



Social Studies: Our Composer, Georges Bizet

Students will

- Read for information
- Complete timelines
- Read for enjoyment and discovery

Copies for Each Student

- “Our Composer, Georges Bizet”
- Activity Worksheet 1 or 2 as appropriate

Copies for the Teacher

- “Our Composer, Georges Bizet”
- Activity Worksheet 1 or 2 as appropriate

Getting Ready

- Decide which worksheet(s) you wish your group to complete.
- Gather Pens or pencils

Guided/Independent Practice

Teachers: Depending on your grade level and the ability of your students, you may choose to conduct this lesson as a whole class, small group, or partner activity.

Tell students: Today we will be reading about our composer, Georges Bizet, and then studying a timeline. Remember, a timeline shows events in the order in which they happened.

Have your students read, **“Our Composer, Georges Bizet”**. Direct students to the appropriate activity worksheet. Remind students that by studying events that happened during the composer’s lifetime, one can gain a broader picture and understanding of the times in which he lived. Then read the directions aloud.

Explain that historians and biographers often begin with a question. Some bit of information sparks their interest and they want to know more. It was one of Bizet’s biographers, D. C. Parker, who discovered the “Symphony C” in the archives of the Paris Conservatory of Music in 1935. By checking two events of interest, students are beginning to think like historians and biographers.

You might read the events listed in the chart as a class. Give students time to complete the worksheet. Since students’ answer will vary, let students share their answers with the class.

If students are completing **Activity Worksheet 2**, read the directions with your class. Have students read the first event listed in the chart on the worksheet:

1838 May 26 – The people of the Cherokee Nation are forcibly relocated during the Trail of Tears.

Ask students to think about the event. What else do they want to know? Give examples of how students can formulate new questions for research: Who or what is the Cherokee Nation? Why were they forced to relocate? Who made them move? Have students brainstorm more questions. Allow students to complete their activity worksheets. Let students read their answers and new questions to each other, or the class, and explain why they chose their particular events and questions. Students may complete further research on the events they chose if time allows.

Evaluation

- 1 Did the students read “Our Composer, Georges Bizet?
2. Did the students complete the appropriate Activity Worksheet?

TEKS

Social Studies

6th - 7th grades

(21) Social studies skills. B. C.

8th grade

(30) Social studies skills. B. C.

Correlates: Math, Visual Arts

Gardner’s Intelligences: Verbal-Linguistic, Logical/Mathematical

Bloom’s Taxonomy: Knowledge, Comprehension, Application, Evaluation

Bibliography

Comstock, Ariane Csonka. The Young Person’s Guide to the OPERA. Los Angeles, California:

1997.

Sadie, Stanley (Ed.), The New Grove Dictionary of Opera. New York: MacMillan, 1994.

Soukhanov, Anne H., Gen. Ed. Encarta World Dictionary. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999.

Online Resources

http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georges_Bizet

<http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1838>

<http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1848>

<http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1855>

<http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1856>

<http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1857>

<http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1861>

<http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1863>

<http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1875>

<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>

Our Composer, Georges Bizet

Georges Bizet (*Zhorzh Bee-zay*) was born in Paris, France on October 25, 1838. His father was a singing teacher and a composer. His mother, also a musician, taught Georges to play the piano. When he was nine years old, Georges enrolled at the Paris Conservatory of Music in October, 1848. In time, he became a brilliant pianist and was known for his ability to sight-read. By 1855, he had won prizes for organ and fugue and even wrote his first symphony when he was seventeen.

In April 1857, Georges entered a musical competition for the best one-act opera. This opera, *Le Docteur Miracle* (*Doctor Miracle*), was the second he had ever composed. He tied for first place with another student, Charles Lecocq. A few months later, at the age of nineteen, Georges won a prestigious music scholarship, the Prix de Rome. With the scholarship, Georges Bizet went to study in Rome for the next three years. His musical talents developed as he studied and he continued to write operas and symphonies during this time.

When Bizet left Rome in July of 1860, he continued to tour Italy. As he toured, he thought of an idea for a new symphony. Each of the four movements would represent a different Italian city. In September, Bizet learned that his mother was ill and he returned to Paris. Sadly, his mother died one year later. The symphony he had been writing was not completed until 1866 and Bizet continued to make changes until 1871. This *Symphony in C “Roma”* or *Roma Symphony* was finally published in 1880.

