

Portland Opera ToGo
The Crown Maker

The Teachers'
Guide.

Researched, written and compiled by Alexis Hamilton

PORTLAND OPERA

&

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The Crown Maker

What is that?

Why opera in the

classroom?

Inspire ♦ Enliven ♦ Activate ♦ Renew

Dear Teachers,

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and consider using our curriculum in your classroom. I guess the first question you may have is what, exactly, is opera?

The simplest answer—what we tell kids—is that opera is just a play that is sung. Perhaps we could simplify it more by saying it is storytelling through song. Song is an ancient art form (possibly the very earliest) with some musicologists theorizing that music came into existence when humans developed “intentionality” some 60,000 years ago. It is that “intentionality” that makes opera—and art in general—relevant in your classroom. Children have an innate interest in stories, in music, in creating, and by telling stories, making music, and drawing pictures, our students learn. Myriad studies have been done connecting the practice of the fine arts with brain development. In fact, **the practice of art changes the brain**. Arts in the classroom—your classroom—have the power to increase attention and enhance student cognition. More importantly, arts in the classroom underscore what you are trying to teach, help to reach students for whom paper and pencil work is less effective, provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate what they know, and, frankly, make learning fun.

But is it hard to integrate art into the classroom? It can feel that way if testing culture increases the pressure to “teach to the test,” or if a curriculum allows no room for creativity. That is when we need an act of courage! We need the courage to know that when students internalize knowledge and master curriculum, they test well. Mastery leads to being able to apply knowledge across a broad range of applications, just as opera applies to a wide variety of curricular connections, touching literary arts, history, social studies, math, and science, in addition to poetry, music, visual arts, dance, and aesthetics. When students see the connectivity of what they are doing, seeing, and experiencing, they learn—and remember what they learn.

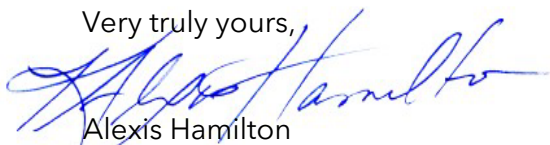
It can also feel hard to integrate arts into your classroom if you do not feel qualified to do so. Within this Teacher's Guide, you will find lesson plans that will allow you to integrate opera into your classroom seamlessly. You will also find background information for yourself so that you can confidently walk into your classroom and answer questions about opera from its history to its composers, to specifics about *The Snowy Day*. In addition, you will find that several of our lesson plans are designed to offer you options for remote learning, with both synchronous and asynchronous components. Our curriculum is designed so that you can adapt it to your needs—please do!!!

Portland Opera believes that opera is the most exciting and visceral way to tell a story, but we know that it is not “mainstream.” The singing style may not appeal to everyone at first, but it communicates emotion in a universal way that is not bound by language. We want to get opera out there in front of our children to inspire the next soprano, conductor, or stage director and develop the audiences of our future. We want to shake up the school day (brain science also indicates that learning the same thing many ways, in different venues, makes the learning “stick!”) and enliven both students and teachers with renewed enthusiasm. We want to create an opera prism through which all curriculums can be explored in a new, fresh way. We want to **activate the artistry of others**—yours and your students—and expand the teaching and learning repertoires of teachers and learners.

We hope, above all, that your visit to the opera inspires you and your students. Please feel free to copy any of the material in this packet for distribution to your students and colleagues. You may, of course, adapt any of these materials to better suit your needs.

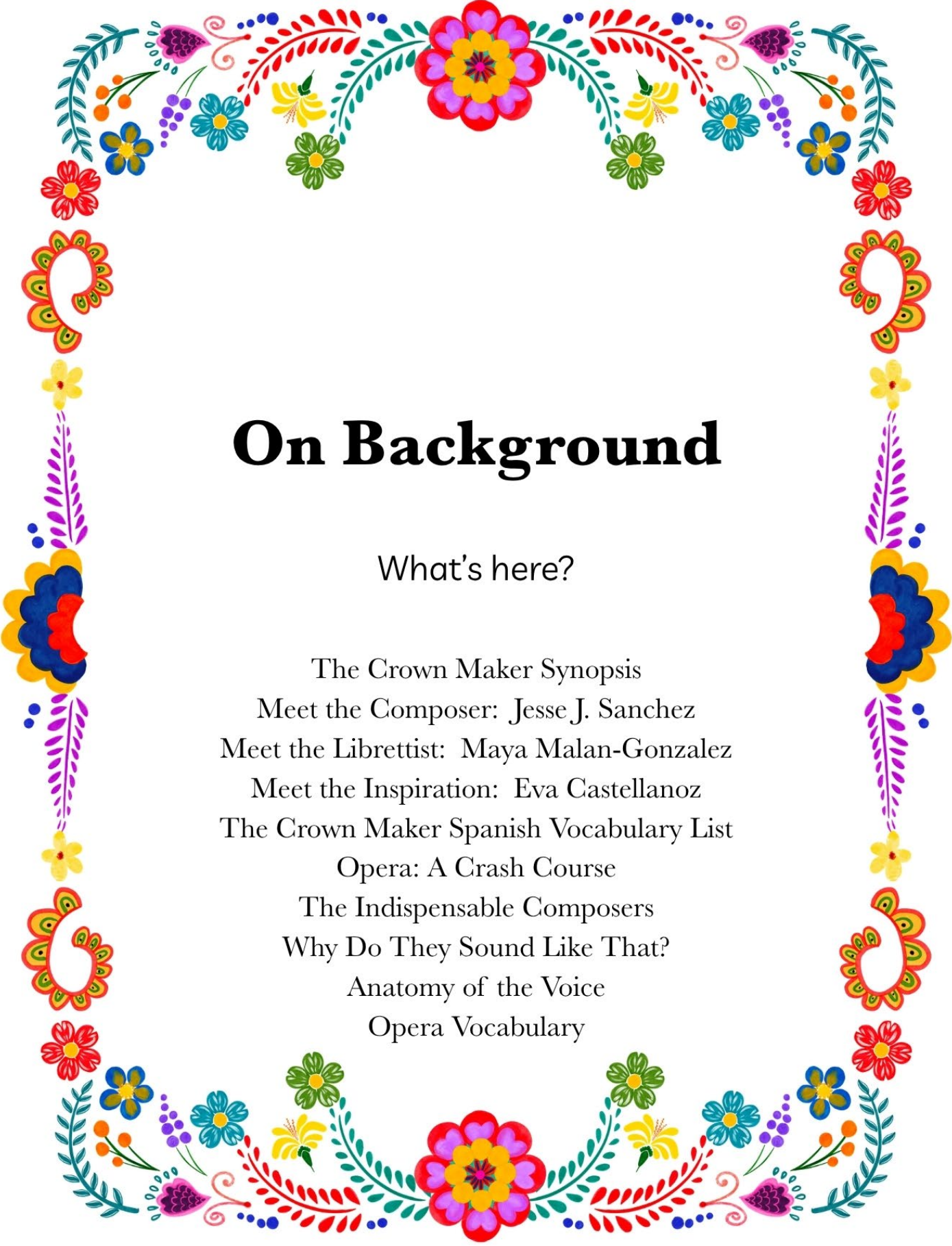
I mentioned “courage” above. In closing, I would like to share something that I learned at the 2012 Oregon Arts Summit. “Bravo” is a term that came out of opera houses and has come to mean “Wonderful! Fantastic! Amazing!” That is a great meaning, but, originally, it meant something more. It was called out to a performer who took a risk—successful or not—and reached beyond him or herself to increase their communicative power. How wonderful it is to celebrate the courage it takes to risk failing in front of others to reach greater heights! That is what the arts in the classroom can do: create a culture that allows “failure” in an environment which celebrates striving, risking, and—dare I say it—learning. I hope you will establish a “Bravo Policy” in your classrooms and encourage that kind of striving. In the meantime, bravo to you. I’ll see you at the opera!

Very truly yours,



Alexis Hamilton

Manager of Education & Community Engagement for Portland Opera



On Background

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Synopsis

THE CROWN MAKER place over a 60-year span from the 1940s to 2003. It is structured as a series of corridos or scenes that mark major milestones in Eva's life.

1. Corrido de los Pajarillos

By a campfire near a river, Fidel and Conchita weave a magical story about their family's history for their little girl, Eva. They tell her of their romance, the tragic deaths of all of her elder siblings, and her miraculous birth marking their new beginnings.

2. Corrido de Amor Y Familia

Eva meets Teo, a handsome stranger who upends her parents plans for her when she marries him. Eva's sister, Teresa, tells us that Eva and her family were estranged for a time because of her decision—until Eva becomes pregnant. The family comes together to work the fields. Fidel then announces plans to move the family from Pharr, Texas to Nyssa, Oregon, where they can stay and find a variety of work all year round. Eva and her family celebrate their love and the addition of her first child.

3. Corrido de las Coronas

Eva and Teo visit his home town of Guadajara, enjoying the exciting sights and sounds of the city. There Eva becomes fascinated by an artist creating coronas (crowns) of paper and wax flowers. The artist explains that the coronas are worn for special moments and that the type of flower used marks the meaning of the moment. Eva discovers her calling and becomes a crown maker.

4. The Crown Maker

Diana brings her niece Lucy over a long distance to visit Eva, hoping that Eva will make Lucy a corona for her quinceañera. Eva reminisces about her own simple quince and encourages Lucy to realize that she is a powerful young woman. Eva's reputation and family grows.

5. Birthing and New Beginnings

Eva struggles to deliver her ninth child—while doctors struggle to save her and her baby boy, Cami, Eva argues with Santa Muerte. The two agree that Eva and Cami will return to the land of the living, but that Eva's life will no longer be her own. As Eva tells her baby boy about herself and her family, she realizes that she is going to become a curandera (healer) as her parents were.

6. Corrido de la Curandera

People line up for Eva's cures as her healing, kindness and compassion bind her community together.

7. Flowers of Grief

Tragedy strikes the family when Eva and Teo's 15-year-old son, Toe, is killed in a car accident. Eva struggles to continue her work as a curandera and crown maker while she works through her grief and anger. Her father, Fidel, helps her to ground herself in her garden with the herbs and flowers that give her solace.

8. The Phoenix

Eva sings to the herbs as she gardens, listing their qualities with love, when she smells smoke and realizes that her home and workshop are on fire. Everything is destroyed, and Eva wonders if she has the strength to rebuild, but her children and community rally around her and pledge that as she has cared for them, they will now care for her.

The Crown Maker

Meet the Composer

Jesse J. Sanchez



Jesse J. Sanchez is an award-winning composer-lyricist, librettist, and music director whose work explores culture, heritage, and identity through expansive, emotionally driven musical storytelling. Named by Playbill as “one of the fastest rising young composers today”, his art often intertwines themes of family, identity, and the intersections of tradition and modern life, creating theatrical experiences that celebrate community, resilience, and joy.

His musical Zapata: A Folklórico Superhero Musical was produced at ZACH Theatre to rave reviews and a sold-out run, and SUEÑOS: Our American Musical had a sold-out workshop production at Las Positas College and released a concept EP album with Broadway producers Jim Kierstead and Nicole La Fountaine, and NAMT. His opera The Crown Maker was produced at Portland Opera, and desert in was produced at Boston Lyric Opera and Long Beach Opera. Other stage work has been

developed and presented at the Johnny Mercer Writers Grove at Goodspeed Musicals, The Orchard Project, New York Theatre Barn, Live & In Color, Musical Theater West, Oregon Shakespeare Festival Black Swan Lab, ZACH Theatre, Latinx Theatre Commons, Austin Latinx New Play Festival, Oregon Cabaret, Portland Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo in collaboration with PCPA (artist-in residence), Cutting Ball Theater.

A 2025 James F. and Marion L. Miller Foundation Spark Artist Award winner (\$25,000), a 2026 Kleban Prize finalist for libretto writing, a two-time recipient of the National Alliance for Musical Theatre Frank Young Grant, an Opera America Digital Excellence in Opera Award finalist, a Milagro Latino Artist Fund Grant recipient, and a VCCA Fellow.

Current commissions include *Zapata: A Folklórico Superhero Musical* (Zach Theatre), *We Three Queens* (Oregon Cabaret), and *The Crown Maker* (Portland Opera). Past works include *Exhaustion Arroyo: Dancin' Trees in the Ravine* (Cutting Ball Theater), *desert in* (Boston Lyric Opera), *Spotlight on Trio* (Camelot Theatre), and *Black Friday!* (Prospect Theatre Lab).

As a music director, Jesse has worked with esteemed theaters and organizations nationwide, including The Old Globe, Je'Caryous Entertainment, South Coast Repertory, Seattle Rep, Portland Center Stage, Denver Center, Hartford Stage, Huntington Theatre Company, American Conservatory Theater, TheatreWorks Silicon Valley, Arizona Theatre Company, Alley Theatre, Round House Theatre, O'Neill Music Theatre Conference, New World Stages, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and more.

Jesse has collaborated on new musicals with world renowned musicians including Chicago, Asdrú Sierra (Ozomatli), Zap Mama, Stokely Williams (Mint Condition), and others.

Earlier in his career, Jesse served as a music assistant on the first national tour of *Hamilton* and the world premiere of *The Prince of Egypt* (TheatreWorks SV). Jesse has served on national selection panels and mentorship programs for organizations including the Doreen Montalvo Scholarship, The Orchard Project, Opera America, the Oregon Arts Commission, the National Alliance for Musical Theatre, and the NEA Songwriting Challenge and is a proud member of the Dramatist Guild of America, BMI, MUSE, and the National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures.

He currently serves as Associate Producer (Music) at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, a Tony Award-winning organization and one of the country's preeminent regional theaters. He oversees all music for productions across a 9-11 play and musical repertory, manage music personnel, and implement industry-standard music processes.

When not writing, conducting, or producing, he's usually chasing stories through his camera lens, wrangling two dogs and two cats, or plotting his next adventure to Disneyland with his wife.



One of Jesse's pups—photographed by Jesse J. Sanchez

The Crown Maker

Meet the Librettist

Maya Malan-Gonzalez



Maya Malan-Gonzalez (she/ella) is a librettist, playwright, and performer whose work uplifts Latine culture through humor, music, and stories filled with possibility. Her writing centers Latina voices and often lives at the intersection of history, imagination, and joy, creating theatrical worlds that move between the magical, the musical, and the deeply human.

She grew up in Portland inside the world of theatre. Her parents founded Milagro, and

much of her childhood was spent in rehearsal rooms, backstage, and on tour. Traveling with her mother in bilingual educational productions gave her an early understanding that theatre could do more than entertain; it can teach, connect, and offer young audiences a reflection of themselves and their communities. That early experience continues to shape her work as both writer and librettist.

Maya began her career as an actress, performing in innumerable productions at Milagro, including *Wolf at the Door* and *Lydia*. She has since performed across the country and internationally, with credits including Portland Center Stage, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Denver Center for the Performing Arts, South Coast Repertory, El Teatro Campesino, and many others. Her performance work has also taken her to Edinburgh Festival Fringe, One Theatre World (Chicago), Carnival of New Work (Chicago), and Encuentro de las Américas (Los Angeles).

