

CLEVELAND  
OPERA THEATER  
PRESENTS

THE MARRAIGE OF  
**FIGARO**  
MOZART



GRADES  
**K-3**

# CLEVELAND OPERA THEATER

Have questions about Mozart or *Le nozze di Figaro*? Contact our Director of Education and Outreach, Megan Thompson at [mthompson@clevelandoperatheater.org](mailto:mthompson@clevelandoperatheater.org)



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Cleveland Opera Theater  
5000 Euclid Avenue, #1001  
Cleveland, Ohio 44103  
p. 216-512-0268

Cover Art by Andrew Lobosco  
Booklet by Nicole Veigas

## Welcome!

We are excited to bring you this opportunity to explore Cleveland Opera Theater's production of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's masterpiece, *Le Nozze di Figaro* (*The Marriage of Figaro*). **Cleveland Opera Theater's mission is to produce vibrant, accessible, innovative, and engaging opera in Greater Cleveland.** When we embarked on this project, the first thing we did was explore what resources exist for families to **experience, explore, and engage** in this opera. What we discovered is that most of the resources that are easily accessible are actually designed for a traditional classroom space. We wanted to create something for the home. The contents of this packet are designed to enhance your family's enjoyment of the opera through discussion prompts and activities, so it's still quite educational, but we designed the questions to create a connection between you and the young opera-viewers in your life.

Unlike most media, we in the opera world believe "spoilers" actually enhance your enjoyment of the opera, so we suggest reviewing the synopsis and the characters before watching our production. Knowing what is about to happen on stage makes it easier, particularly for younger viewers, to focus on the beauty of the music and exciting visuals rather than trying to follow the plot. We also suggest breaking up your experience. Try watching a scene or two, then taking a break to discuss it with your opera novice. The best part of using this video and these materials is that you can stretch out the fun over a day or two!

Happy listening,

Megan Thompson  
Director of Education and Outreach  
Cleveland Opera Theater

Stephanie Ruozzo  
Education and Outreach Associate  
Cleveland Opera Theater



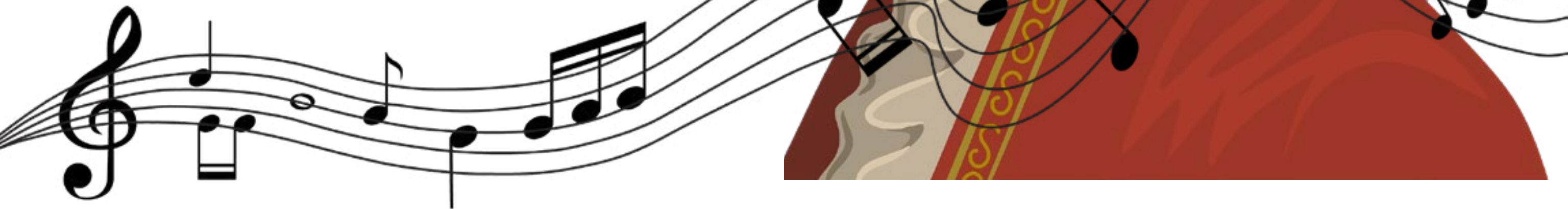
# About Mozart

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart wrote music in Austria over 200 years ago at the court of Emperor Joseph II. He could play several instruments, but was especially good at the piano and violin. He wrote music to play on instruments and to sing. He was especially famous for telling stories in music that could be both funny and sad at different times. When singers act out these stories with the help of an orchestra, we call the stories “operas.” *The Marriage of Figaro* was an opera from 1786 that has been famous ever since.

