

PALM
BEACH
OPERA

children's
PERFORMANCE



OPERA: Stories Told Through Singing

We believe that opera tells stories to which we can all relate, and that's why the operatic art form has thrived for centuries. The education programs at Palm Beach Opera strive to immerse the community directly into these stories, revealing timeless tales of love, passion, and joy. We challenge each person to find his or her own connection to opera's stories, therefore inspiring learners of all ages to explore the world of opera. At Palm Beach Opera, there is something for everyone! **#PBOperaForAll**

THE BARBER OF SEVILLE

Gioachino Rossini

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Welcome

THE BARBER OF SEVILLE

Welcome to Children's Performance!

We're so happy that you are going to join us for *The Barber of Seville*! This day full of fun activities was created with you in mind. *The Barber of Seville* is a fast-paced and funny story told through singing—one of the most famous operas of all time! We know you are going to love it.

Here's a few things you should know before you attend Children's Performance:

- **Get your tickets.** Tickets are only \$5 for students and \$10 for adults! Call Palm Beach Opera's Box Office (561.833.7888) or visit our website (pbopera.org/event/childrens-performance) if you don't have your tickets yet.
- **Education Stations.** Arrive at Kravis Center for the Performance Arts early on performance day to participate in a collection of Education Stations from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Walk the red carpet and strike a pose, visit the instrument station, create a prop or costume, and play a game to help learn more about the story you're about to see!
- **Watch the Show!** The theatre opens at 12:30 p.m. so you have plenty of time to locate your seat and read the program before the curtain rises at 1:00 p.m. The performance is only about an hour, so not as long as a typical opera. Be sure to notice the large orchestra, the colorful lights, the huge set on stage, and the fact that the singers DON'T USE MICROPHONES to make their voices louder.
- **Sensory-Friendly.** During the performance, the lights will remain dim, not all the way off. However, if it gets too loud in the theatre, feel free to exit the room and visit our Break Space where you relax in a calm environment. Just ask an usher for directions. Please contact us (education@pbopera.org) if you'd like to receive more information about our sensory-friendly initiative or would like to request a Braille program.
- **Cast Meet-and-Greet.** After the show, head out to the lobby where you can meet Figaro, Rosina, the Count, and all the characters you just saw on stage. Bring your program to get an autograph, and don't forget to snap a selfie! @palmbeachopera #pboperaforall #childrensperformance

For questions about Children's Performance or for more information about how Palm Beach Opera can help make this a more memorable experience for your family, email education@pbopera.org.



What is Opera All About?



What exactly is Opera?

According to the Oxford Dictionary, an opera is a dramatic work in one or more acts that is set to music for singers and instruments.

Simply put, opera is musical storytelling!

The stories are often fictional, although they may be based on historical events. Some operas are fairytales, others are about kings, queens, and rulers, and some operas tell a love story. The storytelling possibilities are endless!

Opera is a unique art form because it combines elements from several different disciplines. Opera features musical arts (singing and instruments), theatrical arts (writing and acting), visual arts (scenery, set design, props, lighting, and video/projections), costuming (design and construction), and dance (choreography) to create the ultimate work of art.

Opera is written by a composer (music) and a librettist (words). Sometimes operas are sung in English, other times in Italian, German, French, Russian, and Spanish. Opera can be written in any language.

Operas vary in length; some are quite short, others very long. Most operas last 1 to 3 hours (just like a movie) and usually include an intermission (like halftime at a football game).



When did it all begin?

Back in 1597, a composer named Jacopo Peri wrote the first opera, titled *Dafne*, based on a story from Greek mythology. After Peri's creation, Monteverdi took the opera concept to the next level, solidifying the art form and propelling the genre into the future. In the 1600s, opera took root and flourished in Italy. Attending an opera performance in the 1600s was like attending a rock or pop concert today. The singers were incredibly famous and the crowds could be quite rowdy!

For several hundred years, opera audiences were entertained by the operatic works of composers such as Mozart, Rossini, Donizetti, Puccini, and Verdi. Operagoers were spellbound not only by the unbelievable skills of the singers, but by the sheer spectacle of the performances.