Inspired by the plays her mother wrote and performed during Maya's childhood, she eventually followed that same path, moving from performance into writing her own stories for the stage. Her produced plays include *Blast Off*, inspired by first Latina astronaut Ellen Ochoa; *Huelga*, about labor leader Dolores Huerta; *Worry Dolls*; and *A Xmas Cuento Remix*, a National New Play Network Rolling World Premiere. Again and again, she is drawn to stories of extraordinary women whose courage reshapes the world around them. That artistic path led to *The Crown Maker*, commissioned by Portland Opera and inspired by the life of Eva Castellanos. She has also been commissioned by Milagro, University of Nevada: Las Vegas, and Cleveland Public Theatre.

Maya is currently Interim Artistic Director of Milagro and an ensemble member with Studio Luna in Los Angeles. She earned her B.F.A. in Acting from DePaul University and is an alumna of the Candela Playwriting Fellowship and the NALAC Leadership Institute.

Outside the theatre, Maya loves adventure, travel, and being in nature. That spirit made her research trip to Nyssa especially meaningful, where meeting Eva Castellanos and her family offered not only historical insight, but a deeper personal connection to the life behind the opera. For Maya, writing begins by listening: to people, to place, and to the music hidden inside a story.



The Crown Maker

Meet the Inspiration: Eva Castellanoz

A short biography

"Even though a lot of people don't think so, I believe that the flowers have their own personality. For me they do, because I work with them and I see that some flowers let their little petals bend; others don't. Some flowers will take the wax, but this one didn't. So I think that they have their own mind, and I respect each one. No two are exactly alike."

~~Eva Castellanoz~~



Eva Castellanoz in 1987.

Genoveva Castellanoz was born in Guanajuato, Mexico on November 18, 1939. Her parents called her Eva, and that is how she is known today. Little Eva was the sixth child of Fidel Silva and María Concepción Silva—but she never knew her older brothers and sisters. Though they still lived when she was born, they all died in short succession from illnesses. When Eva was three, her parents moved to Pharr, Texas as part of the bracero program—although her father had been a farm worker in the United States for many

years before that, crossing the border to work the fields.

Eva's parents shared an indigenous Mexican heritage. Her mother was an Otomí healer, also known as a shaman. Otomí healers use a type of healing involving ritual and beautifully crafted cut paper figures representing a variety of ailments, gods, and diseases which might bedevil the patient. This background later informed Eva's own healing practice as a curandera, though Eva studied nutrition and used herbal remedies from her garden as well. Eva's indigenous heritage is very important to her and she believes that everyone must nurture their "roots" to grow and thrive. Much of her work has been about connecting people to their roots and claiming their heritage.



Eva and Teo in a composite photo the year they got married.

Eva met her husband Teo in Pharr, Texas, when she was 15 years old. Their relationship briefly caused a rift between Eva and her parents, who had intended her to marry another. But her pregnancy and the promise of an impending grandchild helped to bridge their differences. Eva gave birth to their first child in Nyssa, Oregon, where the entire family had relocated. Nyssa offered the family the opportunity of full-time, year round work.

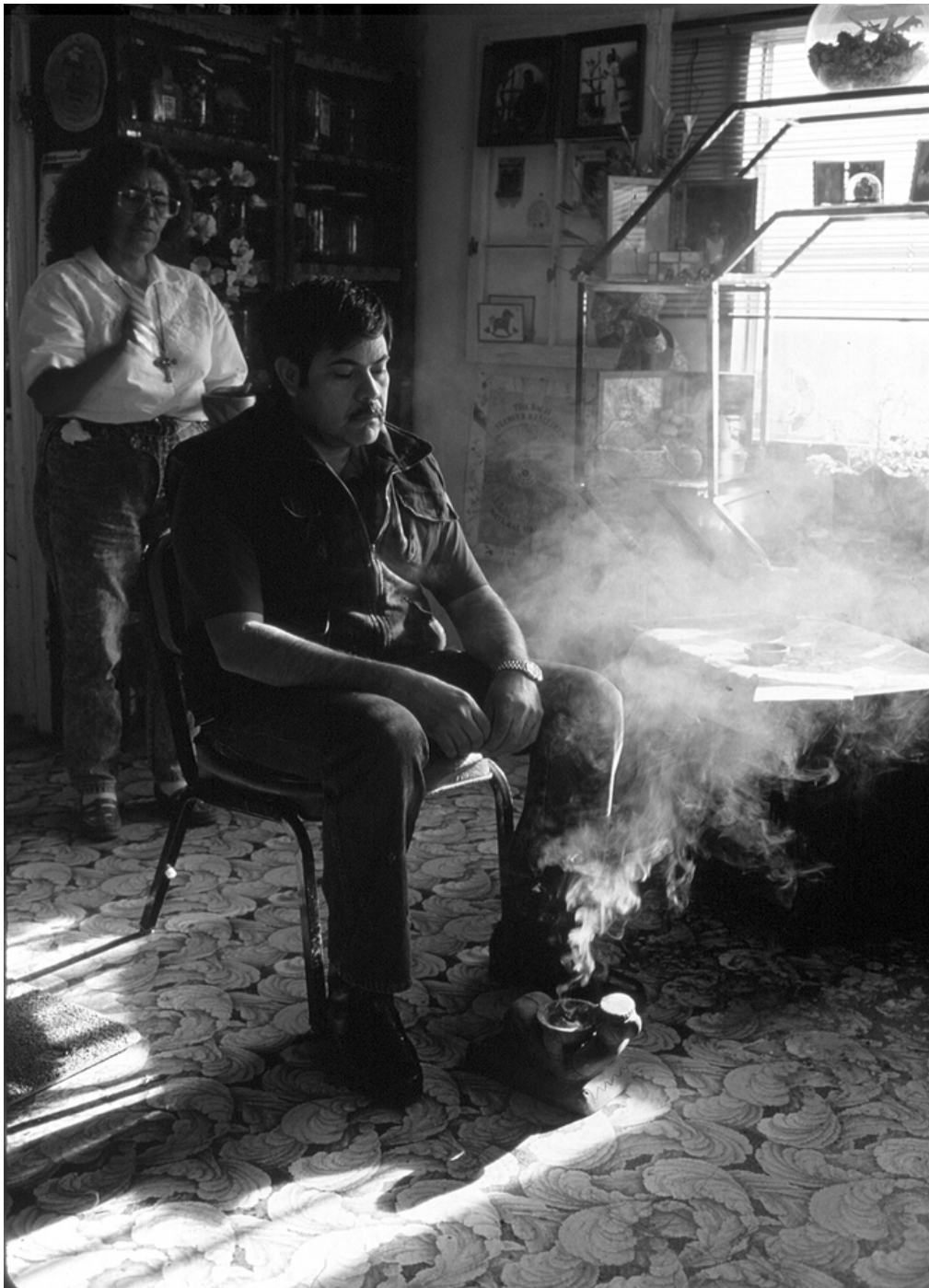
While visiting Teo's hometown of Guadalajara, Eva discovered an artist creating *coronas* or "crowns" of paper flowers dipped in wax. These coronas are worn at baptisms, quinceañeras, weddings, and Day of the Dead celebrations. She fell in love with the process and taught herself to make them after watching the Guadalupe artist's process. She brought the knowledge home with her and began making coronas for young women throughout the area—often her clients came from hours away to have her make them a crown. But Eva's coronas were never just the corona—they came with an empowering message about the strength and value of women—and the importance of gender equality.

But Eva's work went beyond her coronas. After a near-death experience giving birth to her youngest child, Eva believed that Santa Muerte sent her back for a reason—to become a healer. Eva became a *curandera* and has worked hard in her community to reconcile the identities of Mexican-American people who have not yet successfully learned to integrate the two cultures. In this situation, Eva wants to "revive the root" or nurture and reconnect folks with their cultural origins, but also adopt the life-giving aspects of the dominant culture. Much of her healing involves reframing an ailment in the mind of the client.

For over fifty years, Eva Castellanoz has been a fierce advocate for all aspects of her identity: Mexican, indigenous, and Oregonian. She has worked tirelessly with the youth in her community, building them up and making sure to connect them to each other, the community, their roots, and their place. She tries to take the best of both Mexican and

American cultures to fuse them into one, while acknowledging that despite the presence of Hispanic and indigenous peoples throughout the American West for hundreds of years, folks can still find themselves "othered." Despite this, she has viewed Nyssa and its people as partners in raising her children and central to her own life.

As of this writing, Eva and her family continue to live in Nyssa, Oregon.



Eva Castellanoz conducting a healing ritual at her home in Nyssa, Oregon.

The Crown Maker

Glossary of Spanish Terms

Spanish	English
artista	artist
azahares	orange blossoms
bautizo	baptism
boda	wedding
campesina	peasant woman/farm worker
cancion	song
cera de vela	candle wax
chula	cute/cutie
Colibri	hummingbird
coronas	crowns
enojados	angry
Es tiempo para un cuento	It's time for a story.
flores	flowers
fuerza	force
gente	people
Hermana	sister
hermanos	brothers/siblings
Hombre, tengo un cuento por ti	Man, I've got a story for you!
jardines de esperanza	gardens of hope
la raza de Oro	The Golden Race, idealized vision of pre-Columbian civilizations before European contact--associated with Aztec and Mayan peoples.
lavanda	lavendar
magica	magic
mijos	children

milagrosa	miraculous
mocosa	snot-nosed brat
mujeres	women
muy cerca	very close
padres	parents
pajarito	birdie/little bird
papelitos	scraps of paper
patero	"duck hunter," slang for a person who helps people to cross the border
poderosa	powerful
querido	darling/love
Queridos	dear ones
quincenera	celebration of a girl's 15th birthday, a coming of age celebration
rebozo	shawl
sagrado	sacred
salvia	sage
Santa Muerte	Holy Death/Saint Death, a folk figure representing death in Mexican culture. Santa Muerte is a female figure. She blends indigenous traditions with Catholicism.
sembrando	sowing
Te miro	I look at you
tierra	land
trabajosa	laborious/hard-working
Ven mi amore	Come, my love
vestido	dress
vida	life
Y colorin colorado, este cuento se acabado	And they lived happily everafter--this story has come to an end.

The Crown Maker

Opera: A Crash Course A (Very) Brief History

"Opera, next to Gothic architecture, is one of the strangest inventions of Western man. It could not have been foreseen by any logical process."

~~Kenneth Clark~~



Prince Ferdinand and his musicians, by Anton Domenico Gabbiani, 1685–90, Florence
Prince Ferdinand was an early and ardent sponsor and lover of opera.

Opera is the Italian word for "work." According to Merriam-Webster, opera is "a drama set to music and made up of vocal pieces with orchestral accompaniment." When people think of opera they usually think of elaborate costumes, sets and choreography. However, opera is essentially just a play that is sung. Opera can be spectacular and grand or simple and tender. It is a remarkable display of visual and auditory brilliance.

The history of opera begins in Italy in the late 16th century. A group of intellectuals, scientists and musicians calling themselves the **Florentine Camerata** wanted to recreate Greek theater

as it was performed by the ancients and assumed that it was entirely sung. (It turned out they were wrong.) They were also striving to clarify sung text, which had become increasingly obscured by the multi-voiced compositions of the Renaissance. In their first attempts, the music was simple and the text and voice most important. These early musical plays were often performed during the intermission of a play as incidental entertainment. The oldest, extant opera that is still performed is **Orfeo**, written in 1607 by Claudio Monteverdi. Rediscovered in the 20th century, it is now performed all over the world and considered the first work of operatic genius.

In 1637, the first public opera house opened in Venice, Italy, and opera became a "spectator sport!" Between 1637 and 1640, over 388 operas were produced and performed in Venice. Seventeenth century opera singers were the super-stars of their time. They lived or died by their popularity and their talent was tested each night. Rowdy, passionate, Venetian audiences were known to be lavish with their praise, but they were just as likely to run an unpopular singer right off the stage!

Opera became the first major Italian export. Germany, France, and England were all influenced by Italian opera, but eventually each country created operas based on its own cultural traditions. By 1618, German composers were writing *singspiels* (German language operas with spoken dialogue). In France, under the patronage of Louis XIV, opera was heavily influenced by the ballet—in fact, the French king decreed that all French opera (indeed all opera performed in France, whether of French origin or not) must include a ballet. English opera was based on a type of English play called a *masque*.



Claudio Monteverdi was the first composer to write commercially viable operas that are still performed over 400 years later.

During the latter part of the **Baroque Period** (1600-1750), composers re-fined and codified opera. Opera adopted a formal musical structure. Elements of opera such as the **overture** (a musical introduction), **recitative** (sung dialogue), and the **aria** (a song developing emotional information about the character) were defined. There was still a lot of artistic freedom for the singer, however. Singers were expected to improvise in their arias. To give singers this opportunity, composers created the **da capo aria**. Da capo means "back to the beginning." In it, the main idea (A) was followed by a second musical idea (B) and then A was repeated with improvised fast-moving notes called ornaments. Today "Da capo!" shouted from the audience is high praise to a singer—it means repeat what was just sung! (This hardly ever happens in the United States. It is mostly an Italian custom.) The most famous composers of Baroque opera are George Frideric Handel and Alessandro Scarlatti.



At the revival of Thomas Arne's opera *Artaxerxes*, in 1763, a mob protesting the abolition of half-price admissions stormed the theatre in the middle of the performance. Opera fans took their opera *very* seriously.

The standardization of style in the Baroque Period paved the way for composers in the Classical Era (late 18th and early 19th centuries) to reform the style to a simpler, more balanced form with renewed interest in dramatic integrity. Singers were stripped of their power to improvise on a whim, because in the heavily ornamented singer-driven style of the da capo aria, composers saw a distinct lack of taste and balance between music and drama. Flexibility was given to the singer at the end of the piece with a **cadenza**—an improvised, fast moving, flashy ending. Two distinct Italian styles emerged in this era: **opera seria**, serious opera, often with a tragic ending; and **opera buffa**, comic opera, or opera with a happy ending. Famous opera composers of this period are Cristoph Willibald Gluck, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, and to a lesser extent Ludwig von Beethoven and Gioachino Rossini. These latter are considered transitional composers, acting as a sort of bridge to the Romantic Period.

Romantic opera sets the standards for opera today. The composers at the top of the list for Romantic opera are Giuseppe Verdi, Richard Wagner, and Giacomo Puccini. The Romantic Period encompasses the mid and late 19th century. This style engages an expansive musical line and a more innovative use of the voice and orchestral instruments. Opera plots based on true life experiences and ordinary believable characters created a sub-genre of the Romantic Period known as **verismo** opera.

Opera has continued to change and grow throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. During the last 100 years, opera in the United States has come into its own with modern

masterpieces by American composers such as Aaron Copland, Samuel Barber, Gian Carlo Menotti, Carlisle Floyd, and Douglas Moore and welcomed new masters such as Philip Glass, John Adams, David Lang, and Jake Heggie. In addition, the U.S. has contributed the Broadway musical to music theater tradition.

With the world-wide popularity of the Three Tenors (even after Pavarotti's death) and crossover artists like Andrea Bocelli, Josh Groban, and Charlotte Church, opera attendance continues to grow. The 21st century will continue to bring innovations to the stage, new works to the forefront, and new productions of old standards. The world of opera is enduring and universal and will continue to move and delight audiences into the foreseeable future.



Opera audience of the future enjoying a Portland Opera To Go production of *The Elixir of Love*.