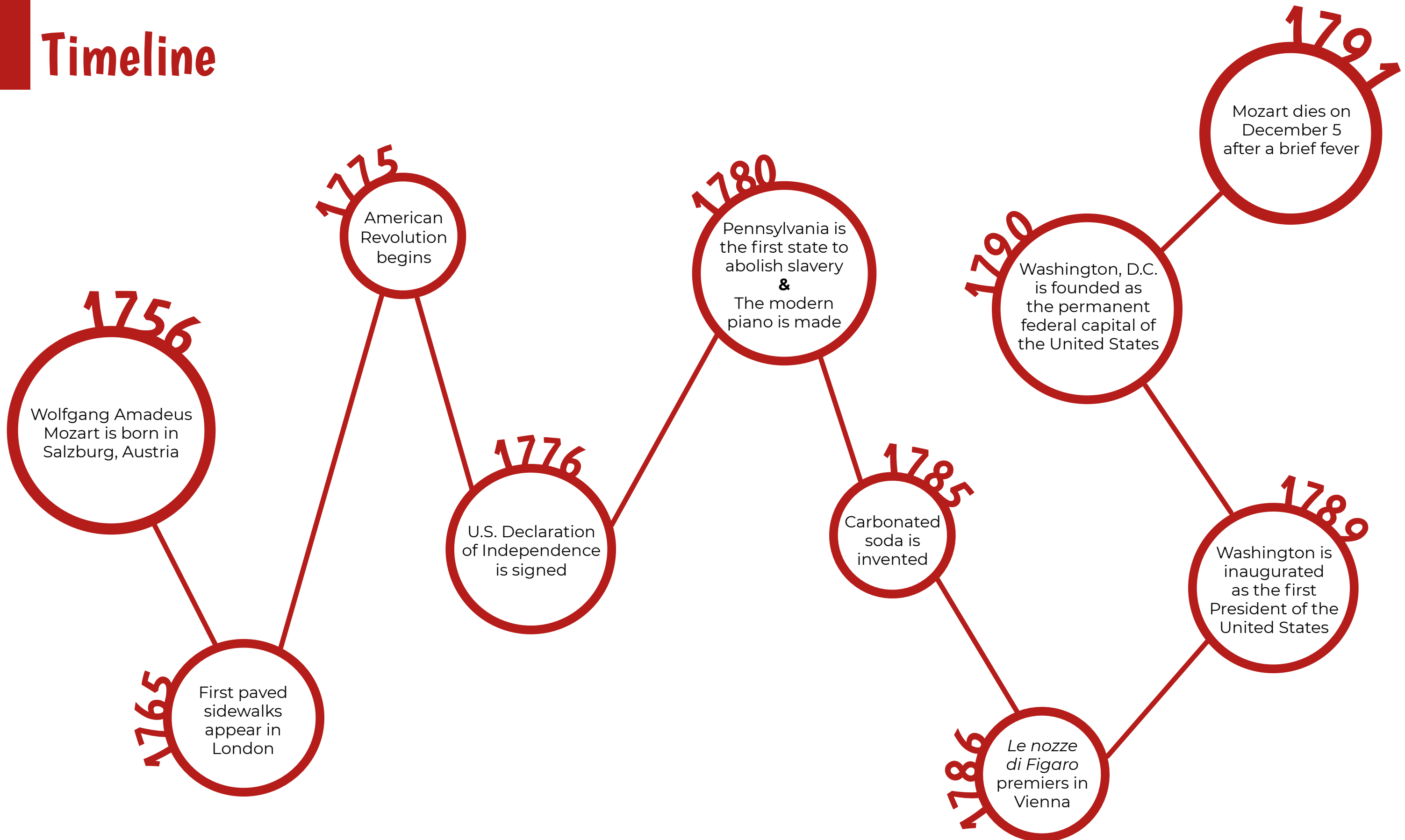


United States  
of America

Austria



# Timeline





# Opera Synopsis

Figaro is excited to marry his girlfriend, Susanna, but soon finds out that his boss, Count Almaviva, doesn't want him to. The Count is a mean man who bullies the other servants, like Cherubino, and even fights with his wife, the Countess. Figaro and Susanna ask Cherubino and the Countess for help. Together, they make a plan to trick the Count so that he realizes how much he loves his wife, how he should be nice to Cherubino, and how he should allow Figaro to marry Susanna. In the end, the Count changes his mind and everybody is happy again.



# Characters



I'm a rich and powerful man. I sing *baritone*.

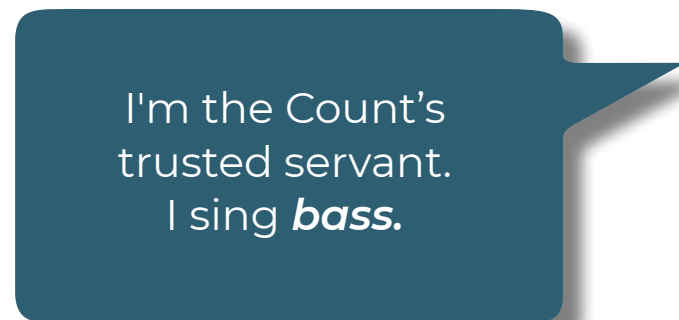
I'm the Count's sad and beautiful wife. I sing *soprano*.



## Characters (continued)



I'm the Countess's loyal maid and Figaro's girlfriend. I sing *soprano*.



I'm the Count's trusted servant. I sing *bass*.