On June 3, 1869 Bizet married Genevieve Halévy (*Gin-uh-veev Ha-lay-vee*), the daughter of his late teacher, Fromental Halévy. In July 1870, Bizet joined the French National Guard. His time in the Guard kept him from completing many of his compositions. By the end of January 1871, Bizet and his wife had to flee Paris for several months to escape the violence in the city.

Upon returning to Paris, Bizet became a member of the Conservatory's examination committees. He also worked on his own music, but had no outstanding successes. When Bizet's opera, *Carmen*, premiered on March 3, 1875, it ran for only 37 performances over three months. At first, no one took much notice of it. Later, Bizet's peers and fellow composers, Debussy (*De-byus-see*), Saint-Saens (*Sanh-Sonh*), and Tchaikovsky (*Tchy-kov-skee*), began to praise the opera. The German philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche (*Fred-rick Nee-chee*) saw it more than twenty times. He proclaimed *Carmen* one of the masterpieces in operatic literature.

Bizet would never know how successful *Carmen* would become. He died of a throat infection at the age of 36 on June 3, 1875, exactly three months after *Carmen*'s first performance. He was buried in the Père Lachaise Cemetery in Paris alongside other famous composers such as Chopin and Rossini.

Activity Worksheet 1: Using Timelines - Our Composer, Georges Bizet

Directions: Read the events in the chart and choose one for each blank in the Bizet timeline below. Place a check by two events that would interest you for further study. Be prepared to say why.

1838 May 26 - The people of the Cherokee Nation are forcibly relocated during the Trail of Tears.
1838 September 3 - Abolitionist, journalist, and author, Frederick Douglass escapes from slavery.

1848 November 7 – 1st U.S. Presidential election is held in every state on same day.

1856 February 2 – Dallas, Texas is incorporated as a city.

1861 February 1 – American Civil War: Texas secedes from the Union.

1863 October 3 – U. S. Pres. Lincoln proclaims a holiday for Thanksgiving celebrated the final Thursday in November.

1875 March 3 - The 1st recorded hockey game took place in Montreal, Canada.

1875 September 11 - 1st newspaper cartoon strip, "Professor Tigwissel's Burglar Alarm" appears in the New York "Daily Graphics".

Timeline for Our Composer, Georges Bizet and other Events

1838 October 25 – Georges Alexandre Cesar Leopold Bizet is born in Paris, France.

1838 _____

1848 October - Bizet begins studies at the Paris Conservatory of Music.

1848 _____

1855 Bizet composes his first symphony. It was discovered in 1933 and performed in 1935.

1856 _____

1857 Bizet ties for 1st place in a musical contest with his one act operetta, *Le Docteur Miracle* (*Doctor Miracle*).

1857 Bizet wins the prestigious music scholarship Prix de Rome. He studies in Rome for 3 years.

1861 May 26 - Bizet gives a faultless performance of an elaborate work of Franz Liszt, sight-reading from an unpublished manuscript.

1861 _____

1863 October 8 – In the *Journal des Debats* H. Berlioz says Bizet's talent at the piano is great.

1863 _____

1869 June 3 – Bizet marries Genevieve Halevy.

1875 March 3 – Bizet's opera, *Carmen*, premiers in Paris.

1875 June 3 – Bizet dies from complications following a throat infection. He is buried in the Pere Lachaise Cemetery in Paris alongside other great composers.

1875 _____

Name _____

Date _____

Activity Worksheet 2: Using Timelines - Our Composer, Georges Bizet

Directions: Read the events in the chart and choose one for each blank in the Bizet timeline below. Place a check by two events of interest to you for further study. On the back of this paper, create a question that would guide your research for each of the two events you chose.

1838 May 26 - The people of the Cherokee Nation are forcibly relocated during the Trail of Tears.

1838 September 3 - Abolitionist, journalist, and author, Frederick Douglass escapes from slavery.

1848 July 4 – Washington Monument is begun in Washington, D.C. Finished Dec. 6, 1884.

1848 November 7 – 1st U.S. Presidential election is held in every state on same day.

1856 February 2 – Dallas, Texas is incorporated as a city.

1861 February 1 – American Civil War: Texas secedes from the Union.

1861 April 12 – The American Civil War begins with the bombardment of Fort Sumter, South Carolina.

1863 January 8 - Ground is broken in Sacramento, CA on the construction of the First Transcontinental Railroad in the United States.

1863 October 3 – President Lincoln proclaims a national Thanksgiving (United States) day to be celebrated the final Thursday in November.

1875 March 3 - The 1st recorded hockey game took place in Montreal, Canada.

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1875 _____