The Crown Maker

The Indispensable Composers of Traditional Opera

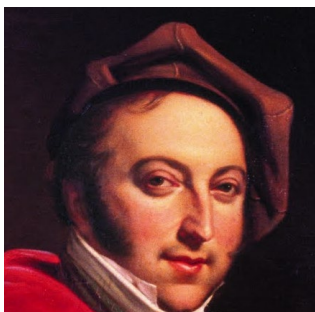
Some may argue that there are more “indispensable” opera composers—and there are, but for the layman, these are unassailable masters of the form and representative of “traditional” opera. Remember, opera is a living, breathing art form with new operas being written all the time. The composers below helped define the genre, but they are not the last word.



George Frideric Handel (1685-1759) German born composer who made much of his career in England writing Italian *opera seria*. His style used a lot of fast-moving notes (the “note-y” passages are called “runs” or melismas) and a simple accompaniment. He is most famous today for his oratorios (un-staged, often religious, operas). *The Messiah* is the most famous of these. During his life, however, he was considered the greatest opera composer of his day.



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) Austrian composer of Italian opera and *singspiel* during the Classical Period. Mozart was one of the very few opera composers who was a master of all musical forms existing at his time. His operas were written for specific singers—and he wrote exquisitely difficult music for those he really hated! His operas *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, *Così fan tutte*, and *The Magic Flute* all continue to be “bread and butter” pieces of operatic repertoire.

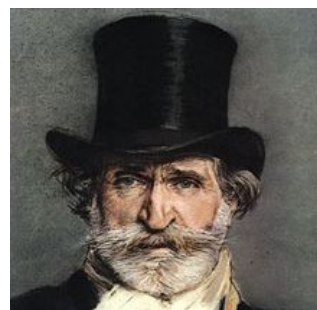


Gioachino Rossini (1792-1848) Italian composer who became a bridge from the Classical Era to the Romantic Era and a writer of the *bel canto* (“beautiful singing”) style of opera. He is most famous today for his operas *buffa*, *The Barber of Seville* and *La Cenerentola* (Cinderella). He also wrote *William Tell*, the overture of which became the theme song for *The Lone Ranger*! Rossini was extremely prolific and wrote about 39 operas in 19 years.

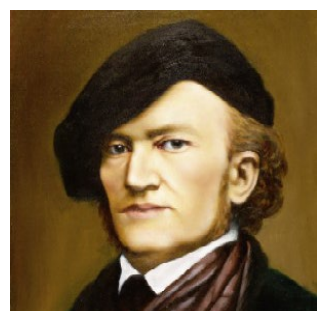


Vincenzo Bellini (1801-1835) & Gaetano Donizetti (1797-1848)

Composers of the *bel canto* style. Bellini and Donizetti perfected a style which celebrated beautiful vocal lines. Bellini's opera, *Norma*, is recognized as the best example of *bel canto* style. Donizetti is famous for his amazing productivity and beloved for his operas *The Elixir of Love* and *Lucia di Lammermoor*. *Bel canto* opera features arias made of two contrasting parts: the cavatina, which is slow and melodic, and a cabaletta which is fast with a lot of flashy runs.



Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901) Arguably, the greatest Italian opera composer of all time. His contributions are among the most beloved operas on stage and include such lions of the theater as *La Traviata*, *Rigoletto* and *Aida*. Many more of his titles are staples of opera houses today. He was a great evolutionary step in the history of opera—a perfect culmination of opera composers from Mozart through Bellini and an undisputed master of operatic form.



Richard Wagner (1813-1883) The most influential operatic composer of all time. After Wagner's operas, no opera was ever composed that was not influenced by his works. He departed from the Italian lyric form and developed the concept of *Gesamtkunstwerk*—music theater that places equal weight on text, drama, and music—a Total Art, epic in length. Wagner's operas include *The Ring Cycle*, which is comprised of four operas, each of which lasts 4-5 hours. His harmonies are far more complex than those in Italian opera and much greater emphasis is placed on the orchestral music than is in Italian opera.



Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924) If Wagner is the most influential composer of opera, then Puccini is the most popular and accessible. His operas are full of lush, beautiful melodies, believable, enduring, characters and extremely affecting theater. His operas include: *La Bohème*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Tosca*, and *Turandot*. Each of his operas shows Puccini's remarkable facility at evoking time and place. He was unafraid of utilizing musical techniques that other more *avant garde* composers were using, but he continued to remain, unmistakably, Puccini.

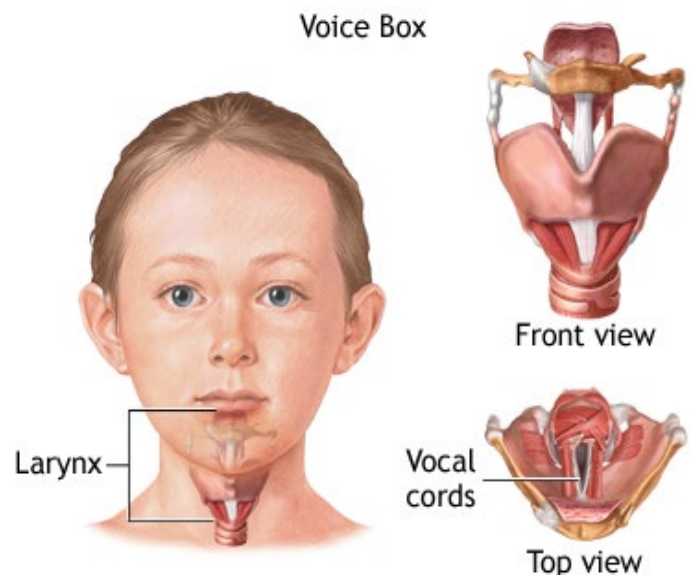
The Crown Maker

Why Do They Sound Like That?

How Opera Singers are Trained and How the Voice Works

Opera singers are highly trained specialists. Each singer learns to maximize the potential of their voice so that they do not need to use microphones. The technique of an opera singer utilizes breath and acoustic resonance in such a way that they can produce enough sound to sing over an orchestra of 30-80 instruments and have every audience member in the theater hear them. To give you some perspective, the Metropolitan Opera House in New York seats about 3900 people. That is a lot of noise for one person to produce without a microphone!

Opera singers are the only professional singers in the world that consistently do not rely on artificial amplification. On occasion, when singing outside or in an amphitheater, singers will be amplified, however that is the exception, not the norm. Opera singers undergo rigorous training—much like professional athletes. Most of the singers in Portland Opera To Go began piano lessons as small children, sang in choirs, and began formal vocal training when they were about seventeen years old. Most voice teachers will not teach voice to young people under the age of about seventeen because of the strength and physical maturity necessary for safe singing. Younger people interested in voice lessons would be better served by singing in choirs, learning breath technique, and learning to read music. Vocal



A diagram of the voice box. Vocal cords are tiny and vibrate together to create sound. When you breathe in, they open to allow air to pass through. When you breathe out, your breath passing through the vocal cords creates a vacuum, pulling them together and causing them to vibrate. The tauter they are and the thinner they are stretched, the faster they vibrate and the higher the sound.

training takes about ten years, and the voice is not fully mature and ready for the rigors of opera until a singer is in their mid-twenties. Some types of voices—usually larger, heavier voices—will not be ready for their repertoire until they are in their early to mid-thirties. The trade-off for this lengthy training is a long career—an opera singer can expect their career to last thirty-plus years.

In addition to studying vocal technique, opera singers study Italian, French, and German, because most operas are written in those languages. A singer may not be fluent in all these languages but will at least have a working understanding of them. A singer may also study Russian and Czech. Singers will also take classes in acting, piano, music history, music theory, and—if they are smart—dance.

To find work, a singer must audition—that is sing—for each potential employer. Opera singers' salaries cover a vast range—a young professional might expect to make \$500-\$800 per performance, while a super-star like Luciano Pavarotti earned up to \$50,000 per performance—or whatever his agent could negotiate for him!

Let me give you a little perspective! Though it may sound like opera singers make an awful lot of money—especially to your students—here are some things to remember:

- A per performance fee includes 4-6 weeks of 6 hour per day rehearsals, 6 days a week, and that is just once you are at your job— it does not count all of the individual preparation a singer does on their own. They are expected to arrive at rehearsal with their music fully memorized.
- Voice lessons and coachings cost MONEY! Most singers will have practice sessions with voice teachers who specialize in the technique of singing, and coaches who rehearse singers and give them information on style and interpretation. These sessions are hourly and can cost anywhere from \$50-\$250 per hour depending on who your teacher/coach is and where you are. One expert from the Metropolitan Opera estimates that it costs a singer at least \$500 to prepare each 7-minute aria they sing for an audition—and again, that is in real money, not just time.
- It costs a lot to audition! First of all, if you don't live in New York City, you will probably have to fly there to audition. You may also have to fly to opera houses around the country and the world to audition. Sometimes, as a young singer, particularly, you will have to pay an application fee (nonrefundable) to audition. This practice is slowly changing because of concerns over equity. The appropriate clothing also costs money.
- Music costs money. Head shots (the 8" X 10" photos you hand to auditors) and resumes cost money to have taken and to print. And you may have to send out hundreds of them! Today, printing costs may often be defrayed by sending electronic copies.

So, by the time you figure in all the expenses of your business, even Pavarotti was not making quite so much money as it sounds—although he



The Crown Maker

The Anatomy of the Voice

1. **Larynx** (pronounced LAIR-inx)

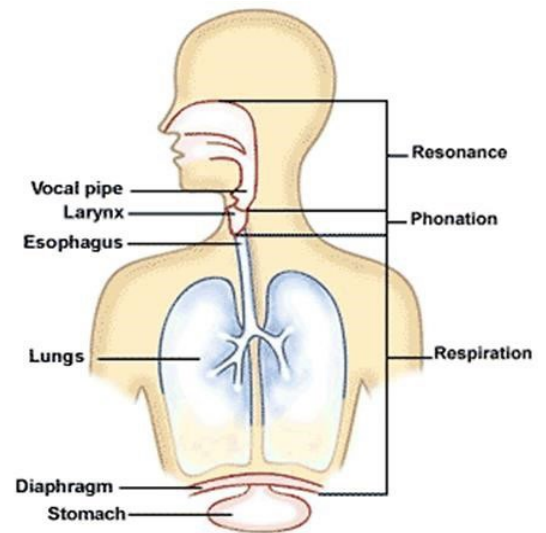
The larynx is the voice box. The vocal folds (also called vocal cords) are part of the larynx. The vocal folds vibrate to create the sound of the voice.

2. **Pharynx** (pronounced FAIR-inx)

The pharynx is the throat. It goes up from the larynx and divides into the laryngopharynx (just above the larynx), oropharynx (going into the mouth) and nasopharynx (going into the nose).

3. **Trachea** (pronounced TRAY-key-ah)

The trachea is your windpipe. It is the tube that connects your lungs to your throat. The larynx sits on the top of the trachea.



Some other nearby organs important to singing:

4. **Esophagus**

The esophagus is your food pipe. It is just behind the larynx and trachea. Your pharynx carries both air and food/water. The air goes through the larynx and trachea, and food and water go into your esophagus.

5. **Spinal column**

The spinal column is behind the esophagus. You can feel it by pressing the back of your neck.

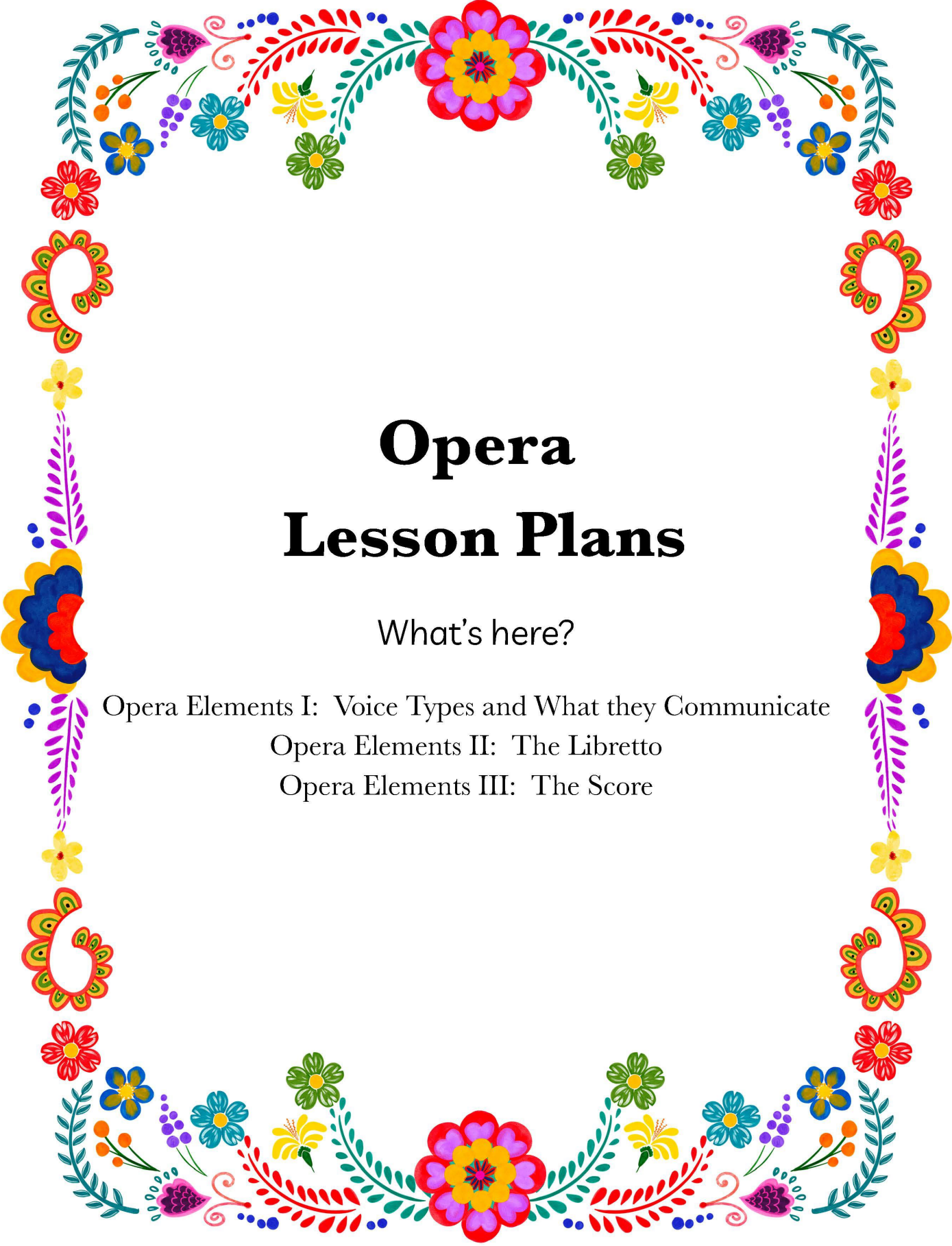
6. **Diaphragm**

The diaphragm is underneath the lungs, inside the rib cage. It is shaped like a dome. The diaphragm is your main muscle for controlling respiration (breathing).

