity sheets, graphic organizers and additional resources are only a mouse click away at coc.ca. These lessons can be done pre- or post-performance and are designed to work as an integrated unit that can be used to address the core understandings in multiple curriculum areas. Depending on your time, you can choose to do the entire series of lessons or select one or several of the lessons to teach.

LESSON	PURPOSE	CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS	DURATION
* Lesson 1 Introduction to <i>The Barber of Seville</i>	Introduce opera, new vocabulary, the storyline, discuss elements of opera	Language, Arts, Drama, Music	1 class
Lesson 2 Get with the program	Students gather and summarize information; learn to sort information and write for a purpose; students discuss character and biography; students create program bios from their jot notes on characters	Language, Arts, Media Literacy	1 to 2 classes
Lesson 3 The plot and jot	Students learn about writing styles; students examine and dissect programs	Language, Media Literacy, Visual Arts, Arts	1 to 2 classes
Lesson 4 What a character	Students discuss characteristics of each role; students turn their biography into a monologue; students explore how characteristics affect the voice, body and language of their character	Language, Arts, Media Literacy	1 to 2 classes
* Lesson 5 The language of music	Students learn about <i>leit motif</i> ; students explore elements of music and the effect on mood	Music, Arts, Language	1 class
Culminating exercise Composing a Biography	Students research Rossini and create timelines of his life; students create biographies for Rossini at various stages of his life; students create a program for one of Rossini's concerts	Music, Language, Arts, History, Media Literacy, Visual Arts	2 classes

* indicates a COC workshop is available to enhance this lesson.

For complete lesson plans, resources, activity sheets and assessment suggestions, visit coc.ca/education.html.
All lesson plans meet specific Ontario Curriculum expectations.

Credits

Produced by the Education and Outreach Department of the Canadian Opera Company, and Christopher Wilson and Kevin Tam (OISE interns).

Online lesson plans were developed by Zoë Ludski (COC's Education and Outreach Department) and OISE interns Christopher Wilson and Kevin Tam.

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The COC Ensemble Studio School Tour is booked through:



Cover image: a scene from the COC's 2008 mainstage production of *The Barber of Seville*. Photo: Michael Cooper

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The COC Ensemble Studio is Canada's premier training program for young opera professionals and provides advanced instruction, hands-on experience, and career development opportunities. The Ensemble Studio is supported by the Government of Canada through the Department of Canadian Heritage, RBC Financial Group and other generous donors.