I'm Doctor Bartolo's housekeeper. I sing *soprano*.

## Characters (continued)

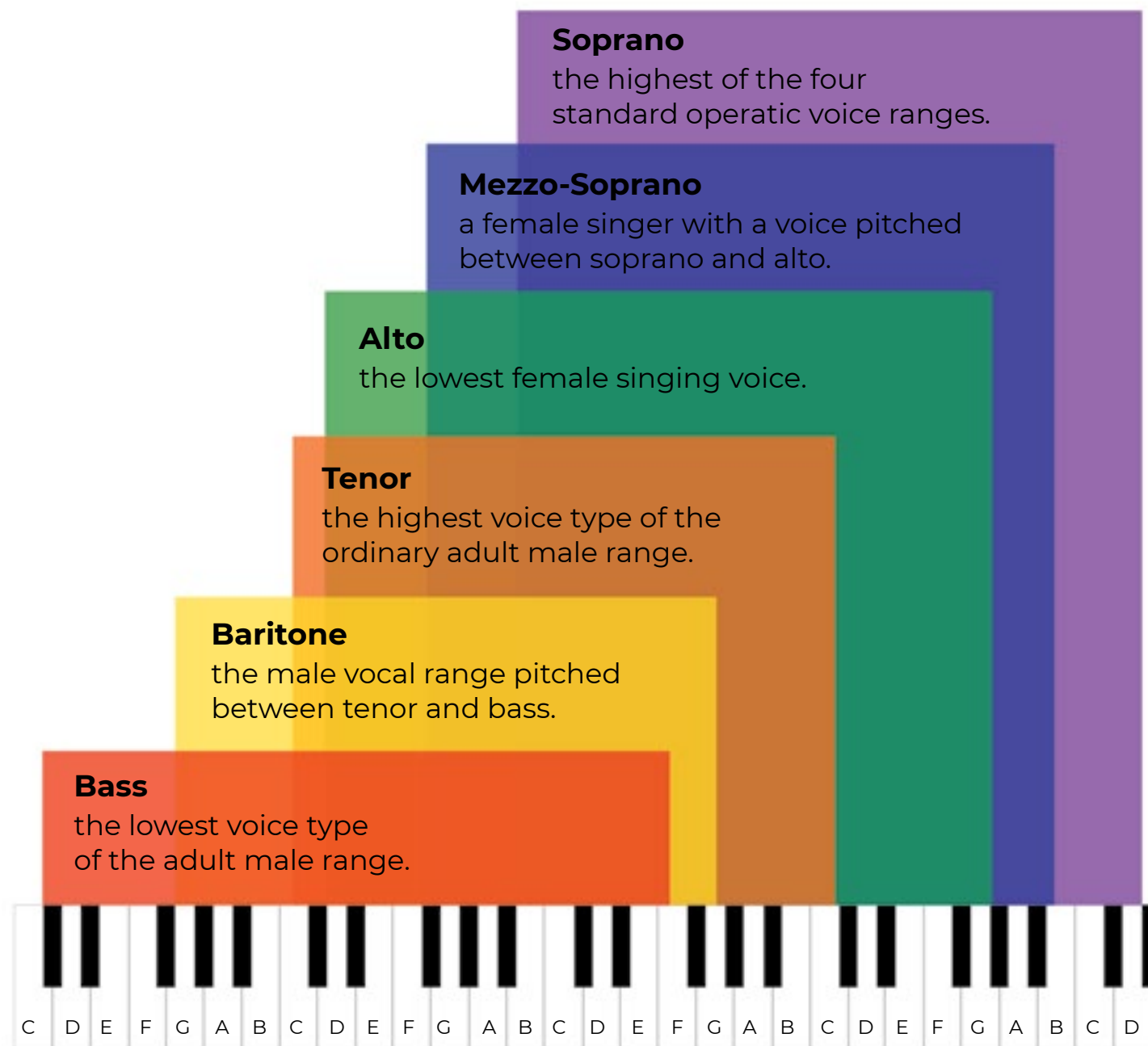
I'm another servant-Figaro and Susanna's funny friend. Even though I'm a boy, I sing *mezzo-soprano*.





# Voice Types

Operatic voices can be classified by a variety of means. Here, we take a look at the voice types Mozart utilized in *Le Nozze di Figaro*:



# Things to Listen For

As you listen to the opera, listen to how the singers sing their lines. Does it all sound the same? Do you notice differences?