The Crown Maker

Opera Vocabulary

Aria	(ah-ree-ah) a solo song. In opera, arias are often used to tell the audience what the character is thinking or feeling—like a monologue in plays
Recitative	(reh-chih-tah-teev) “to recite.” Lines that are sung rather than spoken and forward the action of the story. They are often followed by arias or ensembles which tell how the characters feel about the situation.
Ensemble	Group singing, or the group itself. An ensemble can be a chorus of 50 or a duet—it just has to have more than one singer singing at the same time.
Duet	Two people singing together.
Trio	Three people singing together.
Quartet	Four people singing together.
Opera	The plural form of the Latin word, opus, which literally translated means “work.” A play that is (usually) completely sung, often with orchestral accompaniment.
Soprano	The highest female voice. Adina is a soprano.
Mezzo soprano	The middle female voice—in a choir, a second soprano or first alto.
Contralto	The lowest female voice.
Tenor	The highest male voice. Nemorino is a tenor.
Baritone	The middle male voice. Belcore is a baritone.
Bass	The lowest male voice. Dr. Dulcamara is a bass.
Trouser/ pants role	In some operas, a mezzo soprano plays a young man or a boy whose voice has not changed yet. This is a very old operatic convention.
Set	Short for “setting.” The scenery the singers/actors work on.
Conductor	The leader of the orchestra and singers. Just like on a train, the conductor keeps everything on track.
Props	Short for “properties.” Anything onstage that is not part of the set or the costumes.



Opera Lesson Plans

What's here?

Opera Elements I: Voice Types and What they Communicate

Opera Elements II: The Libretto

Opera Elements III: The Score

The Crown Maker

Opera Elements I:

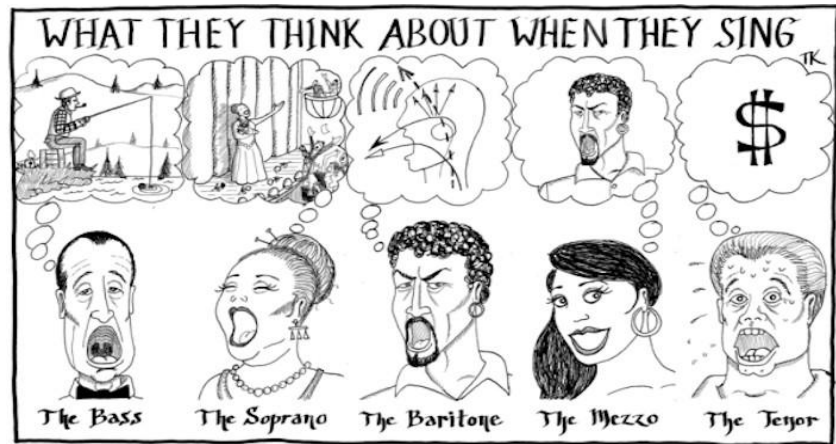
Voice Types and What They Communicate

Theme: How do artistic conventions of the past inform our current artistic choices?

Essential Questions

How do artists make creative decisions?

How do artists balance what is known with what is discovered during the creative process?



Social Emotional Learning

Artists organize and develop creative ideas by balancing what is known with what is new.

Artists can explain their intent and reactive choices in constructive ways.

Culturally Sustaining Elements

Opera traditionally is a Western European art form that tells stories through music—opera is a play that is sung. But because opera is just a play that is sung, it is not limited to telling Western European stories in the traditional way. This lesson plan allows students to explore how composers have traditionally used voices to indicate character traits within a musical framework and then to apply what they know about those conventions into artistic choices of their own. Those choices will be influenced by and filtered through how different vocal qualities and timbres are interpreted by the student and their cultures. Will the voice casting change depending upon whose story we are

telling? How does an individual's or a culture's concept of beauty affect the voice type that might be chosen to depict a certain character?

Learning Targets

I can...

- Listen to and identify the major operatic voice types: soprano, mezzo soprano, tenor, baritone, and bass.
- Make aesthetic judgements about the expressive qualities and uses of the different timbers of voice.
- Understand the concept of an "artistic convention" and how a composer uses operatic convention about vocal casting.
- Analyze the known personality traits of a literary or movie character and match voice type to the characteristics of the role—both by traditional operatic convention and by using my own artistic preferences.
- Articulate my aesthetic decisions.

Activities to Use:

Synchronous:

- **Watch** Portland Opera video: *Opera Elements I: Voice Types* available here: [Opera Elements Videos](#)
- **Discuss** differences in vocal quality between the different voice types and introduce the concept of **timbre** (Pronounced tam-ber)
- **Listen** to some different operatic selections and ask students if they can identify the voice type and describe the timbre of the voices after each selection. (See digital resources section.)
- **Discuss** how the timbre of a voice influences how the audience interprets a character.

Asynchronous:

- Use [Opera Elements 1 Slideshow](#) to complete the following:
 - [Casting Director Worksheet](#)
 - Play identify that voice type

- For older students: Write an essay about how conventions and stereotypes are similar and consider what the responsibilities of creators and audiences when using and engaging with stereotypes.

Key Vocabulary/Concepts:

Soprano ■ Mezzo Soprano ■ Tenor ■ Baritone ■ Bass ■ Timbre ■ Artistic Convention

Digital Resources:

- Video: *Opera Elements I: Voice Types* [Opera Elements Videos](#) (complete arias for play after the class votes is also located in this playlist.)
- Slide Show (embedded recordings) [Opera Elements 1 Slideshow](#)
- Musical selections: [Musical Selections Opera Elements I](#) (You need not listen to the entirety of any recording, *just long enough to get the feel for the voice.*)
- Fillable Casting Director Sheet [Casting Director Worksheet](#)

Materials & Apps Needed:

- Needed: Computer, internet service, earphones, microphone
- Optional: journal or notebook, pencil, or pen

Direction:

All creators need to make artistic decisions that will best communicate their intent to their audience. Sometimes artists use “conventions” or unofficial rules/customs established by artists who came before them as a kind of shorthand way of getting the audience necessary information quickly. In opera there are lots of conventions! One of these conventions is the use of voice types for various kinds of characters. For instance, traditionally in opera and musical theater, the female romantic lead is a soprano, the male romantic lead is a tenor, the secondary lead is a lower soprano or a mezzo soprano, etc. The qualities of a voice type—how it sounds or its timbre—are associated with distinctive character traits. Of course, these rules are breakable! In this lesson, students have the opportunity to listen to and identify the different voice types and “cast” their own opera based on a movie, story, or novel they know well by making aesthetic decisions which pair known character traits and the vocal qualities of the different voice types. There are no right or wrong answers here! Students will describe why they made the decisions they made.

Synchronous	Asynchronous
• Start by watching the video from Portland Opera: Opera Elements I: Voice Types Opera Elements Videos • Discuss what they learned about the different voice types. • Listen to some additional operatic selections and as they listen, have students give feedback about the timbre of the voices they are hearing either on a Jamboard or by jotting down some notes to share in discussion. Words that can be used to describe the timbre of a voice: light, dark, clear, ringing, warm, bright, brassy, reedy, harsh, noisy, thin, buzzy, pure, raspy, shrill, mellow, strained. In general, try to avoid describing timbre in emotional terms (excited, angry, happy, sad, etc.); that is not the sound quality, it is its effect or interpretation. After each selection, have students try to identify the voice types. • Ask students what kinds of vocal qualities they might associate with different character traits and why. • Questions to help the conversation: Why might a light soprano sound like a young girl? Why might a bass sound like a dad or a priest? • For older students: Do students agree with how composers in the past have created a kind of character shorthand using a singer's vocal quality to communicate information about a character to the audience? • Consider how conventions could be like stereotypes. Ask if students see a connection.	• Review slideshow! Opera Elements 1 Slideshow • Listen to the musical selections in the slide show! • Following the directions in the slide show, complete the assignments chosen by your teacher.

More Ideas!

- After the video presentation, students will have the opportunity to vote for the arias that they would like to hear in their entirety. As a class, listen to the winning arias and discuss how the music expresses emotion to the audience. Do they hear how the music relates to the story the aria tells?
- Students could share their favorite vocal artist and talk about why they like the timbre of their voice and how it makes them feel. They can share this in a video prepared for the class, playing part of the selection, and then talking about it.
- When thinking of popular singers in different genres, how do those singer's vocal qualities influence a listener's interpretation of their music? Are there similarities/differences between how operatic composers use timbre and how popular songwriters use vocal timbre? Does that differ across different genres of music?
- Every culture has a form of musical storytelling. Students can explore different forms of musical storytelling (Chinese Opera, folk ballads, West African griot traditions, African call, and response stories, are just a few ideas) and report back to the class on what they discover.

Differentiation

How will all learners be supported?
(BIPOC, SPED, ELL, TAG)

- BIPOC students are supported in this lesson by seeing BIPOC opera singers in the Opera Elements I: Voice Types video. It can be rare to see BIPOC people represented in the classical arts.
- BIPOC, SPED and ELL students are supported by the opportunity to have a frank and courageous conversation about stereotypes in art and discussing whether they feel that those stereotypes are harmful and what can be done about any damage inflicted by those stereotypes.
- SPED students are able to articulate their personal responses to the emotional content of the music and vote for their favorite aria, which validates their choices and feelings.
- ELL students are placed on an equal footing with their English-speaking peers as they listen to the operatic music presented. All of the selections are in a foreign language and untranslated, forcing all students to listen to the emotional content of the music and look for the artistic interpretation of the performer for context and meaning, rather than relying on language.
- TAG students, through the additional ideas section have the opportunity to go deep into comparing different genres and noticing the through lines in each.

The Crown Maker

Opera Elements II:

Building Blocks: What is an opera made of?

Theme: What elements go into creating an opera?

Essential Question:

How do artists make creative decisions?

How do artists use a critique process and reflection to refine a work and decide it is ready to be shared.

Socio-Emotional Learning

One's feelings, thoughts, personal traits, strengths, and challenges influence the creative process.

Creative ideas and inspiration can emerge from a variety of sources. Creativity is a life skill that may be developed.



Culturally Sustaining Elements

Opera traditionally is a Western European art form that tells stories through music—opera is a play that is sung. But because opera is just a play that is sung, it is not limited to telling Western European stories in the traditional way. This lesson plan allows students to explore how composers and librettists use music and song to express story and emotion through the basic building blocks of opera: aria, recitative, ensemble, chorus, and orchestra. Students will have an opportunity to express their own stories by creating arias and recitatives of their own and sharing them live or through pre-recorded video in apps like Flipgrid.

Learning Targets

I can...

- Define and identify the basic building blocks of opera and understand how they are utilized within the larger operatic structure.
- Using what I know about how aria and recitative are used in an opera, create my own aria and recitative by writing the libretto to either an established popular song or my own melodies.
- Perform my recitative and aria.

Activities to Use:

Synchronous:

- **Watch** Portland Opera video: *Opera Elements II: The Building Blocks of Opera* [Opera Elements Videos](#)
- **Discuss** differences and similarities between how operas are constructed and the building blocks of other art forms and how recitative in opera and the verse in a song might be similar and different.
- **Listen** to some different operatic selections and ask students to identify what “building block” they think they might be hearing (recitative, aria, ensemble [duet, trio, quartet, etc.]) and what kind of emotion the music evokes for them. (see digital resources below.)

Asynchronous:

- Use *Opera Elements II: Building Blocks of Opera* Slide Show here [Opera Elements II Slide Show](#) to complete the following:
 - Review the building blocks of opera
 - Complete Building Blocks of Opera Worksheet
- **For older students:** Write an essay on how opera building blocks compare with how other art forms are constructed (novels, plays or ballets for instance)
- Create a recitative and aria by writing the libretto and setting it to the tune of a known song. Students may choose to write their own melody as well.
- Perform their recitative and aria and share it via recording on Flipgrid, or teacher’s preference.

Key Vocabulary/Concepts:

Recitative ■ Aria ■ Ensemble ■ Chorus ■ Orchestra ■ Libretto ■ Artistic Convention

Digital Resources:

- Video: *Opera Elements II: Building Blocks of Opera* [Opera Elements Videos](#)
- Slide Show (embedded recordings) [Opera Elements II Slide Show](#)
- Musical selections: [Opera Elements II Musical Selections](#)
- Building Blocks of Opera worksheet [Building Blocks of Opera Worksheet](#)
- Access to Flipgrid or other apps to facilitate the recording of student recitatives and arias.

Materials & Apps Needed:

- Needed: Computer, internet service, earphones, microphone
- Optional: journal or notebook, pencil, or pen

Direction:

All art forms use specific structures and conventions to organize how they communicate with an audience. For instance, novels typically use punctuation, paragraphs, and chapters to help an audience interpret meaning (William Faulkner aside!). Plays use acts, scenes, monologues, etc. to communicate their story. Ballets use the pas de deux, solo variations, ensembles, codas, etc. Opera is a highly stylized dramatic art form that uses specific structures to help tell its story as well. In addition to acts and scenes, like a play, opera uses recitatives, arias, ensembles, choruses, and the orchestral accompaniment to convey meaning. Understanding how these structures work within opera increases our ability to interpret the art form itself and to structure our own ideas and communicate them effectively in an operatic context. This lesson plan introduces the basic structures (building blocks) used in an opera and gives students an opportunity to create their own recitative and aria expressing a situation in their own lives and their feelings about it.

Synchronous	Asynchronous
• Watch Portland Opera Video II: Building Blocks of Opera Opera Elements Videos • Discuss differences and similarities of how an opera is constructed and how other art forms are constructed. You might ask the following questions: • What other art forms are you familiar with? (You might need to prompt them with suggestions like	• Review slide show: Opera Elements II: Building Blocks of Opera. Opera Elements II Slide Show • Watch links and ask yourself is this an aria? Does it also have a recitative? Is it an ensemble? What kind? • Fill out Building Blocks of Opera Form. • Write a recitative and aria of your own!

books, paintings, plays, movies, etc.) • Are there any specific ways those art forms are organized? Let us list some ways that authors organize novels or chapter books. (List out how a chapter book is organized). • What art forms look more like an opera? (musical, play, movie, ballet, etc.) • Do any of them have structures that are like an opera recitative, aria, ensemble, etc.? • Listen to some selections provided in the digital resources play list. Opera Elements II Musical Selections (These selections are in English). Ask students to identify whether the selection is an aria, a recitative, an ensemble of some sort (duet? Trio?) or a chorus. As you listen, consider the emotional content of the music. What does the music make you feel?	Use something happening in your own life. Explain the situation in your recitative and then tell us how you feel about the situation in your aria. You can write your words to a song tune you already know or make up your own melody to go with it. • Record your performance of your recitative and aria and share it with your teacher. (Follow your teacher's instructions on how to do this. • If your teacher asks you to, write an essay comparing how an opera uses recitative, arias, ensembles, etc., and how a different art form of your choice uses its building blocks.
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More Ideas!	Differentiation How will all learners be supported? (BIPOC, SPED, ELL, TAG)
• Compare how songs use verses, choruses, recitatives, and arias. Can an aria have a chorus like a song? • Discuss how an opera uses its chorus and how Greek theater uses the chorus. Are they similar or different? How so? • Discuss how plays might get across the same function as an opera chorus. Can it be done without music? How would you do it?	• BIPOC students are supported in this lesson by seeing BIPOC opera singers in the Opera Elements II: Building Blocks of Opera video. It can be rare to see BIPOC people represented in the classical arts. • BIPOC, SPED, and ELL students are supported by the opportunity to describe their lives and their feelings about their lives in an artistic way, utilizing musical tunes or genres that they are familiar with and enjoy.