The same holds true today.

Audiences are enjoying the masterpieces from days past and embracing new works by a myriad of accomplished composers! (Check out Benjamin Moore, Jake Heggie, John Adams, and Benjamin Britten to start.)

Most importantly, people continue coming to the opera so that they can hear incredible singing and experience the art form as a collective...there's nothing quite like it!



PHOTO: Coastal Click Photography



PHOTO: Coastal Click Photography

ABOVE: Bass-baritone Andrew Simpson as the Pirate King and the Palm Beach Opera Chorus in our 2017 Children's Performance *The Pirates of Penzance*.

LEFT: Mezzo-soprano Kelsey Robertson as Cherubino and soprano Kasia Borowiec as Countess Almaviva in Palm Beach Opera's 2018 Children's Performance *The Marriage of Figaro*.



Bringing Opera to Life on Stage

The artists who give voice to Opera

The composer—he or she writes the music of the opera. Sometimes the composer will also write the words for the opera. The music is often considered its own “character” in the opera since it plays a large part in the storytelling. The music can help the audience feel and understand the emotions or intentions of the characters on stage. Music is powerful! *Some well-known opera composers include: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Richard Wagner, Giuseppe Verdi, Giacomo Puccini, and Gioachino Rossini.*

The librettist—from the Italian word *libro*, meaning “book,” the librettist writes the words of the opera, just like a playwright pens the words for a play or a screenwriter develops the script for a movie. The librettist’s words tell us the action (or plot) of the opera. *Some well-known opera librettists include: Lorenzo Da Ponte, Pietro Metastasio, W.S. Gilbert, Felice Romani, and Giuseppe Giacosa.*

The performers—the singers, dancers, and actors who bring the opera to life on stage. In opera, we have lead roles, comprimario roles (secondary parts), the ensemble (chorus), and supernumeraries (non-signing parts). *Some well-known opera performers include: tenor Luciano Pavarotti, tenor Plácido Domingo, soprano Renée Fleming, soprano Anna Netrebko, soprano Maria Callas, bass-baritone Bryn Terfel, and mezzo-soprano Denyce Graves.*

The director—he or she interprets the librettist’s words along with the composer’s music and decides how the opera story should be told. The director tells the performers what to do on stage. The director helps the audience (that’s YOU) understand the story! *Some well-known opera directors include: Franco Zeffirelli, Werner Herzog, Jonathan Miller, Kristine McIntyre, and Peter Sellars.*

The conductor—he or she uses physical movements, gestures of the hands, and facial expressions to lead the orchestra and the singers during the performance. The conductor cues the performers so that they know when to play or sing, when *not* to play or sing, and how loudly or softly to do so. *Some well-known opera conductors include: Arturo Toscanini, Anton Coppola, Angelo Mariani, Fritz Reiner, James Levine, and Palm Beach Opera’s own chief conductor, David Stern.*



PHOTO: Costal Click Photography
Gregory Ritchey, Palm Beach Opera’s Associate Conductor and Chorus Master, rehearses the orchestra for our 2019 Children’s Performance *The Revenge of the Bat*.

The orchestra—the instrumentalists who play the music written by the composer. The orchestra is made up of many different instruments divided into groups.

Strings: *violin, viola, cello, double bass*

Woodwinds: *piccolo, flute, oboe, clarinet, bass clarinet, bassoon*

Brass: *trumpet, French horn, euphonium, trombone, tuba*

Percussion: *snare drum, timpani, bass drum, bells, cymbals, gong, xylophone*

Special: *harp, piano, harpsichord, English horn, saxophone, contrabassoon, cornet, flugelhorn, bass trombone, marimba, glockenspiel, celeste, tambourine, triangle, chimes, guitar, mandolin, banjo, (plus many more, as required)*

The Opera Singer

Soprano—the highest of the female voices, sopranos often sing the heroine role, or lead role, in the opera.

Mezzo-soprano—a lower-voiced singer than the soprano, mezzo-sopranos often play mothers, seductive heroines, and villainesses. There are times when a mezzo-soprano will play a “pants/trouser role,” meaning they play a male character.