**Hint for grownups, your child should notice that sometimes the singers sound more like they're speak-singing (recitative) and sometimes sound like they're singing a regular "song" (arias).**

Look at this chart of orchestral instruments. While you're watching the opera, try to pick out each instrument when it has a solo. What instruments do we hear the most when Figaro sings? When Susanna sings? The Count and Countess? Cherubino?



Learn more about orchestral instruments, click [here](#)!

# Cast

Figaro - **CHRISTOPHER HOLMES**

Susanna - **MARIAN VOGEL**

Count Almaviva - **BRIAN KEITH JOHNSON**

Countess Rosina - **RACHEL E. COPELAND**

Cherubino - **AMANDA FINK**

Don Bartolo - **JASON BUDD**

Marcellina - **LAURA AVDEY**

Don Basillio - **ETHAN BURCK**

Antonio - **JAMES EDER**

Barbarina - **GILLIAN HOLLIS**

Don Curzio - **SPENCER LAWRENCE BOYD**

Flower Girls / Wedding Singers – **MEGAN SLACK &  
NICOLE FUTORAN**

## Chorus

### Sopranos

Mary Grace Corrigan  
Nicole Futoran  
Gillian Hollis  
Megan Slack  
Dawna Rae Warren

### Mezzo Sopranos

Lauren Wright  
Amanda Krohne  
Janessa Janke  
Kara Ross

### Tenors

Ethan Burck  
Robert Bordon  
Spencer Lawrence Boyd  
Christian Thomas

### Baritones / Bass Baritones

Timothy Bates  
Michael Borden  
Cody Russell Gould  
Ryan Honomichl

**Supernumeraries** - Sue Hundermark, John Bowers, & Beshoy Hanna

# Libretto



If you're interested in following along line by line, you can check out the libretto by clicking [here!](#)

The **libretto** is the words of the opera



# Artistic and Production Staff

Conductor - [Domenico Boyagian](#)

Stage Director - [Scott Skiba](#)

Scenographic Design and Technical Director - [Matthew D. McCarren](#)

Costume Design - [Esther Haberlen](#)

Production Stage Manager and Assistant Stage Director - [Robert Pierce](#)

Scenic Artist - [Jennifer Hitmar Shankland](#)

Makeup Design - [Tamiko Jenkins](#)

Wardrobe Mistress - [Mackenzie Malone](#)

Wig Design and Rental - [Wigs & Whiskers Ltd.](#)

Assistant Conductor / Chorus Master - [Gaddiel Dombrowner](#)

Rehearsal Pianist and Performance Keyboardist - [Tatiana Loisha](#)

Assistant Technical Director & Carpenter - [Caleb Wimbrow](#)

Wig and Makeup Assistant - [Danielle Tapp](#)

Assistant Scenic Artist - [Thomas Hitmar](#)

Supertitle Operator - [Marie Lineman](#)

Supertitles by - [Chadwick Creative Arts](#)

Props & Furniture Rental - [Cleveland Play House](#)

[Templelive Cleveland Masonic Auditorium](#)

Property Manager - [Romanina G. Campea](#)

Production Manager - [Lisa Campea-Kish](#)

# About the Production

## Continuing the legacy of "Opera For All"

Our heritage and motto is "Opera For All." Cleveland Opera Theater continues to honor and celebrate the vision and mission of Opera Per Tutti (Italian for Opera For All) founder, Andrea Anelli by bringing opera to audiences throughout Northeast Ohio's diverse communities through a diverse annual season of programming as we build a sustainable professional opera company for Cleveland and Northeast Ohio.



# Discussion Questions

1. What is art? What is music? How do these fit into our lives?
2. Define what opera is, and what it is not.  
How does it differ from other musical and/or theatrical forms?
3. Do you consider yourself an artist?  
What is the criteria for being an artist?
4. What do the sets and costumes tell us about the characters, and how do they help to tell the story?
5. Are there any props that play a role in driving the plot of the story?
6. The plot of the opera is very complex.  
How much time do you think passes during *Le Nozze di Figaro*?
7. The authors of *Figaro* were trying to point out to their audiences that sometimes people in lower positions (like Figaro and Susanna, the servants) are just as smart, if not more so, than people in higher positions who may think they are better than them. In what ways does the story try to show us this? How do the servants of the house try to outsmart their masters?
8. Is there a clear “good guy” or “bad guy” in this opera?  
What aspects of each character could be seen as “good” or “bad”?
9. Do you think the Count will truly change his ways in the future?

# Activities



Some fun activities  
to learn more about  
*Le Nozze di Figaro*  
and opera!