The Crown Maker

Opera Elements III:

Building Blocks: The Libretto & The Score

Theme: How do words and music work together to make an opera?

Essential Question:

How do artists make creative decisions?

How do artists use a critique process and reflection to refine a work and decide it is ready to be shared.

How do artists balance what is known with what is discovered during the creative process?



Socio-Emotional Learning

One's feelings, thoughts, personal traits, strengths, and challenges influence the creative process.

Creative ideas and inspiration can emerge from a variety of sources. Creativity is a life skill that may be developed.

Artists recognize the skills needed to generate, refine, and complete creative ideas in order to achieve their goals.

Culturally Sustaining Elements

Opera traditionally is a Western European art form that tells stories through music—opera is a play that is sung. But because opera is just a play that is sung, it is not limited to telling Western European stories in the traditional way. This lesson plan allows students to explore how composers and librettists use music and song to express story and emotion through words (libretto) and music (written as a score), utilizing the basic building blocks of opera: aria, recitative, ensemble, and chorus. Students will have an opportunity to express their own stories by working individually or in groups to create an opera libretto scenario of their own. Optional activities include the second part of libretto writing: versification (writing the actual words to be sung).

Learning Targets

I can...

- Define and utilize the building blocks of opera within the context of an opera libretto
- Understand the difference between the two parts of an opera libretto: the scenario and the verses
- Understand and discuss how music influences the storytelling and words of an opera
- Understand the role of the composer in opera
- Sequence a story by creating a five-sentence opera scenario
- Work with others or independently to tell my own story, utilizing the structures of an opera libretto

Activities to Use:

Synchronous:

- **Watch** *Opera Elements III: The Libretto and the Score* [Opera Elements Videos](#)
- **Review** opera vocabulary words
- **Discuss** The influence of music on words and how it affects how a libretto is written.
- **Demonstrate** how the five-sentence scenario structure works with a familiar story

Asynchronous:

- **Review** Opera Elements III: [The Libretto and the Score Slideshow](#)
- **Create** an original five-sentence libretto scenario individually or in an assigned group using [How to Write an Opera Worksheet 1](#)
- **Create** (optional) a versified libretto

Key Vocabulary/Concepts:

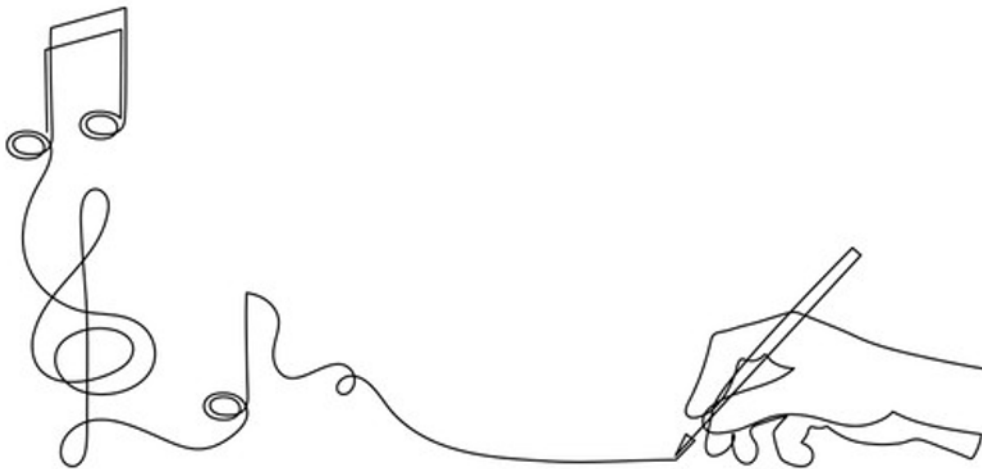
Libretto • Scenario • Verse/versification • Score • Librettist • Composer • Aria • Recitative • Ensemble

Digital Resources:

- *Opera Elements III: The Libretto and the Score* Video [Opera Elements Videos](#)
- Opera Elements III: [The Libretto and the Score Slideshow](#)
- [How to Write an Opera Worksheet 1](#)
- (optional) [How To Write an Opera Worksheet 2](#)

Materials & Apps Needed:

- Needed: Computer, internet service, earphones, microphone
- Optional: journal or notebook, pencil, or pen



Direction:

Synchronous	Asynchronous
1. After viewing the <i>Opera Elements III: The Libretto and the Score</i> Opera Elements Videos, discuss what you have just seen. Some questions to ask might be: - How do you think words and music work together to make an opera? - What does a librettist have to consider when writing a libretto for a composer to put to music? - What does a composer consider when setting words to music? - Have a student read the lyrics to a popular or familiar song—then listen to a recording of it. Does the music change your feelings about the words? - How is storytelling different in operas, plays and movies than in books? 2. Review the definitions for the opera vocabulary: Libretto, scenario, verse, aria, recitative, ensemble, and chorus. 3. Introduce the 5-Sentence Story Structure, outlined in the appendix below. 4. Using a familiar story and working as a group (or you can send groups into break out rooms to work together to come up with a 5-Sentence Story) create an opera scenario based on this 5-Sentence Structure—remind students that they shouldn't get bogged down in the details—that will come later! The important part is the basics of the story with a Beginning, Middle and an End. 5. After students understand this model, explain that during asynchronous learning they will create an original 5-Sentence Opera Scenario. If desired, they can elaborate on that scenario, by deciding what opera building blocks would work to tell the story (should a chorus open the show? Does a character sing an aria here? Do we need some recitative to hold it all together and get us to the next story element?)	- Review with Opera Elements III: The Libretto and the Score Slide Show. - Using the <i>How to Write an Opera (or at least a really good start!)</i> worksheet, create an original Five Sentence Opera Scenario, with your group, if assigned to do so by your teacher, or on your own. - If instructed, go on to the next step, and using the <i>How to Write an Opera II</i> fill in where different Opera Building blocks like arias, recitatives, ensembles or choruses should go to tell the story—remember, in an opera or a play, characters have to show by actions and tell with dialogue what is happening in the story—we cannot tell the story in the same way that the author of a book can. Optional for more advanced students (or really interested students): Versify their opera scenario. They could consider rewriting words for popular or familiar songs that have the emotional content they need to tell their story.

More Ideas!	Differentiation How will all learners be supported? (BIPOC, SPED, ELL, TAG)
• After watching Portland Opera's production of Frida or Journeys to Justice via limited access links provided to participating teachers, have students revisit their opera scenarios, revising, as necessary. Or, if using this lesson plan outside of the viewing window for Portland Opera's productions, watch portions of operas available on YouTube and have students revise their work based on their observations of those operas. • Create a class opera by writing a 5-Sentence Opera Scenario as a class and then break the class into groups who will be responsible for writing the libretto, working closely with students who select or write the music for the words of the libretto (for instance, as librettists designate different places for arias, choruses, etc., working on the music might select tunes of popular music for the librettists to write to, or they might right tunes that fit the librettists' verses. For this it might be easier for them to curate rather than write the music, but if you have some ambitious students, go for it!), for designing costumes and sets and performing the finished product. Have students film themselves performing.	• BIPOC students are supported in this lesson by seeing an African American composer talk about his process and career in the Opera Elements III: The Libretto and the Score. It can be rare to see BIPOC people represented in the classical arts. • BIPOC, SPED, and ELL students are supported by the opportunity to describe their lives and their feelings about their lives in an artistic way, utilizing musical tunes or genres that they are familiar with and enjoy.



Language Arts Lesson Plans

What's here?

Musical Storytelling: Mexican Folk Song

Everyone's a Critic

People Postcards

The Crown Maker

Musical Storytelling

Mexican Folksong Genres

Theme: Let's Write a Corrido or Ranchera!

Essential Question:

EU: How do artists make creative decisions?

EU: How do artists use a critique process and reflection to refine a work and decide it is ready to be shared.

Socio-Emotional Learning

EU: One's feelings, thoughts, personal traits, strengths and challenges influence the creative process.

EU: Artists may consider the thoughts, feelings, and perspectives of others, and the influence of these factors varies based on an artist's intent.



Detail from a mural by Diego Rivera

Culturally Sustaining Elements

When I teach folks about opera, I always tell them, “an opera is just a play that is sung.” In very basic terms, operas tell stories through music. There are a lot of extra theatrical elements in an opera, but essentially, opera is musical storytelling. Many cultures tell stories with music, and Mexico has a rich tradition of musical storytelling which combines melody and words to tell tales. This unit of lesson plans introduces several different genres of Mexican folk music with definitions and examples and then focuses on corridos and rancheras. Composer Jesse Sanchez used the corrido form as a basis for *The Crown Maker*, although he also utilizes traditional operatic forms to tell the story as well.

Students will have the opportunity to write the words to their own corrido or ranchera, using the traditional poetic form familiar to many of these folk songs: the ballad. Because corridos in particular have a tradition of telling stories about topical and culturally/historically significant events, students may choose to write about the very

tumultuous times in which we are living--corridos offer the narrator an opportunity to comment on the action, and this will give voice to students' thoughts and opinions. This unit will take about three sessions.

Learning Targets

I can...

- Define various genres of Mexican Folk music including *son*, *mariachi*, *ranchera*, *corrido*, *canto nuevo*, and *Mexican cumbia*
- Articulate the basic history of the corrido and how it is used today
- Understand the meter and rhyme pattern that is used in a ballad poem (a form often used for the words of corridos and rancheras)
- Write a corrido or ranchera, utilizing the ballad meter and rhyme schemes
- Optional: Set the words of their corrido to music to perform for the class (students can utilize the tune of a corrido or ranchera that is already familiar to them and put their new words to it or make up their own tune that is in the spirit of Mexican folk tunes.

Activities to Use

Session 1: Introducing some Mexican folk music genres.

Synchronous:

- **Brainstorm** all of the types of musical storytelling students can come up with
- **Introduce** Mexican folk music genres with the help of [Music of the People: Mexico slideshow](#) (this slideshow includes listening!)
- **Compare** musical storytelling forms by asking students to work in pairs to fill out a [Venn Diagram Worksheet](#)

Asynchronous:

- **Review** slideshow [Music of the People: Mexico slideshow](#)
Homework worksheet [An Example of a Corrido or Ranchera](#)

[Worksheet](#)

Session 2: Learning about Ballad Poems

Synchronous:

- **Remind** students that songs and poems can tell stories like rancheras and corridos.
- **Read** out loud anonymous ballad poem "The Unquiet Grave," available online here:
<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/50403/the-unquiet-grave>
- **Introduce** the classical form of the ballad poem using the slideshow [What is a Ballad?](#)
- **Compare** the rhyme and meter of the Scottish ballad "The Unquiet Grave" with the Mexican ranchera "La Llorona" as a class. Selections from both poems compared side by side are in the [What is a Ballad?](#) slide show.

Asynchronous:

- Review slideshow Musical Storytelling: [What is a Ballad?](#)
- Homework: Write your own ballad poem paying attention to the ballad poem rhyme and rhythm scheme. You can use a story you made up or a story you know and turn it into a poem.

Session 3: Putting it together: Writing Lyrics for a Corrido or Ranchera

Synchronous:

- **Review** the definitions of corridos, rancheras and ballad poems. Discuss their similarities.
- **Introduce** [Corrido Format Slideshow](#) (slide show to help available here:
- **Brainstorm:** Students, working individually or in groups, brainstorm contemporary, historical happenings or personal stories within the last two years that they think would make a good corrido or ranchera.

Asynchronous:

- **Review** slideshows [Music of the People: Mexico slideshow](#); [What is a Ballad?](#); and [Corrido Format Slideshow](#)

- **Homework** Taking all that you have learned about corridos, rancheras and ballad poems, write the lyrics for a new corrido or ranchera based upon a personal story or social events of the last two years. If you would like to set your words to music, you may use the tune to a ranchera or corrido you know or create your own! (English or Spanish)

Key Vocabulary/Concepts

Son ♦ mariachi ♦ ranchera ♦ corrido, ♦ canto nuevo, ♦ Mexican cumbia ♦ ballad

Digital Resources

- [Music of the People: Mexico slideshow](#)
- [What is a Ballad?](#)
- [Corrido Format Slideshow](#)
- [Venn Diagram Worksheet](#)
- [An Example of a Corrido or Ranchera Worksheet](#)

Materials and Apps Needed

- Needed: Computer, internet service, earphones, microphone
- Optional: Journal or notebook, pencil or pen

Direction

Session 1: Mexican Folk Songs and Musical Genres

Synchronous	Asynchronous
Brainstorm all of the types of musical storytelling students can come up with. If students have already seen the POGO production of <i>The Crown Maker</i>, then they already know about opera. If they have not yet seen it, this is a great opportunity to introduce opera as a genre. "Opera is just a play that is sung!" Other forms of musical storytelling students might know are musical theater, operetta, ballads, folk songs, etc. Talk a little bit about why people might use music in their storytelling. Introduce Mexican folk music genres with the help of Music of the People: Mexico slideshow. Explain that Mexico has a long history of distinctive folk music. We are going to learn a little bit about several different kinds, but we will be focusing primarily on corridos and rancheras over the next couple of lessons. Rancheras and corridos both tell stories. Compare musical storytelling forms by asking students to work in pairs to fill out the Venn Diagram Worksheet. Or, you could work together as a class compare the different forms.	Review slideshow Music of the People: Mexico slideshow. Students should spend some time reviewing and refreshing their new knowledge of Mexican folk music forms. Homework worksheet An Example of a Corrido or Ranchera Worksheet • Students google examples of corridos or examples of rancheras and listen to 3-5 of those that they find. • Once they find one they like (or their favorite among those they found), they select it and do some research about it in order to answer the questions on the worksheet. • Students share their findings-- including sharing the music with the class, or in small group discussion. NOTE: Some corridos talk about crimes or glorify a drug culture or a death culture. You might want to mention to students that you are looking for older, more traditional, corridos that focus on historical events in the past.

Session 2: Learning about Ballad Poems

Synchronous	Asynchronous
Remind students that songs and poems can tell stories. Rancheras and corridos are examples of narrative songs. Explain that ballad poems are poems that also tell stories and, like many poetic forms, have a specific rhyme and meter. The rhyme scheme and meter of ballad poems make them particularly suitable for setting to music. Read out loud anonymous ballad poem “The Unquiet Grave,” available online here: https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/50403/the-unquiet-grave ● Ask students what they noticed about the poem. (some thoughts: length of the story, rhyming, rhythm, language which might be unusual for them--it is in a Scottish dialect--how is the story told) Introduce the classical form of the ballad poem using the slideshow What is a Ballad? ● Pay particular attention to the rhyme and rhythm. They will be using this format for their own ballads as homework. Compare the rhyme and meter of the Scottish ballad “The Unquiet Grave” with the Mexican ranchera “La Llorona” as a class. Selections from both poems compared side by side are here: ● These poems are in exactly the same form. The rhyme scheme, the meter, etc. Point this out--they are going to be using this later to write their own ranchera or corrido! If students speak only English, provide a translation for “La Llorona,” readily available online. If appropriate, Spanish speakers familiar with the song might like to share.	Review slideshow What is a Ballad? to refresh your memory about ballad poem form and read some of the poems linked to get a feel for them. Homework: Write your own ballad poem paying attention to the classical ballad poem rhyme and rhythm scheme. You can use a story you made up or a story you know and turn it into a poem.