Contralto—the lowest of the female voices, contraltos are quite rare. They often play villains or comedic characters.

Countertenor—This is a unique male voice type in which the singers use a strengthened falsetto to sing in the soprano range. There are few countertenor roles in opera.



PHOTO: Costal Click Photography

Soprano Kasia Borowiec as Countess Almaviva, soprano Chelsea Bonagura as Susanna, soprano Brooklyn Snow as Barbarina, mezzo-soprano Francesca Aguado as Marcellina, and mezzo-soprano Kelsey Robertson as Cherubino in Palm Beach Opera’s 2018 Children’s Performance *The Marriage of Figaro*.

PHOTO: Costal Click Photography



Soprano Suzannah Waddington as Rosalinde, tenor Robert Stahley as Alfredo, and baritone Ben Schaefer as Eisenstein in Palm Beach Opera's 2019 Children's Performance *The Revenge of the Bat*.

Hear the Difference: Check out Royal Opera House's "[Introduction to Opera Voices](https://youtu.be/hLfvkwTnJVM)" as they demonstrate each voice type and include an example of a famous aria they might sing. <https://youtu.be/hLfvkwTnJVM>

Tenor—the tenor is a high-voiced male singer. He often plays the romantic lead in an opera.

Baritone—baritones sing lower than a tenor and higher than a bass. They often play villains or the best friend of the lead character.

Bass-Baritone—the range of this male singer is between a baritone and a bass. This voice type is used as both villain and hero in opera.

Bass—the lowest and darkest male voice. Basses often play wise characters, evil characters, and foolish characters.

Chorus—the chorus is comprised of singers who each sing one of the designated voice types. They often play townspeople or guests at a party or event. The chorus fills the stage and plays an integral, dynamic role in opera.

PHOTO: Costal Click Photography



Members of the chorus participating in a scene from Palm Beach Opera's 2017 Children's Performance *The Pirates of Penzance*.

Creating the Magic of Opera



The artists who work behind the scenes

Performing an opera is hard work and it's not just about singing. There are many people backstage who work to create a stellar opera production...and you never even know they are there! The behind-the-scenes crew makes the MAGIC OF OPERA happen on stage. Here are some of the team members:

Producer/Producing Company—raises funds for a production and hires the personnel and singers.

Set Designer—designs the physical surroundings on stage to depict where the action of the opera takes place.

Lighting Designer—combines both direct and indirect lighting to illuminate the performers and create an atmosphere to enhance the story on stage.

Production Manager—oversees the entire production in order to bring the director's theatrical vision to life on stage.

Technical Director—makes sure that all technical aspects of the production run smoothly and efficiently.

Stage Manager—supervises all persons on stage, calls all show cues (when the curtains close, when backdrops are changed, when singers come on stage, etc.), and oversees backstage action.



LEFT: Brett Finley, Palm Beach Opera's Stage Manager, explains the importance of lighting on stage and the effects it has on the set and the mood of the show during the 2018 Children's Performance *The Marriage of Figaro*.

The Stage Manager plays a vital role in any production. He or she maintains order in rehearsals, marks all show cues and cuts, sends out production notes after each rehearsal or performance, calls the show, and much more. Nothing happens without the Stage Manager knowing and giving his or her permission.

Costume Designer/Wardrobe—helps create the look of a show through careful design and construction of clothing.

Choreographer—plans the movements for any dances in the opera.

Chorus Master—directs and rehearses the chorus.

Properties Master—organizes, supervises, creates, and repairs all props.