## Music

Opera composers rely on librettists to write the lyrics for their operas. Try your hand at writing a song set to the tune of Cherubino’s “Voi che sapete” (51:31 in our production). Remember, in opera, you can sing about ANYTHING! Proud of your song? We’d love to hear it! You can email it to [mthompson@clevelandoperatheater.org](mailto:mthompson@clevelandoperatheater.org).

In opera, the composer often uses “recitative,” a sort of speak-sing to express some of the action on-stage, especially the parts that aren’t exciting enough to warrant a full aria. After you’ve listened to the opera and heard some examples, try singing about your day in recitative-style. (Need help? Check out our [Opera 101 video](#) about recitative!)

## Social-Emotional Learning

Composers use different musical elements to evoke different feelings from the audience. Listen to Cherubino’s aria “Non so piu” (25:22 in our production), and draw a picture just based on what the music makes you feel (don’t worry about the words). What kinds of things do you draw? What made you feel like that while you listened?

## Italian

This opera was written in Italian, so you probably didn’t understand all of the words just by listening to them. Some of the words, however, are very similar to the words we use in English. For example, when you listen to Figaro’s aria “Se vuol ballare, signor Contino” (13:46 into our production), do you hear any words that sound familiar? (Hint for grownups: focus on “Contino,” which translates to “Count,” and “chittarino” which is Italian for “a small guitar.”)

### Italian

Se vuol ballare, Signor Contino,  
Se vuol ballare, Signor Contino,Il  
chitarrino le suonerò.  
Il chitarrino le suonerò.  
Sì, le suonerò, sì, le suonerò.

Se vuol venire nella mia scuola,  
La capriola insegnerò.  
Se vuol venire nella mia scuola,  
La capriola insegnerò.  
Sì, insegnerò. Sì, insegnerò. Sì, insegnerò  
Saprò, saprò, saprò, saprò, saprò...

Ma, piano, piano, piano, piano, piano:  
meglio ogni arcano,  
Dissimulando, scoprire potrò.  
L’arte schermendo, l’arte adottando,  
Di qua pugnendo, di là scherzando,  
Tutte le macchine rovescerò, rovescerò.  
L’arte schermendo, l’arte adottando,  
Di qua pugnendo, di là scherzando,  
Tutte le macchine rovescerò.  
Tutte le macchine rovescerò.  
Tutte le macchine rovescerò.  
Rovescerò, rovescerò.

Se vuol ballare, Signor Contino,  
Se vuol ballare, Signor Contino,  
Il chitarrino le suonerò.  
Il chitarrino le suonerò.  
Sì, le suonerò.  
Sì, le suonerò.

### English

If you want to dance, my little count,  
If you want to dance, my little count,I'll  
play the guitar.  
I'll play the guitar.  
Yes, I'll play it, yes, I'll play it.

If you want to go to my school,  
I'll teach you how to somersault.  
If you want to go to my school,  
I'll teach you how to somersault.  
Yes, I can teach you. (repeat)  
I'll find out, I'll find out... (repeat)

But, gently, gently does it:  
bettet to find things out,  
By acting dumb, I'll find it all out.  
I'll use all the arts of combat,  
Striking you just so, just my little joke,  
All your schemes I'll discover.  
I'll use all the arts of combat,  
Striking you just so, just my little joke,  
All your schemes I'll discover.  
All your schemes I'll discover.  
All your schemes I'll discover.  
I will find out, will find out.

If you want to dance, my little count,  
If you want to dance, my little count,  
I'll play the guitar.  
I'll play the guitar.  
Yes, I'll play it.  
Yes, I'll play it.

## Activities (continued)

### English/Language Arts

For such a seemingly silly plot, a lot of people were mad about the themes in this opera. Why would the concept of a servant outwitting his master make some people mad? Who might get mad about this story?

We at Cleveland Opera Theater rely on reviewers to come to our operas and tell other people what they thought of our production. Now that you’ve watched the opera, write your own review of *Le Nozze di Figaro*. Tell what you liked, what you didn’t, and what you would change. You can even send it to us to read by emailing [mthompson@clevelandoperatheater.org](mailto:mthompson@clevelandoperatheater.org)!

While the opera ended, these characters’ lives didn’t. Imagine what happened after the events of the opera. Write a sequel story using *Le Nozze di Figaro* as a starting point!

### History

*The Marriage of Figaro* is set in the late 1700s. What do you think life was like back then? Use your imagination to think about what kinds of things you might eat and do, then with your family, look up information about the 1700s. Were you right? How did life differ from your guesses?