Session 3: Putting it Together: Writing the Lyrics for a Corrido or Ranchera.

Synchronous	Asynchronous
Review the definitions of corridos, rancheras and ballad poems. Discuss their similarities. Introduce the corrido format using Corrido Format Slideshow to help • Take special note of the function of each stanza of the poem. This will help students structure their poem for lyrics. • The biggest difference between a corrido or a ranchera when set to music is the musical meter: Corridos are in "common" or 4/4 time and Rancheras are often in 3 /4 or waltz time. • Another difference between rancheras and corridos as traditionally understood is that corridos are "gendered" in that they are traditionally sung by men often for men. • Explain to students that while there are important differences between ranchera and corrido, their poetic forms are similar, though their focus may be different. Rancheras are more "romantic" and often focus on love, love lost, jealousy, etc. Corridos often focus on historic or social events. Brainstorm: Students, working individually or in groups, brainstorm contemporary, historical happenings or personal stories within the last two years that they think would make a good corrido or ranchera.	Review • Music of the People: Mexico slideshow • What is a Ballad? • Corrido Format Slideshow Focus particularly on ballad and corrido forms. Homework Taking all that you have learned about corridos, rancheras and ballad poems, write the lyrics for a new corrido or ranchera based upon a personal story or social events of the last two years. • Optional: If you would like to set your words to music, you may use the tune to a ranchera or corrido you know or create your own! (English or Spanish!) Share your work with the class--either by reading your poem aloud or by sharing a recording of it being sung, performing it in front of the class or in written form. Poems are made to be read!

The Crown Maker

Everyone's A Critic

Theme: Making aesthetic judgements without making value judgements and communicating clearly in written language.

Essential Question:

EQ: How does an audience use a critique process and reflection to determine the aesthetic quality of a work?

EQ: How does an audience go deeper than their personal "like" or "dislike" to make aesthetic judgements?

Socio-Emotional Learning:

EU: One's feelings, thoughts, personal traits, strengths, and challenges influence our reaction to an artist's work.

EU: How does the recognition of one's personal traits, strengths, challenges, and biases affect one's ability to make aesthetic judgements?



Overview:

In this lesson plan, students will have the opportunity to think critically about what they are watching and hearing. Students will pretend that they are the classical music reviewer for the local newspaper. Their job is to provide readers with a sense of the performance of *The Crown Maker*. A review should include descriptions of the singing, sets, acting and costumes. It is not a reviewer's job to inform readers if the performance is "good" or "bad." Instead, a reviewer uses language in such a way that a reader can understand what to expect for a performance without having seen it. This lesson is best used after your students have seen the Portland Opera To Go presentation of *The Crown Maker*. This lesson plan is appropriate

for all grade levels 3rd and up and is adapted from Houston Opera's Opera in the Neighborhoods program.

NOTE: Consider having students bring the handout "Everyone's a Critic" with a writing utensil to the performance to take notes as they watch. Go over the handout before the show to familiarize students with what they are listening for. Also be mindful of where your students will be seated. If you plan to use this lesson plan, request that your students are seated where they can see but not disturb other student audience members. One could also select sections of a DVD recording of an opera and use this lesson plan.

Common Core Standards

CC standards for Writing: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

CC standards for speaking and listening: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

Learning Targets

I can...

- Understand that opera reviews must include descriptive information about the singing, sets, acting, accompaniment, and costumes
- Understand that reviews of live performances are not always subjective and evaluative (for example: the performance was "good" or "bad" or "I liked" or "didn't like").
- Construct a written review with an appropriate audience in mind using Standard English (or their native language), within a 250-400-word limit.
- Optional: Indicate which of the words in their review are adjectives and adverbs or strong, descriptive verbs

Activities to Use:

Synchronous:

- **Discuss** what a review is and the role of the reviewer and the difference between **subjective** and **objective** observation. You may wish to use the *Everyone's a Critic* slideshow available here: [Everyone's a Critic Slideshow](#)
- **Review/introduce** terminology

- **Watch** Portland Opera To Go presentation of *The Elixir of Love* either live at school or via available recording (contact Portland Opera for more information)
- **Take notes** on what they are watching using the *Everyone's a Critic* Handout available here: [Everyone's a Critic Notes Handout](#)

Asynchronous:

- **View** [Everyone's a Critic Slideshow](#)
- **Review** notes taken during presentation of *The Elixir of Love*
- **Organize** notes using suggested format presented in *Everyone's a Critic* slideshow
- **Write** review of Portland Opera To Go presentation of *The Elixir of Love*.

Key Vocabulary/Concepts:

Libretto • Aria • Soprano • Mezzo Soprano • Tenor • Baritone • Bass • Score • Aria • Ensemble • Sets • Costumes • Accompaniment • Subjective • Objective

Digital Resources:

- *Everyone's a Critic* Slideshow available here: [Everyone's a Critic Slideshow](#)
- *Everyone's a Critic* Handout available here: [Everyone's a Critic Handout](#)

Materials & Apps Needed:

- Needed: Computer, internet service, (earphones, microphone, if learning remotely)
- Optional: journal or notebook, pencil, or pen

Direction:

Synchronous	Asynchronous
1. Discuss: Ask students if they know what a "review" is. Explain that, in this case, a review is an article in a paper that describes a performance of some sort, whether a play, opera, concert or movie. Inform students that a helpful review provides enough detail for the reader to "recreate" aspects of the performance by reading the review. The purpose of writing the review is not to express the reviewer's feelings about whether the performance was "good" or "bad," but to accurately describe what the reviewer saw or heard. 2. Explain that they will be seeing an opera and writing a review. (Explain what an opera is if students don't know). Explain that they should think about the singing, sets, costumes, acting and piano accompaniment (or orchestral accompaniment, if using a DVD of an opera). Again, they should not be subjective and say whether they "liked" those elements or not but describe what they see or hear and whether everything worked together in their opinion. 3. Review/Introduce terminology. Explain that critics use what they know about an art form to help them make aesthetic judgements about what worked or did not in a performance. You may use the Everyone's a Critic slideshow available here to help you: Everyone's a Critic Slideshow 4. Watch Portland Opera To Go presentation of <i>The Crown Maker</i> either live at school or via available recording (contact Portland Opera for more information)	1. View <i>Everyone's a Critic</i> slideshow here: Everyone's a Critic Slideshow 2. Review notes taken during presentation of <i>The Crown Maker</i>. 3. Organize notes using suggested format presented in <i>Everyone's a Critic</i> slideshow 4. Write review of Portland Opera To Go presentation of <i>The Crown Maker</i>.

5. Take notes on what they are watching using the Everyone's a Critic Handout available here: Everyone's a Critic Handout	
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More Ideas!	Differentiation How will all learners be supported? (BIPOC, SPED, ELL, TAG)
• Have students indicate which words in their review are adjectives or adverbs • Have students discuss how to separate whether they like a work of art (whether it is visual, literary, musical, theatrical, etc.) from whether the art is good art. What makes a piece of art "good" or "bad?" Who gets to decide whether art is "good" or "bad?" What might influence whether an artistic piece survives into the future or not? What influences their opinion of an artwork? • Using their critic's eye, have students review a piece of their own art, whether a story they have written or a drawing, etc. How does reviewing their work help them to revise their work? Is it harder to criticize your own work or someone else's?	• BIPOC students are supported by seeing artists of color performing in an opera presented in their school • BIPOC students will be supported in that they bring their unique perspectives into the act of aesthetic criticism and realize that their opinions, thoughts, and values uniquely influence their experience of a work of art. • ELL students will be supported by seeing a presentation that is performed in both the culturally dominant language and in a language other than the dominant language, observing that both languages are equally valid.

The Crown Maker

People Postcards

Sequencing a Story

Overview:

This lesson provides an opportunity for kinetic learners, ESL students, and other students to sequence a story in an interesting, non-traditional way, while working together and allowing those who are less successful with pencil and paper contribute to the group. This lesson plan could use any story. This lesson plan is appropriate for kindergartners (with support and guidance) through 3rd grades. The Culminating Activity can be done orally for kindergartners and first graders.



Common Core Standards

CLSS.ELA.Literacy: RL.K2,K3,K7 RL.1.2,1.3,1.7 RL2.1,2.2,2.5 RL3.1,3.2,3.7

Learning Targets

I can...

- Work in groups of 5 or 6 to sequence a story
- Work together as a group to create a tableau of each scene in the story sequence using my face and body to communicate emotional information for the rest of the class.
- Determine what is happening in other groups' tableaus.

Activities to Use:

Synchronous:

- **Activate** by discussing the saying, "A picture is worth a thousand words?"
- **Review/introduce** terminology
- **Explore and experiment** as a class by reading a picture book in class giving thought to important events in the story.
- **Create** sequential events of an assigned story in small groups
- **Share** each group's vignette's with the class.
- **Respond** by writing a paragraph how pictures help tell a story

Key Vocabulary/Concepts:

Character • Director • Sequence • Vignette

Materials & Apps Needed

Per Group:

- Scratch paper and pencil to take notes and organize group
- Any simple story (without pictures!) If your students are not yet reading, choose a familiar story (*Hansel & Gretel*, *Cinderella*, *The Three Bears*, etc.) that is easily recalled.

Per Class:

- Picture book (any will do, but best if protagonists are people or anthropomorphized animals) as an example. Any of David Weisner's amazing picture books will do: *Tuesday* or *Sector 7* are terrific wordless picture books. (If you haven't seen *Tuesday*, you really must!)

Prep for Teachers:

- Create zones or space for each student group to work. They will need a little space to rehearse their postcards.
- Decide on the story (without pictures!) for which the students will create tableaux.
- Write some bullet points on the board:
 - Decide on 6 events

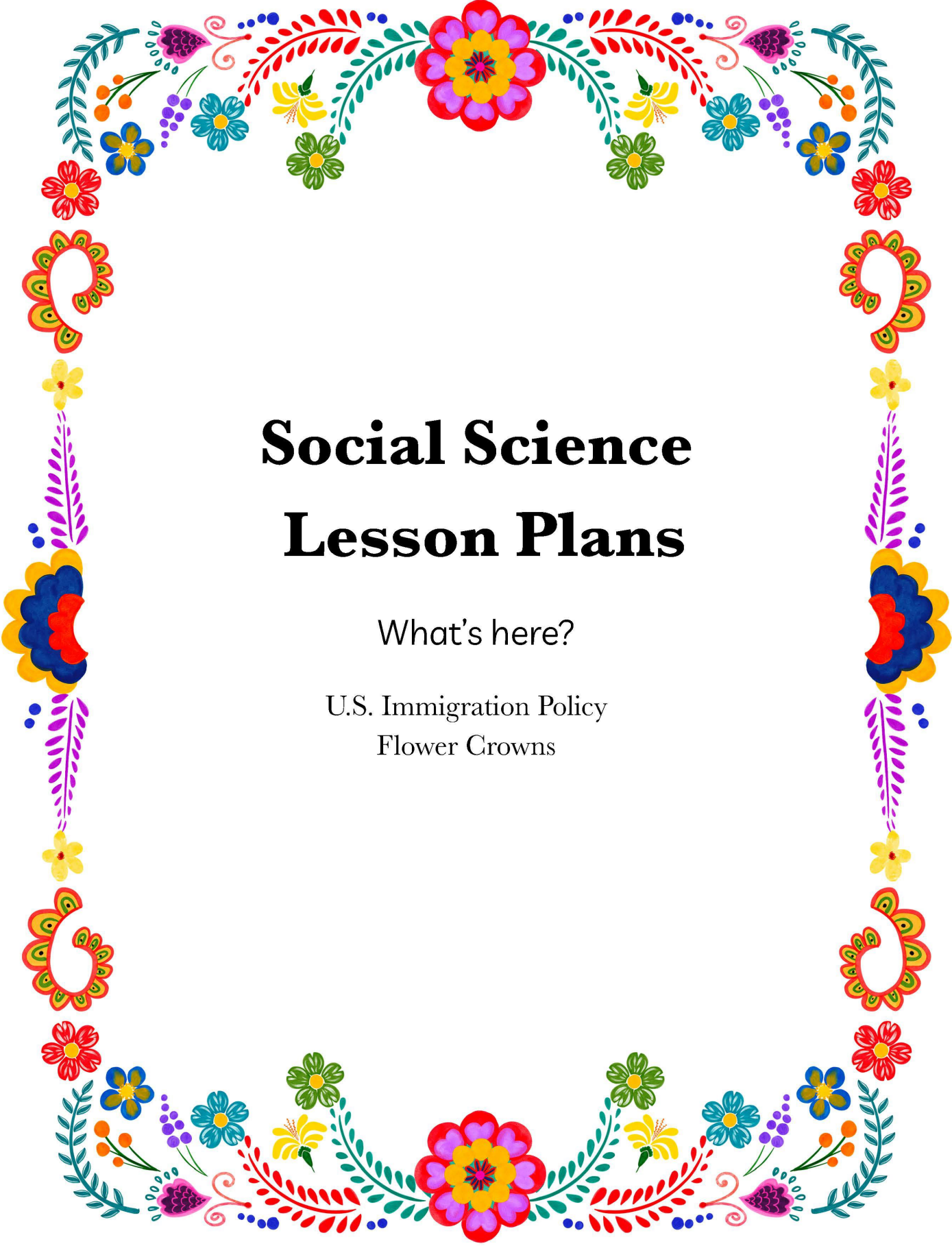
- Decide who will be the “Director”
- Decide who will play what role
- Decide how your people postcard should look

Direction:

Synchronous	Asynchronous
1. Activate: Ask students if they have ever heard the saying, “A picture is worth a thousand words.” • Ask them if they agree—why or why not? • Explain that research says that small children get up to 95% of their information visually. • Today we are going to work in groups to tell a story using our bodies and faces, but not our voices. We are going to create pictures with people! 2. Review/Introduce vocabulary Ensure that all students understand terms character, director, sequence, and vignette. 3. Explore and experiment: Pull out the picture book. • Show the class one of the pictures in the books. a. Have a group of volunteers look at the picture and then put themselves in the same position/s as the characters in the picture and freeze. This is what they will be doing with the 6 events of the story they are about to hear. • Instruct kids to listen carefully to the story they are about to hear, thinking what important things happen in the story. • Read the story to the class aloud. • Create: Divide kids up into groups of 5 or 6 (adjust according to the size of your class.) ○ Tell them that first they must work together to decide which 6 events in the story are the most important. (Depending on their age, you can provide them a copy of the story as well) ○ Then they should choose a “director” for the group. A director in a play helps the actors to know what to do. They are usually very visual people who help to tell the story by showing the audience through actions. This person will make sure that the	Respond Students should write a paragraph for the following questions: • Is it easier to understand a story told in words or pictures? ○ Why? • How do words and pictures work together to tell a story?

postcard “looks right” and make sure that everyone has an appropriate expression on their face. ○ After they have chosen a director, the group should decide who will play what character. If there is a disagreement, the director will be the tiebreaking vote. ○ After they have determined who will be what character, the group, with guidance from the director, will create pictures/postcards of each event they have sequenced in the story. • Share After students have created their people postcards, it is time to share with the class. ○ Audience members should be reminded of proper etiquette—they should be quiet and respectful as they watch the postcards and after each group is through, they should applaud the group’s efforts. Remember, everyone will have their turn up there! ○ Groups should show their postcards, one at a time. The audience should answer the following questions for each postcard: ▪ What is happening in this scene? ▪ Who is playing what character (i.e. stepsister, Cinderella, Prince) ▪ What is each character feeling (using facial cues and body language)	
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More Ideas!	Differentiation How will all learners be supported? (BIPOC, SPED, ELL, TAG)
• Choose different picture books for each group and have the class guess what the story is based on the vignettes presented by each group. (Choose very well know fairytales and/or provide a list of possible stories for the class to select the answer from.) • Add words to each vignette. Allow each group to add three lines to each scene to be delivered by the appropriate character.	• All students are supported by participating in an activity which allows them to play to their strengths. • ELL students will be supported by participating in an activity where spoken communication is less important for the final activity. • Kinetic learners are supported by hands on learning.