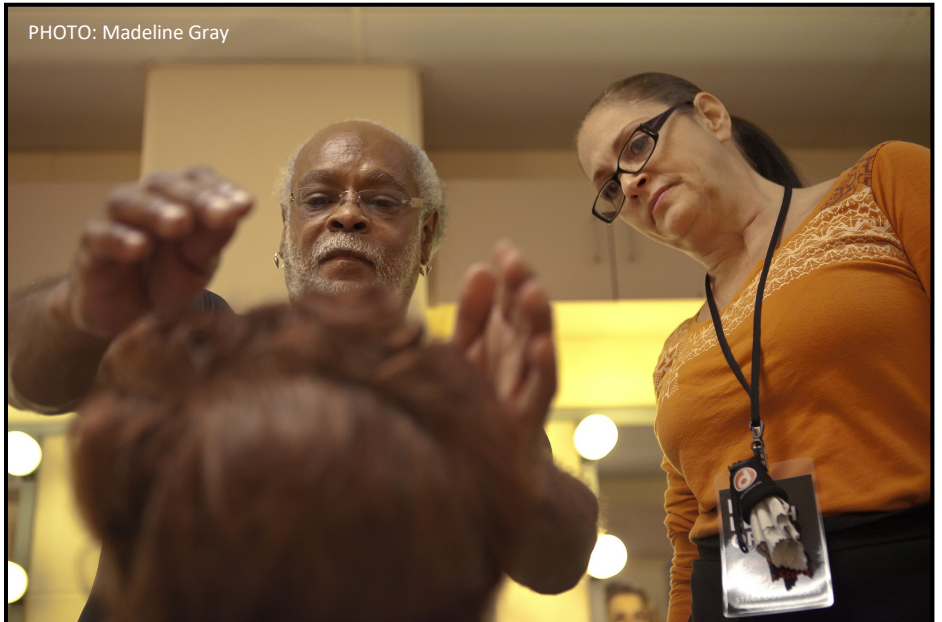
Wigs/Hair/Makeup Artists—this team plans and executes the construction of wigs for the opera singers and helps finish the look of each character with makeup. This job is very important because proper makeup will highlight the singer’s facial expressions allowing each audience member to see the singer’s emotions.



ABOVE: Technical Director, Jason Barroncini, walks the audience through the sequence of a set change during our 2019 Children’s Production *The Revenge of the Bat*.

Palm Beach Opera typically rents costumes for our operas from an outside company. The costumes are shipped to us, fit to our singers, and then sent back to the rental company once the opera is complete. In some cases, we create new costumes for our Children’s Performance that perfectly match our rented mainstage production costumes.

PHOTO: Madeline Gray



RIGHT: Steven Hampton makes sure that the singer’s hair looks perfect before she goes out onto the opera stage. Every details matters.



The Masterminds



THE BARBER OF SEVILLE

Gioachino Rossini. Opera in Two Acts. 1815.

Libretto by Cesare Sterbini, based on the play *Le Barbier de Séville* by Pierre Beaumarchais. Sung in English with English supertitles.

First performance at Teatro Argentina, Rome, Italy, February 20, 1816.

GIOACHINO ROSSINI

Composer Gioachino Antonio Rossini was born February 29, 1792 in Italy (the same year Kentucky became the 15th US State). There was a lot of music in Rossini's house growing up. His dad was a trumpet player in various bands and orchestras, and his mother was a soprano who sang opera. Rossini wasn't always a good kid and he liked to play practical jokes on everyone. However, when it came to music, he was a whiz kid. At the age of six, he was already playing the triangle in his father's band. When he was 14, he went to a music school and wrote his very first opera! By age 15, he had learned the violin, horn, and harpsichord and often sang in public to earn money.

Once Rossini started composing, there was no stopping him. He was known to write music very quickly, about three or four operas every year. *The Barber of Seville* was completed at the end of 1815, when Rossini was only 24 years old. He had already written 16 operas before this - #overachiever! He was also a big trendsetter by breaking a lot of rules about traditional opera. He used unusual rhythms, included large orchestras, and began writing music in a way that told the singers exactly how he wanted it sung.



FUN FACT: After retiring at the age of 37, the only composing Rossini did was to write a short piece of music to celebrate his dog's birthday.

Rossini completed his final opera in 1829 at the age of 37. By this time many people considered him to be one of the most important Italian opera composers of his time. Rossini retired a very rich man. He spent the rest of his life cooking and eating. He was known for throwing gourmet dinner parties and fancy musical gatherings, inviting all the famous people in the world of music. During this time he struggled with physical and mental health problems. He died of pneumonia at the age of 76.