### Math

At the very beginning of the opera (5:45 in our production), we saw Figaro measuring his room. Use a measuring tape to measure the room you are in right now. Think about what kinds of things you could put in your room. Is it big enough for your parents’ car? Is it big enough for a horse? Practice your measuring skills to measure other spaces in your house - you might even be able to help rearrange the furniture!



# Activities (continued)

## Science

String instruments in the orchestra make sound using vibrations of the string against a closed in space, much like a box. You can make your own instrument by applying the same principles! Create a “Tissue Box Guitar” to play along with Figaro while he sings “Se vuol ballare, sign or Contino.”

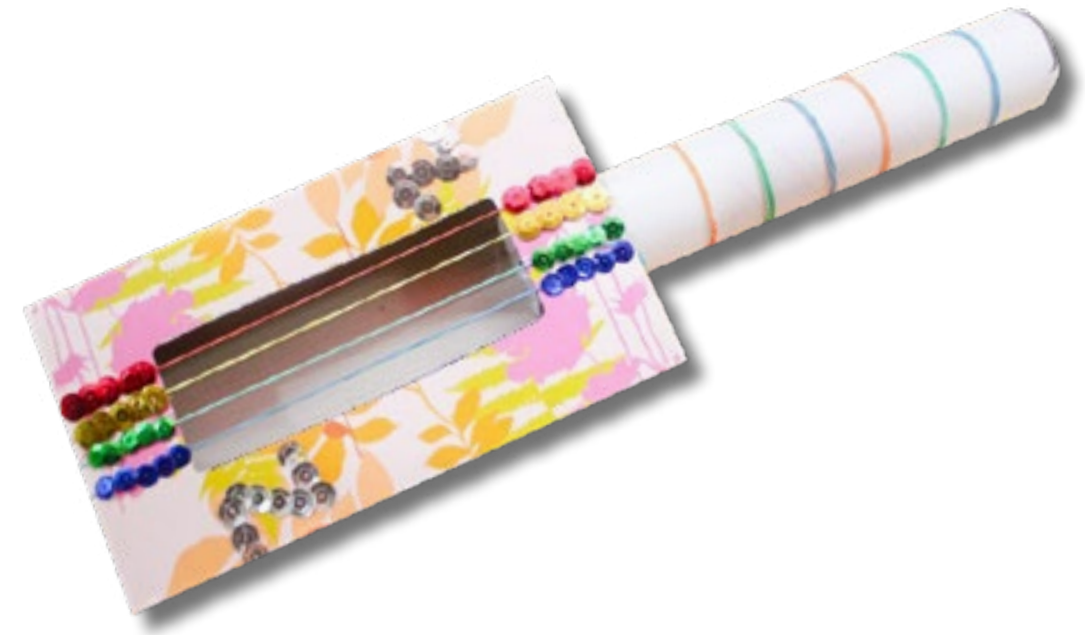
### You'll need:

- A cardboard box – tissue boxes are ideal
- 3 rubber bands different thicknesses
- A pencil
- Tape
- A piece of paper

### How to make your Tissue Box Guitar:

1. Remove the plastic from the hole in the top of the tissue box (be careful not to rip the box).
2. Check the box to make sure the top is the only part that's open. If you find any other openings, tape them closed.
3. Wrap the rubber bands longways around the box so that they are evenly spaced over the hole in the box. Put the thickest elastic band on the left, the thinnest on the right and the middle one in the middle.
4. Slide a pencil under the bands, then place it just past the hole in the box.
5. Pluck the “strings” one at a time. Can you hear a difference in the sounds they each make?

6. Move the pencil into different places along the strings and try the strings again. Do they sound the same or different?
7. Fold the piece of paper so that you can slide it in between the strings and the hole in the box. Try plucking the strings again. How is the sound different?



## Art

Sometimes we can imagine what someone might look like based on how they sound. As you listen to Susanna sing “Deh Vieni non Tardar” (2:05:30 in our production), draw a picture of what you think she looks like as she’s singing

Costume designers help bring characters to life by dressing them in clothes that express their social status as well as their personality. Think about the characters you saw in the opera. If this opera were set today, what might these characters look like? How would they dress? Draw a picture of one of the characters in the modern day. Describe how you are showing their personality through their clothes/hair/makeup/etc.