Social Science Lesson Plans

What's here?

U.S. Immigration Policy
Flower Crowns

The Crown Maker

U.S. Immigration Policy

Discovering how the United States has handled immigration over time.

Essential Questions

How have attitudes towards immigration changed throughout the history of the United States?

What does it mean to be a “nation of immigrants?”

Does an immigrant’s country of origin matter to how welcome they are in the United States?



Culturally Sustaining Elements

Portland Opera To Go’s production of Jesse Sanchez’s and Maya Malán-Gonzales’s *The Crown Maker* tells the story of one Mexican family’s journey to the United States and how they became not only Mexican, but Mexican American. Eva Castellanoz’s father was part of the bracero program though he had also worked in the U.S. before that program formalized Mexican migration. Initially, her family worked in the Rio Grande Valley in Texas, and then, in 1957, when Eva was 19, they moved to Nyssa, Oregon, where the family still works and lives today. She often quotes her father as saying, “I’d rather be a poor man in the United States than a millionaire in Mexico.” She is a revered artist and curandera in Eastern Oregon, where she has served the

migrant community. In 1989 she received a National Heritage Award. All nine of her children were born in the U.S. The United States has often been called a “nation of immigrants,” and our relationship to immigration throughout history has been fraught. U.S laws regulating immigration have reflected the attitudes of the current population to newcomers throughout history. In this lesson plan, high school students will research various U.S. immigration laws and begin to draw their own conclusions about the issues surrounding immigration from their understanding of the laws and laws and how they have changed over the years.

Learning Targets

I can...

- Understand how U.S. Immigration law has changed throughout U.S. history
- Understand that U.S. immigration law reflects the politics and social concerns of the country at the time that they were made and that those attitudes change and shift over time.
- Begin to extrapolate the kinds of social situations that influence attitudes towards immigration and immigration legislation.

Activities to Use

Session 1: Introduction

Synchronous

- Discuss what students know of their own family's immigration stories.
- Introduce some context about immigration with help from the slideshow [U.S. Immigration Policy: A Brief Introduction](#)
- Consider what students know about immigration in the United States today.
- Explain that the first law regarding immigration and citizenship requirements was the Naturalization Act of 1790. Ever since, Congress has been passing laws regulating immigration.

Asynchronous

- **Review** slideshow U.S. Immigration Policy: A Brief Introduction
- **Write** a short essay about what you know about your family's immigration story.

Session 2: Research

Synchronous

- **Discuss** Portland Opera To Go's production of *The Crown Maker* is about one Mexican American woman's life—which includes how she and her family came to the United States.
- **Introduce** research activity
- **Research** various immigration laws in small groups or individually. Students may fill out the [Immigration Policy Research Worksheet](#) List of possible immigration policies to research at teacher discretion available here: [For the Teacher Immigration Policy](#)

Asynchronous

- **Continue** research
- **Prepare** presentation

Sessions 3 & 4: Present and Reflect

Synchronous

- **Present:** Students present their research to the class. *Optional: record students' presentations for asynchronous viewing for those not present or for future reference.*
- **Engage:** Students listen actively and take notes (things to keep in mind listed in directions)
- **Respond:** Students give peer feedback and responses to presentations
- **Discuss:** Students discuss what they have learned

Asynchronous

- **Reflect:** Students reflect upon what they have learned about immigration policy and write an essay.

Key Vocabulary/Concepts

- Socioeconomic forces affect immigration policy
- Internal U.S. politics affect immigration policy
- Immigration policy changes
- Immigration policy is different for different groups of people at different periods of time
- Not all immigration policy is a law passed by Congress

Digital Resources

- Slideshow: [U.S. Immigration: A Brief Introduction](#)
- [Immigration Policy Research Worksheet](#)
- [For the Teacher Immigration Policy](#)

Materials and Apps Needed

- Needed: Computer, internet service, ear phones, microphone
- Optional: journal or notebook, pencil or pen

Direction Below

Session 1: Introduction

Synchronous	Asynchronous
Discuss: After watching Portland Opera To Go's production of <i>The Crown Maker</i>, divide students into small groups and ask students to discuss with their peers what they know about their own family's history and immigration story. ○ Have a group spokesperson share out the different countries of origin of the families of their group members. Introduce some context about immigration with help from the slideshow U.S. Immigration: A Brief Introduction ○ Explain that every person in the United States came from somewhere else at some time—even indigenous peoples came to North America from Asia—at least 15,000 years ago! We are truly a country of immigrants. Consider what students know about immigration in the United States today. Ask students to consider what they know about immigration in the United States today. What have they heard in the news? Based on that, from what area of the world do they think the most immigrants come? If they answered "Mexico," as of 2020, they are right—at 25% of the immigrant population, Mexicans are the largest percentage of immigrants to the U.S.—but some students might be surprised to learn how many people are coming from other areas of the world, since we hear so much less about them and we don't have the same dramatic images in the news cycle. Beyond Mexico, other leading countries include: ○ China, Hong Kong and Taiwan: 2.9 million people ○ India: 2.6 million people ○ The Philippines: 2 million people ○ El Salvador: 1.4 million people It is important to know that these numbers are dynamic and change from year to year, but they do illustrate trends over longer periods of time. Explain that the first law regarding immigration and citizenship requirements was the Naturalization Act of 1790. Ever since, Congress has been passing laws regulating immigration. Explain that student groups will be doing research on various immigration policies throughout our history and up to the present in future sessions.	Review slideshow <i>Immigration: A Brief Introduction</i> Homework: Write a short essay about what you know about your family's/ancestors' immigration story. If you can, please include: ○ Your family's country/countries of origin ○ Why your family/ancestors came to the United States (or the North American Continent). Did they come because they wanted to or were they forced to come? ○ Approximately when your family/ancestors came to the United States (or the North American Continent) <i>There may be reasons that a student may have difficulty participating in a discussion of this sort. If so, have them reflect upon what might make them migrate from one place to another either within the United States or to some other country. What factors would influence their decisions?</i>

Session 2: Research

Synchronous	Asynchronous
Discuss Portland Opera To Go's production of <i>The Crown Maker</i>. Remind them that the opera includes one, individual Mexican family's immigration story and how they became Mexican American. Every immigrant's experience is different. Questions to consider: ○ When do you think the opera is set? (The opera covers a lot of ground—but Eva Castellanoz's parents first came to the U.S. in the 1940s when many Mexican migrant workers were asked to come by the U.S. government under the Braceros program. ○ What kinds of issues are raised by the opera? ○ Do students think that the historical context of when immigrants come to the U.S. matters to how they are received? How? ○ What might influence U.S. attitudes towards immigrants? Introduce research activity. Remind students that immigration law in this country stretches all the way back to the Naturalization Act of 1790—but even before we became the United States, we had regulations about immigration. Throughout our history, immigration law has changed significantly. Explain that students individually or in small groups (teacher discretion) will now each research one of those laws and then share back with the rest of the class what they have learned. Research various immigration laws in small groups or individually. ○ Divide class into small groups (if working in groups) and assign one (or more of the following laws to students (List available here: For the Teacher Immigration Policy ○ Have them fill out the information sheet here to organize their thoughts: Immigration Policy Research Worksheet	Continue research on assigned immigration policy Homework: As a group, prepare presentation on your assigned policy to inform the rest of the class about what you discovered.

Session 3: Present & Reflect

Synchronous	Asynchronous
Present: Students present their research to the class. <i>Optional: record students' presentations for asynchronous viewing for those not present or for future reference.</i> ○ Ask students to keep in mind as they listen: ■ What countries of origin are targeted/affected by the policy enacted? ■ What is happening in the United States when the policy was enacted? ■ What connections are they seeing in U.S. immigrations policies? Engage: Students listen actively and take notes. Notes should include: ○ Policy name ○ What is happening in the country? ○ Who is affected? Respond: Students give peer feedback and responses to presentations Discuss: Students discuss what they have learned. Questions for discussion: ○ How does what is happening in the country affect immigration policy? ■ Why do they think what is happening in the country might result in more restrictive or lenient immigration policy? ○ How does country of origin affect immigration policy? ○ Who should decide immigration policy and why? ○ What principles or values should drive U.S. immigration policy? ○ What might the consequences of using these principles be?	Reflect: Students reflect upon what they have learned about immigration policy and write an essay. Essay should address: ○ What socioeconomic circumstances in the U.S. affects immigration policy (if they think they do) ○ Given the time period in which their families immigrated to the U.S., how do they think immigration policy may have affected them. ○ Their opinion regarding the principles and values that the U.S. should use to guide immigration policy.

The Crown Maker

Flower Crowns

History, Cultural Significance, and Symbolism

Theme: How does history and culture influence our own artistic choices?

Enduring Understanding

Through art-making, people make meaning by investigating and developing awareness of perceptions, knowledge, and experiences.

People develop ideas and understandings of society, culture, and history through their interactions with and analysis of art.

Essential Questions

How does art help us understand the lives of people of different times, places, and cultures?

How does engagement in the arts deepen recognition of one's personal traits, strengths and challenges?

How is art used to impact the views of society?

How does art preserve aspects of life?

How do artists make creative decisions?

How do artists balance what is known with what is discovered during the creative process?

How do objects, places, and design shape lives and communities?



How do artists and designers determine goals for designing or redesigning objects, places, or systems?

Social Emotional Learning

Artists organize and develop creative ideas by balancing what is known with what is new.

Artists can explain their intent and reactive choices in constructive ways.

Recognize one's personal traits, strengths and limitations

Identify and apply ways to persevere or overcome barriers through alternative methods to achieve one's goals

Culturally Sustaining Elements/Overview

Eva Castellanoz is a Mexican American artist and culture keeper who uses traditional techniques to create Mexican coronas de flores (flower crowns) for quinceañeras, weddings, baptisms, etc. All of her work is designed to water "the root," a metaphor for her Mexican culture and source of cultural celebration and healing for those she serves, both as a crown maker and as a curandera. In this lesson plan, students will learn about the history of flower crowns in a variety of cultures before focusing on the importance of flowers and flower crowns in Mexico. They will learn what a variety of flowers in Mexico symbolize and about the art of making paper flowers. They will then use what they know about how flower crowns are and have been used and the meaning of flowers to create their own flower crowns made of paper flowers they have made. They will then have the opportunity to share the personal significance of their crowns and the flowers they chose with the class. This lesson plan will take several sessions.

Learning Targets

I can...

- Identify the uses of flower crowns in a variety of cultural and historical settings
- Identify the cultural significance of flower crowns in Mexican culture
- Identify the meaning of a variety of culturally significant flowers in Mexican culture
- Utilize know facts about uses of flower crowns and floral symbolism to select and design floral crown for myself.
- Create a paper flower crown
- Present my artwork to my peers and explain the significance of the flowers I chose for myself.

Activities to Use:

Session 1.

Synchronous:

- **Discuss** Portland Opera To Go presentation of *The Crown Maker*.
- **Explore** the importance of flowers in a variety of settings through discussion.
- **Learn** about the history of flower crowns in different cultures and Mexican Culture, in particular, by viewing the slideshow [Flower Crowns: A Brief History](#)
- **Consider** your favorite flowers

Asynchronous:

- **Reflect** on your favorite flowers.
- **Research** your favorite flower's meaning
- **Write** a paragraph about your favorite flower. Why is it your favorite? What is it's symbolic meaning? Why do people think that the flower has that meaning? Do you like that symbolism? What does the flower symbolize to you?

Session 2.

Synchronous:

- **Review** the section of [Flower Crowns: A Brief History](#) concerning Mexico's culturally significant flowers and their meanings.
- **Share** some of the students' favorite flowers and their meanings.
- **Plan/Design** a personal flower crown using the [Flower Crown Planning Worksheet](#) (links to paper flower tutorials are available below in Materials and Apps section. **It is highly recommended that teachers review videos and learn how to make the various flowers so that they can assist students in making their own flowers.** Tutorials are limited to three flowers: marigolds, roses, and lilies. (These flowers are fairly simple to make. Marigolds and dahlias are similar and can be interchangeable depending on color).

Session 3.

Synchronous:

Note: This step of the process can be ongoing—after the initial instructional period, making the paper flowers can be an activity that can be revisited when students have completed other assignments, etc.

- **Students review** their flower crown plan.
- **Learn** how to make paper marigolds/dahlias, roses, and lilies (using the instructional videos and direct instruction)
- **Create** paper flowers to fill their crowns
 - Marigold: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yDSri1yP_k
 - Rose: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OPsWX1qni_U&t=11s
 - Calla lily: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LUI504OuBY4>

Asynchronous:

- **Reflect and write** a short essay that explains your flower crown include information on
 1. What your flower crown celebrates/was created for (a person? Occasion?)
 2. Why you chose the types of flowers and the colors of flowers—what do they mean to you?
 3. Describe your experience making the crown. Did you have any difficulty? Did you think about the person or reason you were making it while you made it? Did you enjoy it? Why or why not?

Key Vocabulary/Concepts:

Flower crowns are used in a variety of cultures □ Often the flowers symbolize ideas important to the culture □ In Mexico, flower crowns are called coronas and are used during Day of the Dead; baptisms; quinceañeras; weddings, etc.

Digital Resources:

- [Flower Crowns: A Brief History](#)
- [Flower Crown Planning Worksheet](#)
- Links to YouTube tutorials:
 - Marigold: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yDSri1yP_k
 - Rose: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OPsWX1qni_U&t=11s
 - Callalily: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LUI504OuBY4>

Materials & Apps Needed:

- Access to computer and internet
- Projector for slideshow

- Printed copies of Flower Crown Planning Sheet
- Writing utensil
- Variety of colored tissue paper
- Card stock
- Straws or skewers (for rolling paper around–lilies)
- Scissors
- White glue and/or glue sticks
- Stapler (for creating crown base)

Direction:

Session 1:

Synchronous	Asynchronous
• Discuss Portland Opera To Go presentation of <i>The Crown Maker</i>. Prompts: • When Eva learned about coronas (flower crowns), what did the Artista tell her they were for? • What did Eva learn about herself as she watched the Artista make the flowers for the coronas? Have you ever discovered an activity that made you want to learn how to do it and changes your ideas about yourself? • Explore the importance of flowers in a variety of settings through discussion. Prompts: • When do people buy flowers? • What events do you expect to see flowers and floral arrangements? • Learn about the history of flower crowns in different cultures and Mexican Culture, in particular, by viewing the slideshow Flower Crowns: A Brief History • Consider your favorite flowers. Ask students to share their favorite flowers.	• Reflect on your favorite flowers. • Research your favorite flower's meaning • Write a paragraph about your favorite flower. Why is it your favorite? What is it's symbolic meaning? Why do people think that the flower has that meaning? Do you like that symbolism? What does the flower symbolize to you?