CESARE STERBINI

Librettist Cesare Sterbini was born in Rome, Italy in 1784. Being a librettist means that he wrote the *libretto* (the words or “the book”) for the opera *The Barber of Seville*. He also worked at the Vatican in Rome, plus he was a poet, and could speak five languages (Italian, Greek, Latin, French, and German). He wrote his first libretto in 1812. Sterbini worked with Rossini on an earlier opera when he took over for a different librettist. They enjoyed working together so much that they joined forces for *The Barber of Seville* right after they completed their first opera. Beyond that, we don’t know a lot about Cesare Sterbini. This libretto based on a comedy by Pierre Beaumarchais was certainly his greatest achievement and secured his place in opera history.

PIERRE BEAUMARCHAIS

Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais (say that three time fast!) was born in Paris, France on January 24, 1732. His father made watches and Pierre followed in his footsteps as he invented a new part that controlled the speed of the watch. In addition to his watch-making talents, he was also an author, a playwright, a publisher, a musician, a diplomat, an arms dealer, and a spy. How’s that for not knowing what he wanted to do when he grew up? Beaumarchais ended up being one of the greatest comic French playwrights of all time, even though not everyone liked his humor. He wrote a series of three plays, one of which being *The Barber of Seville*. All three of these plays have the same central characters, including Figaro the barber. In fact, the King of France completely banned one of the plays from being performed! However, the ban was eventually lifted, and his plays were made into very popular operas: Rossini’s *The Barber of Seville* and Mozart’s *The Marriage of Figaro*.



Who's Who



THE BARBER OF SEVILLE

The Characters

CHARACTER		PRONUNCIATION	VOICE TYPE
Count Almaviva	A rich and handsome young nobleman smitten with Rosina.	al-ma-VEE-vah	tenor
Dr. Bartolo	Rosina's guardian; an old doctor who hopes to make a fortune by forcing Rosina to marry him. Knowing that Rosina hates him, Bartolo has imprisoned her in his house.	DOC-tor BAR-toh-loh	bass
Rosina	Young and beautiful, the cunning Rosina is in love with Almaviva, but is not aware of his true identity.	ro-ZEE-nah	mezzo-soprano
Figaro	The town barber who always manages to be in the middle of everyone's plans and schemes.	FEE-ga-roh	baritone
Don Basilio	Rosina's music teacher and a good friend of Bartolo.	DOE-n ba-ZEEL-yoh	bass
Fiorello	A servant of Count Almaviva.	fyor-REL-loh	baritone
Ambrogio	A servant of Dr. Bartolo.	am-BRO-jo	bass
Berta	A housemaid of Dr. Bartolo.	BEHR-ta	soprano

Understanding the Action



THE BARBER OF SEVILLE

Setting
Seville, Spain.



CHECK IT OUT: Take a lighthearted look at *The Barber of Seville* by Classic FM: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yUk6Wf29aUA>

The short of it

Handsome Count Almaviva has fallen head over heels for the pretty Rosina, but wants to make sure she likes him, not his title. He disguises himself as a poor student and serenades her. But he's getting nowhere, and if Rosina's guardian Bartolo has his way, no suitor will get anywhere near his ward. Thwarted, he enlists the help of Figaro, the neighborhood barber with plenty of tricks up his sleeve, and more importantly, access to Bartolo's household. Will disguise and deception be enough to win the day for romance?

The long of it

ACT I

Count Almaviva, a Spanish nobleman, is in love with Rosina, who is under the care of Dr. Bartolo, an old doctor who plans to marry her himself. Almaviva has followed Rosina from Madrid to Seville, disguised as a poor student named Lindoro.

From the street outside Dr. Bartolo's house, Almaviva serenades Rosina, assisted by a group of actors and musicians. Unfortunately, the serenade did not capture Rosina's attention, so Almaviva enlists the help of Figaro, a barber, who prides himself on his ability to bring people together. They realize that they have, in fact, met before, and Almaviva explains why he is in Seville disguised as Lindoro. He is delighted to discover that Figaro does some work for Dr. Bartolo, so he has access to his house and gardens.