# Glossary

## A

**ACT:** A portion of an opera designated by the composer, which has a dramatic structure of its own.

**ARIA:** A solo piece written for a main character, which focuses on the character's emotion.

## B

**BLOCKING:** Directions given to actors for on-stage movements and actions.

**BRAVO (BRAH-voh):** Literally, a form of applause when shouted by members of the audience at the end of an especially pleasing performance. Strictly speaking, "bravo" is for a single man, "brava" for a woman, and "bravi" for a group of performers.

## C

**CHORUS:** A group of singers, singing together, who sometimes portray servants, party guests or other unnamed characters; also the music written for them.

**COMPOSER:** A person who writes music.

**CONDUCTOR:** The leader of the orchestra, sometimes called Maestro. This person leads all the musicians (instrumentalists and vocalists) in the performance of an opera; an accomplished musician with a strong sense of rhythm and an in-depth understanding of the voice and each orchestral instrument, he or she must also be able to communicate nuances of phrasing and inspire great performances from all players.

**CUE:** In opera, a signal to a singer or orchestra member to begin singing or playing.

**CURTAIN CALL:** At the end of a performance, all of the members of the cast and the conductor take bows. Sometimes this is done in front of the main curtain, hence the name curtain call. Often, however, the bows are taken on the full stage with the curtain open.

**CUT:** To omit some of the original material from the score.

## D

**DESIGNER:** A person who creates the lighting, costumes and/or sets.

**DIRECTOR (STAGE DIRECTOR):** One who prepares an opera or play for production by arranging the details of the stage settings and stage effects, and by instructing the performers in the interpretation of their roles.

**DRESS REHEARSAL:** A final rehearsal that uses all of the costumes, lights, etc. While sometimes it is necessary to stop for corrections, an attempt is made to make it as much like a final performance as possible.

## E

**ENSEMBLE:** Two or more people singing at the same time, or the music written for such a group.

## F

**FULL PRODUCTION:** A performance that includes all the elements of live theater: lights, costumes, props, makeup, design and audience. In opera, this includes music provided by an orchestra or piano along with the characters' singing.

## I

**INTERMISSION:** A long break, usually about 20 minutes, between the acts of an opera, during which the audience is free to move around.

## L

**LIBRETTO:** The text or words of an opera.

**LYRICS:** The sung words or text of a musical comedy or operetta song.

## M

**MAESTRO (mah-EHS-troh):** Literally "master;" used as a courtesy title for the conductor. The masculine ending is used for both men and women.

## O

**OPERA:** Simply stated, a play that is sung. In opera, singing is the way characters express feeling; as it often takes longer to say something in music than it would in speech, the action may seem delayed or even interrupted.

Opera (the Latin plural for opus, meaning "work") can involve many different art forms (singing, acting, orchestral playing, scenic artistry, costume design, lighting and dance). Like a play, an opera is acted out on a stage with performers in costumes, wigs and makeup; virtually all operatic characters sing their lines, although there are exceptions for a role that is spoken or performed in pantomime.

**ORCHESTRA:** The group of instrumentalists or musicians who, led by the conductor, accompany the singers.

## P

**PRODUCTION:** The combination of sets, costumes, props, lights, etc.

**PROPS (PROPERTIES):** Small items carried or used by performers on stage.

## R

**RÉPERTOIRE (REP-er-twahr):** Stock pieces that a singer or company has ready to present. Often refers to a company's current season.

## S

**SCORE:** The written music of an opera or other musical work.

**STAGE DIRECTOR:** The one responsible for deciding the interpretation of each character, the movements of the singers on stage, and other things affecting the singers. Is in charge at rehearsals.

**STAGE MANAGER:** The person in charge of the technical aspects of the entire opera, including light changes, sound effects, entrances (even of the conductor) and everything else that happens.

**SYNOPSIS:** A written description of an opera's plot.

## V

**VOCAL CORDS:** Wishbone-shaped edges of muscles in the lower part of the throat whose movements creates variations in pitch as air passes between them. Often spelled incorrectly as "chord."

\*Based on National Opera Teacher and Educator Source (NOTES), "Glossary of Terms," Opera America, Accessed April 11, 2020, <https://www.operaamerica.org/Applications/Notes/glossary.aspx>.

# Recommendations for books and resources

If you have enjoyed our production of Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro* and would like to learn more about the composer and the opera, please check out these resources we've compiled!