Session 2:

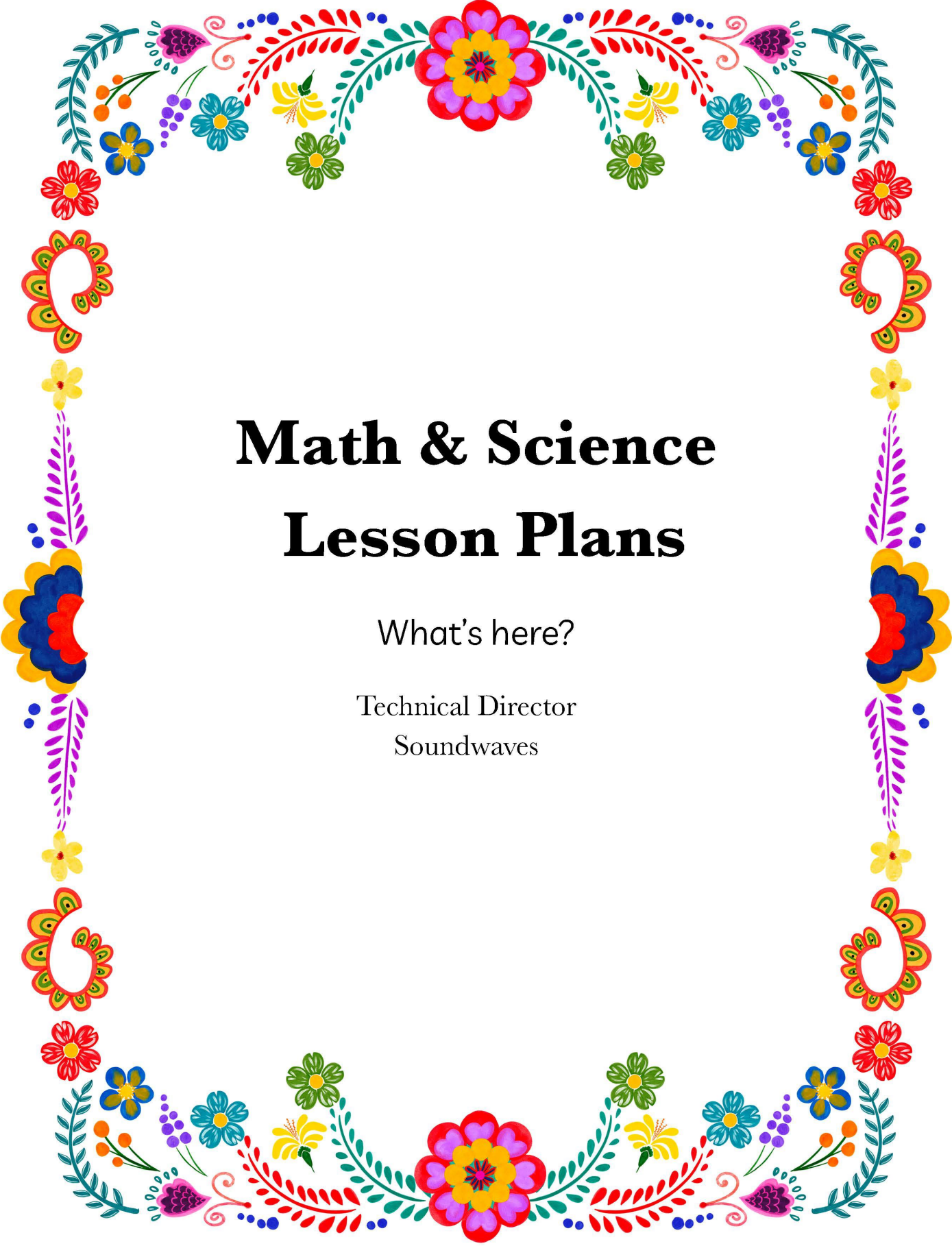
Synchronous	Asynchronous
• Review the section of Flower Crowns: A Brief History concerning Mexico's culturally significant flowers and their meanings. • Share some of the students' favorite flowers and their meanings. This can be through discussion or students reading the paragraphs they wrote from Session 1. • Plan/Design a personal flower crown using the Flower Crown Planning Worksheet Tell students that they should limit their choice of flowers to marigolds, roses and callalilies, as these are the flowers they will learn to make in Session 3.	• If needed, students can plan their flower crowns utilizing the Flower Crown Planning Worksheet at home



Session 3:

Synchronous	Asynchronous
• Students review their flower crown plan. • Learn how to make paper marigolds/dahlias, roses, and lilies (using the instructional videos and direct instruction) • Create paper flowers to fill their crowns • Marigold: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yDSri1yP_k • Rose: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OPsWX1qni_U&t=11s • Callalily: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LUl504OuBY4	• Reflect and write a short essay that explains your flower crown include information on 1. What your flower crown celebrates/was created for (a person? Occasion?) 2. Why did you choose the types of flowers and the colors of flowers—what do they mean to you? 3. Describe your experience making the crown. Did you have any difficulty? Did you think about the person or reason you were making it while you made it? Did you enjoy it? Why or why not?





Math & Science Lesson Plans

What's here?

Technical Director
Soundwaves

The Crown Maker

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR: Build It

Theme: Building a set within a budget

Overview:

This lesson provides an opportunity for students to experience some of the problems that a Technical Director in an opera company encounters when mounting a new production. In experiencing the elements that go into realizing a set designer's vision, students will apply mathematical skills in a theoretical and practical way by calculating the cost and creating a free-standing structure. Thanks to Laura Baldasano, formerly of Arizona Opera, for sharing this idea. This lesson plan could be adapted for a variety of ages.



2021 Oregon Math Standards

Mathematical Practice Standards:

1. Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them
2. Reason abstractly and quantitatively.
3. Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.
4. Model with mathematics
5. Use appropriate tools strategically
6. Attend to precision

Learning Targets

I can...

- Demonstrate basic construction skills by building a free-standing structure, using predetermined materials.
- Compute the cost of the structure and identify problems, successes, and revisions through group discussion and answering questions on the worksheet.

Activities to Use:

Synchronous:

- After watching Portland Opera To Go's presentation at your school, discuss what students think went into creating the show.
- Brainstorm the different elements or jobs that went into creating the show (sets, costumes, director, performers, etc.)
- View [Production and Technical Director Slideshow](#)
- In small groups, build the tallest freestanding object they can within a budget using the [Tech Team Worksheet](#)

Asynchronous:

- **Optional:** Write a reflection about what was the most difficult part of the exercise. How do you balance financial considerations with artistic ones?

Key Vocabulary/Concepts:

Technicaldirector ♦ Technical Director ♦ Set designer ♦ Budget

Digital Resources:

- [Production and Technical Director Slideshow](#)
- [Tech Team Worksheet](#)

Materials & Apps Needed:

Per Group/Class:

- Approximately 20 plastic drinking straws

- Approximately 20 straight pins (caution students about safety as necessary)
- 10 small paper clips
- 1 roll of masking tape
- 1 yard/meter measuring stick
- 1 [Tech Team Worksheet](#)
- 1 pencil or pen
- 1 calculator (optional)
- Area to work in small groups

Direction:

Synchronous	Asynchronous
Introductory Activity: • Watch Portland Opera To Go's presentation • Discuss with students what they think went into creating the show. Ask them to brainstorm the different elements of the production. (performers, rehearsals, costumes, sets, etc.) • View Production and Technical Director Slideshow • Discuss the questions and challenges raised in slideshow • Explain that today, they will get to be the Technical team and figure out how to build a free-standing structure (defined as a building or structure that stands on its own and is not attached to any other structure) and calculate its cost. Learning Activities: • Divide students into groups of 5-6 • Give each group a learning zone (cleared floor area) and their materials • Distribute Tech Team Worksheet • Each group should assign (or be assigned) the following roles: spokesperson, accountant, recorder, timekeeper (jobs may be combined) ○ Explain the objective (to build the tallest free-standing structure for the least cost);	Optional: Write a reflection about what was the most difficult part of the exercise. How do you balance financial considerations with artistic ones?

model the materials and how they might be used (without actually building a structure!) and **introduce** the Tech Team Worksheet

- Groups should take 3-4 minutes to brainstorm designs for their structure. Building time should last 30-45 minutes, during which time, the accountant should keep a tally of material costs.
- Upon completion of the structure, the group should record their final structure height and the accountant should tally the final cost.
- Give students 5-10 minutes to discuss the questions. Recorder will transcribe the group's responses to the worksheet.
- Spokesperson for each group will then share the group's building and worksheet answers with the rest of the class. Special emphasis should be placed on questions 2 and 4 on the worksheet.

Culminating Activity:

- Bring the class back together and ask them if there were any problems common to all the groups.
- Ask them how the process might change if they had to start with a budget first and build a structure based on the budget rather than the other way around. How would they alter their designs? What kinds of discussions might have to take place between a company, scene designer and director to get to an affordable product?

The Crown Maker

Singers and Sound Waves

Theme: Exploring sound waves with simple instruments and describing how soundwaves should look based on vocal sounds we make.

Overview:

One of the most common questions any opera singer gets asked is, "Can you break a glass with just your voice?" Lots of people may have seen cartoons where an opera singer sings a loud, high note and wine glasses, eyeglasses, and even lightbulbs shatter and break! So...can it happen in real life? Believe it or not, the answer is yes. Every solid object has a sound frequency that can cause it to vibrate. Wine glasses vibrate easily because of their hollow shape. This is why they make a ringing sound when they are tapped together. If a person sings the same musical note as that ringing note from the glass, the sound of the voice vibrates the air molecules around the glass, and this causes the glass to start vibrating as well. If the person sings the correct note loudly enough, the glass will vibrate so much that it shatters. This lesson plan includes a video in which this happens! Sound waves are invisible, but they can be powerful! In this activity, you will use models to demonstrate and explain two important characteristics of sound waves: the frequency (how many waves reach your ears each second) and the amplitude (the height and energy of a wave.)



Oregon State
University

This activity is used and adapted with the kind permission of Oregon State University College of Education and Precollege programs which developed this lesson plan in conjunction with the NSF-funded [LaCuKnoS project](#) and has been used with students around Oregon who participate in Oregon State's Precollege [SMILE Program](#). Portland Opera deeply appreciates their expertise and willingness to allow us to use this plan to expand our curriculum. You may find the original lesson plan [here](#).

Oregon State Science Goals, 2022

Asking Questions and Defining Problems

A practice of science is to ask and refine questions that lead to descriptions and explanations of how the natural and designed world(s) works and which can be empirically tested.

Developing and Using Models

A practice of both science and engineering is to use and construct models as helpful tools for representing ideas and explanations. These tools include diagrams, drawings, physical replicas, mathematical representations, analogies, and computer simulations.

Planning and Carrying Out Investigations

Scientists and engineers plan and carry out investigations in the field or laboratory, working collaboratively as well as individually. Their investigations are systematic and require clarifying what counts as data and identifying variables or parameters.

Analyzing and Interpreting Data

Scientific investigations produce data that must be analyzed to derive meaning. Because data patterns and trends are not always obvious, scientists use a range of tools—including tabulation, graphical interpretation, visualization, and statistical analysis—to identify the significant features and patterns in the data. Scientists identify sources of error in the investigations and calculate the degree of certainty in the results.

Learning Targets

I can...

- Ask how different actions on my part or that of a classmate will affect the results of my experiment and describe my findings.
- Interpret my findings based upon my observations and understanding of frequency and amplitude.
- Understand that every solid object has its own sound frequency that can cause it to vibrate.
- Define sound waves, frequency, amplitude, and pitch and how each interacts with the other.
- Create a sound based upon my interpretation of a drawing of a sound wave.

Activities to Use:

Synchronous:

- **Discuss** what students heard when they watched the POGO presentation at their school.
- **Watch** [How I Broke a Wine Glass with My Voice \(with Science!\)](#) video.
- **Share** [Singers and Sound Waves What is Frequency, Pitch, and Amplitude?](#) Slideshow
- **Explore** soundwaves by **experimenting** with the diddly bow and hanger gong.
- **Observe** and **record** the results.
- **Apply** what you know by “reading” pictures of sound waves.

Asynchronous:

- **Review** [Singers and Sound Waves What is Frequency, Pitch, and Amplitude?](#) Slideshow
- **Write** a friendly letter to a friend or family member explaining what you have learned about sound waves, using vocabulary from the slideshow (soundwave, frequency, pitch, and amplitude). Draw pictures to help explain if you would like to.

Key Vocabulary/Concepts:

Amplitude ♦ Frequency ♦ Sound Wave ♦ Pitch ♦ Resonance ♦ Diddly Bow

Digital Resources:

- [How I Broke a Wine Glass with My Voice \(with Science!\)](#) video.
- For teacher prep: [How to Make a Diddly Bow \(one-stringed guitar\)](#)
- For teacher prep: [How to Make a Hanger Gong](#)
- [Singers and Sound Waves What is Frequency, Pitch, and Amplitude?](#) Slideshow
- [Sound Waves Lab Report](#)

Materials & Apps Needed:

- Diddly bows (one-stringed guitars—if using a diddly bow you have prepared for the group, each group will also need a stick/ruler to strike the string and a slide of some sort—either a glass bottle or a guitar slide like this: [You can buy slides here](#)) and hanger gongs for each group
- Internet access
- Computer and projector
- Copies of [Sound Waves Lab Report](#) for each group

Direction:

Synchronous	Asynchronous
• Discuss what students heard when they watched the POGO presentation at their school. ○ Ask students what they thought of the style of singing. ○ How do they think the singers sang so loud without a microphone? ○ Do they think any of those singers could break a glass with their voice? ○ Do they think it is possible to break a glass with their voice? • Watch How I Broke a Wine Glass with My Voice (with Science!) video. • Share Singers and Sound Waves What is Frequency, Pitch, and Amplitude? Slideshow • Explore soundwaves by experimenting with the diddly bow and hanger gong using the instructions and methods in the Sound Waves Lab Report. • Observe and record the results. • Apply what you know by “reading” pictures of sound waves.	• Review Singers and Sound Waves What is Frequency, Pitch, and Amplitude? Slideshow • Write a friendly letter to a friend or family member explaining what you have learned about sound waves, using vocabulary from the slideshow (soundwave, frequency, pitch, and amplitude). Draw pictures to help explain if you would like to.

More Ideas!	Differentiation How will all learners be supported? (BIPOC, SPED, ELL, TAG)
- Expand this lesson plan by experimenting with how sound travels through different mediums. These activities Sound Science experiments are designed for littles, but as an expansion could be fun for older kids too! - Have students draw sound waves from selections from songs. Choose popular songs and play a short section of them. Have students listen to the vocals and try to draw the sound waves based on frequency (pitch) and amplitude (volume). - Instead of the teacher preparing the diddly bows, have students build their own. - Students can also do these sound wave experiments: Salt Vibrations: Sounds You Can See	Group learning helps all students to lean into their strengths and enables all students to participate. Those that are strong writers can pick up the task of recording the information into the report; students with strong verbal skills can help articulate what they are experiencing. All students can complete the activity.

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you.*