While they are talking, Rosina appears on the balcony with a note for the handsome young student Lindoro who keeps visiting the house. Despite Bartolo sneaking up behind her, she manages to drop the letter from the window and it floats down to Almaviva. Bartolo hears that Almaviva likes Rosina, so Bartolo decides he must waste no time in marrying her himself. He gives strict instructions to the servants that while he is out, no one should enter the house.

Figaro convinces Almaviva to answer Rosina's note with another serenade, but she is interrupted before she can write it. Hoping to earn some money if he's successful, Figaro comes up with a plan to get Almaviva into Bartolo's house: he must pretend to be a soldier and ask to spend the night at Dr. Bartolo's home.

Figaro tricked his way into Dr. Bartolo's home and managed to meet with Rosina before Bartolo appears and expresses his annoyance at Figaro's constant disrespect towards him. He questions Rosina about her meeting with Figaro, as well as asking all his servants. When Rosina's singing teacher Don Basilio arrives, Bartolo tells him all about the situation with Rosina. Meanwhile, Figaro has overheard Bartolo and Basilio's conversation. He tries to find a way for 'Lindoro' to meet Rosina, but soon realizes that that she is already ahead of him.

Bartolo suspects Rosina of writing a letter to 'Lindoro'; when she protests her innocence, he warns her not to mess with him, advising her to find better excuses for a man of his standing.

Almaviva, now disguised as a soldier, arrives to stay the night at Bartolo's house. Rosina is of course delighted when he reveals that he is really her secret admirer. Bartolo's annoyance at Almaviva's behavior causes such a noise that the police are called by the neighbors. The Count, however, narrowly escapes arrest, much to Bartolo's annoyance.

ACT II

Putting on yet another disguise, Almaviva enters the house as Don Alonso, a music teacher who says he has come to give Rosina her music lesson in place of Don Basilio, who, he claims, has suddenly fallen ill. To gain Bartolo's trust, Don Alonso tells him that he found a note from Almaviva to Rosina. While Bartolo takes a nap, Rosina and 'Lindoro' express their love and make plans to run off and get married that very night.

Figaro arrives to give Bartolo a shave. He manages to steal the key to Rosina's balcony and gets Bartolo to leave the music room by smashing a pile of dishes. All is going according to plan until Don Basilio, the real music teacher, suddenly appears, but Figaro quickly pays him to leave and Basilio goes away. Figaro continues shaving Bartolo and tells Rosina of his plan to help them escape. Bartolo, however, has not been tricked, and recognizes Almaviva through his disguise.

Bartolo discovers that Basilio has never heard of 'Alonso,' so Bartolo decides to marry

Rosina right away. He confronts Rosina with a letter she addressed to Lindoro and catches her by surprise when he figures out that Lindoro is just doing what Almaviva wants.

After a loud thunderstorm, Figaro and Almaviva climb up a ladder through an open window into the house. They are confronted by Rosina who is angry that she has been 'used' by Almaviva – until she learns that he is in fact Almaviva and falls happily into his arms. Figaro is anxious for the two to leave, but they discover they are unable to make their escape because Bartolo has removed the ladder.

Basilio returns with an official who is ready to marry Rosina to her guardian, but a promise of money and some threats easily persuade Basilio to witness instead the marriage of Rosina to Almaviva. Bartolo and the judge appear too late and he has to admit that he has lost Rosina.



THE COLORS OF BARBERING

The barber pole's colors are from a time long ago when people went to barbers not just for a haircut or shave, but also for medical procedures. The look of the barber pole is linked to the fact that barbers often performed surgery, with red representing blood and white representing the bandages used to stop the bleeding. The pole itself is said to symbolize the stick that patients squeezed to make the veins in their arms stand out. In Europe, barber poles are traditionally red and white, while in America, the poles are red, white, and blue. One theory is the blue was added as a show of patriotism.