[\*For the Love of Music\*](#)

[\*Mozart \(Famous Children Series\)\*](#)

[\*Mozart Finds a Melody\*](#)

[\*Mozart, The Wonder Boy \(Great Musicians Series\)\*](#)

[\*Mozart: The Wonder Child\*](#)

[\*Mozart's Wig\*](#)

[\*Musical Genius: A Story about Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart \(Creative Minds Biographies\)\*](#)

[\*My Amazing Mozart Music Book\*](#)

[\*Play, Mozart, Play!\*](#)

[\*Poppy and Mozart\*](#)

[\*The Making of Mozart\*](#)

[\*Who was Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart?\*](#)

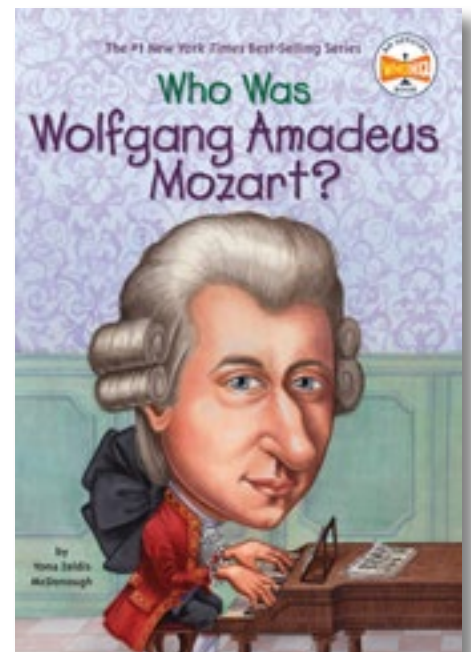
[\*Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart \(Getting to Know the World's Greatest Composers\)\*](#)

[\*Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart \(Musical Picture Book\)\*](#)

[\*Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart \(Kids in History\)\*](#)

[\*World History Biographies: Mozart: The Boy Who Changed the World With His Music \(National Geographic World History Biographies\)\*](#)

[\*Young Mozart\*](#)





# Recommendations for videos and recordings

## About the Opera:

[Opera Cheats: \*Le nozze di figaro\*](#)

[Opera in Brief: \*The Marriage of Figaro\*](#)

[The Plot of Mozart's \*Le Nozze di Figaro\* - In under 7 minutes!](#)

[Setting the Scene: \*Le Nozze di Figaro\*](#)

## Full Productions:

[Le Nozze di Figaro - Glyndebourne \(1999\)](#)

[Le Nozze di Figaro - Salzburg \(2006\)](#)

## “Cinque, dieci, venti” Figaro and Susanna Duet

[“Cinque, Dieci, Venti” - Alison Hagley and Gerald Finley \(Glyndebourne, 1994\)](#)

[“Cinque... dieci... venti... trenta...” - Rosemary Joshua and Luca Pisaroni](#)

[\(Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, 2004\)](#)

[“Cinque, dieci, venti” - Jennifer France & Joshua Bloom \(Garsington Opera, 2017\)](#)

## “Se vuol ballare signor contino” Figaro’s Aria

[“Se vuol ballare signor contino” - Bryn Terfel \(Théâtre du Chatelet, 2001\)](#)

[“Se vuol ballare signor contino” - Erwin Schrott \(Royal Opera House, 2011\)](#)

[“Se vuol ballare, signor Contino” - Luca Pisaroni \(Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, 2004\)](#)

## “Via resti servita, madama brillante” Marcellina and Susanna Duet

[“Via resti servita” - Alison Hagley and Wendy Hillhouse \(Glyndebourne, 1994\)](#)

[“Via resti servita” - Rosemary Joshua and Sophie Pondjiclis \(Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, 2004\)](#)

## “Non so piu” Cherubino Aria

[“Non so piu” - Isabel Leonard \(Metropolitan Opera, 2014\)](#)

[“Non so piu” - Kate Lindsey \(Royal Opera House, 2016\)](#)

## “Porgi Amor” Countess’ Aria

[“Porgi Amor” - Annette Dasch \(Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, 2004\)](#)

[“Porgi Amor” - Sally Matthews \(Glyndebourne, 2012\)](#)

## “Sull’Aria” Susanna and Countess Duet

[“Sull’Aria” - Sally Matthews and Lydia Teuscher \(Glyndebourne, 2012\)](#)

[“Sull’Aria” - Rachel Willis-Sørensen and Christiane Karg \(Metropolitan Opera, 2017\)](#)

## "Deh vieni, non-tardar" Susanna’s Aria

[“Deh vieni, non-tardar” - Kathleen Battle \(Metropolitan Opera, 1985\)](#)

[“Deh vieni, non-tardar” - Alison Hagley \(Monteverdi Choir, 1994\)](#)

Want to listen to  
other versions?  
Check these  
links out!



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