Figaro, the barber in the Spanish city of Seville, is much more than a barber or surgeon. He could take care of everything, so he called himself a "factotum." He was a jack-of-all-trades, matchmaker, veterinarian, pharmacist, letter carrier, and yes, he could even give shaves and haircuts.

FUN FACT: Rossini was known for being able to compose very quickly. Some of this could be due to the fact that he often reused and recycled many of his own works. The brilliant and well-known overture to *The Barber of Seville* was used by Rossini twice before in his other operas.



Beyond the score

Even more popular today! The music in Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* shows up in tons of pop culture from television commercials (Burger King) and sitcoms (*Seinfeld*), to cartoons and hit movies. Parts of the score have become famous for its fun and upbeat energy that can easily accompany cartoonish and silly scenes.



MRS. DOUBTFIRE

Figaro's aria "Largo al factotum della città" is sung by the late Robin Williams during the opening sequence of the film while his character is doing voiceover work for a cartoon. [\[WATCH\]](#)



LOONEY TUNES

The overture of *The Barber of Seville* can be heard in the famous *Bugs Bunny* episode "The Rabbit of Seville." [\[WATCH\]](#)

SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS

Many young people recognize Figaro's name from the "Choir Boys" episode when Squidward wants to join a chorus. [\[WATCH\]](#)



ICE AGE: COLLISION COURSE

Buck changes the lyrics, but uses Figaro's aria to explain how fantastic he is. [\[WATCH\]](#)



FUN FACT: Rossini was nicknamed "Signor Crescendo" because of his characteristic habit of scoring a long, steady increase of sound over an *ostinato* figure—music that began as a whisper that rose to a monstrous roar.



**Every kind of music
is good, except
the boring kind.
-Gioachino Rossini**

The Real Opera Experience



What can you expect at the opera?

Palm Beach Opera understands that many people have a preconceived notion of what opera is, who attends, and what happens at the opera. We want to dispel any negative myths so that you feel comfortable going to the opera.

What you may think:

Opera is impossible to understand unless you can speak a foreign language.

The Real Opera Experience:

Not the case! Palm Beach Opera projects supertitles above the stage which provide an English translation. You will be able to understand what each performer is singing so that you can follow the action of the story. We also provide program books that give you a rundown of the plot so you know what is going to happen on stage.

What you may think:

Opera is boring and doesn't apply to my life.

The Real Opera Experience:

Did you know that opera plots are very similar to something you would see on TV or in a blockbuster movie? They can be comedies, dramas, superhero stories, love stories...anything! Remember, opera is a story told through singing—why can't opera tell YOUR story? Have you ever found yourself in a funny situation? Or have you had to make tough decisions? Or have you ever loved someone? **Opera is about human emotions and life—that is something to which we can all relate.**

What you may think:

Opera is fancy and I have to dress up to go see a performance.

The Real Opera Experience:

At Palm Beach Opera, audience members wear whatever they feel comfortable wearing. Some people wear jeans, others wear their favorite party dress or suit, while some people put on their finest attire. **We just want you to be you—come as you are and enjoy the show!**

What you may think:

Opera is different than what I'm used to and I won't know what to do at the performance.

The Real Opera Experience:

Palm Beach Opera wants you to try something different: Discover Opera! Don't worry about knowing what to do. If you love the way a singer is performing, clap for him or her at the end of the aria or musical number and feel free to shout *bravo!* (for a man), *brava!* (for a woman), or *bravi tutti!* (for a group). Opera singers love knowing that you enjoyed their singing, so let them know through thunderous applause and shouts of affirmation. **If you aren't sure when to clap, just wait for someone else to start...there will be many opera lovers in the room and they will know when to kick off the applause.**

You can also reach out to our Audience Services Manager or the Education and Community Engagement Department at Palm Beach Opera before you go to the opera to ask questions about the experience. **We are here to make the experience an excellent one for you, so let us know how we can help.**

What you may think:

Opera is expensive and I can't afford to go.

The Real Opera Experience:

We have a range of ticket prices available for every Palm Beach Opera performance. **Did you know that you can check out a mainstage performance for only \$20?** And those seats are in our balcony which is a fantastic place to see the whole stage, read the supertitles, and be enveloped by the singers' voices that fill the theatre.

Not only that, but you can have a season subscription to see all three of our mainstage operas at the Kravis Center for the Performing Arts for \$60. If you are a middle or high school student, you may come with your class to a dress rehearsal for free through our Opera Rehearsal 101 program! Plus, if you are a Twitter fanatic, you might even be able to get a *Tweet Seat* at a dress rehearsal for free and tweet during the dress rehearsal performance. There are group prices and student tickets as well, so give us a call or check us out online at pbopera.org.

Opera Terms



Common expressions you may hear around the opera house

Act—a section of an opera that is used to divide the work into parts.

Aria—a song for solo voice typically accompanied by the orchestra.

Blocking—on-stage directions provided by the stage director to the singers and actors; blocking helps depict the story's action.

Bravo—an Italian word that can mean “brave,” this is the term that audience members shout at the end of an aria or the end of the opera when they love the singing! *Bravo* is used when a man is singing, *brava* is used when a woman is singing, and *bravi tutti* when more than one person is singing.

Chorus—a group of singers who play unnamed characters in the show; they sing together as a cohesive ensemble.

Comprimario role—a small role that is important to the development of the story.

Concertmaster—the first chair violinist who tunes the orchestra before the opera begins. In addition, the concertmaster typically plays all violin solos within pieces and marks the appropriate bowings so that all the violinists are moving and playing in unison.

Cover—the understudy; the singer who replaces the lead in emergency situations.

Curtain Call—this is the part at the end of the opera where the performers and orchestra take their bows.

Dress Rehearsal—the final rehearsal before opening night done in full costumes, wigs, and makeup with all set pieces and props. This is everyone's chance to run an uninterrupted performance before they are in front of an audience.

Duet—a musical selection or scene that is sung by two people. They do not always sing the same musical line nor do they always sing at the same time.

Encore—a French word meaning “again,” it is a term the audience uses to request that a singer repeat an aria; this term is not used frequently and is saved for only the best performances.

Finale—an Italian word meaning “the end,” it is the last musical number of an act or of the opera. Many times, the finale is grand, with most of the main characters on stage singing together.

Interlude—a short section of music that the orchestra plays between scenes or acts of an opera.

Intermission—a break between acts of the opera usually lasting 15 to 20 minutes. During this time, the audience and orchestra take a short break while the actors and stage crew prepare for the next act.

Maestro—an Italian word meaning “master,” this is a respectful title sometimes used to address the orchestral conductor.

Mark or marking—when a singer sings very softly or not at full voice; singers often mark during dress rehearsals to conserve their voices for the opening night performance.

Opera—an Italian word meaning “work,” opera is defined as storytelling set to music that involved multiple artistic disciplines.

Orchestra Pit—the sunken area in front of the stage where the orchestra plays.

Overture—a piece of music played by the orchestra before the opera begins. Sometimes the overture will play musical themes that will be heard throughout the opera. The audience claps at the end of the overture.

Props—items used by the singers and actors on stage during the opera performance (like a pencil, a glass, a telephone, etc.).

Quartet—an extended musical section performed by four singers.

Quintet—an extended musical selection performed by five singers.

Recitative—the speech-like sections between the more lyrical writing of the *aria*. Recitative delivers most of the story’s action, whereas an *aria* is usually an emotional reflection on the character’s circumstances.

Stage—the area where the opera performance happens.

Supernumerary—non-singing roles played by actors who help fill the scene on stage.

Supertitles—a translation of the opera that is projected onto a screen above the stage during the opera.

Synopsis—a short description of the opera’s storyline.

Trio—an extended musical selection performed by three singers.

Vibrato—a natural variation of pitch heard in both voices and instruments.

Vocal Coach—a person hired by the opera company to help singers interpret their individual role with musical accuracy and honest emotions.



Interested in learning more about opera?

We'd love to hear from you!

Reach out to Palm Beach Opera's
Education & Community Engagement Department
561.835.7566 or education@pbopera.org

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