



## Music: The Characters

### Students will

- Read “The Story of the Opera”
- Read the information sheet “The Characters” included with the lesson.
- Listen to the audio selections from *Doctor Miracle* included with the online lesson.
- Discuss and answer questions on the appropriate portion(s) of the **Activity Worksheet**.

### Copies for Each Student

- “The Characters”
- “The Story of the Opera”
- Music Activity Worksheet

### Copies for the Teacher

- “The Characters”
- “The Story of the Opera”
- Music Activity Worksheet

### Getting Ready

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

### Introduction

Tell students to read “The Story of the Opera”. Give each student a copy of the information sheet “The Characters” or display it on the screen. Read through the information, discussing each character and listening to the selections as you go.

Depending on your grade level, the ability of your students, and time constraints, you may choose to have students work as a whole class, in small groups, with a partner, or individually. Read the directions on the **Activity Worksheet**. Have students complete the portion(s) of the **Activity Worksheet** you have chosen with an opportunity to ask questions. If students are working with a partner or in small groups, give them time to discuss their answers before writing them down. Have students share their answers individually, or by groups, and tell why they gave their answers.

### Evaluation

Have students discuss and evaluate the answers of others. The teacher may want to guide the discussion with the sample answers provided. After individual or small group responses have been shared and turned in, the class can then formulate comprehensive answers with the teacher asking leading questions to guide the discussion.

**TEKS: Music**

**Grade 3**

(5) Historical/cultural heritage. The student relates music to history, to society, and to culture. The student is expected to identify aurally-presented excerpts of music representing diverse genres, styles, periods, and cultures. (A)

**Grade 4**

(5) Historical/cultural heritage. The student relates music to history, to society, and to culture. The student is expected to identify aurally-presented excerpts of music representing diverse genres, styles, periods, and cultures. (A)

**Grade 5**

(5) Historical/cultural heritage. The student relates music to history, to society, and to culture. The student is expected to identify aurally-presented excerpts of music representing diverse genres, styles, periods, and cultures. (A)

**Grade 6**

(5) Historical/cultural heritage. The student relates music to history, to society, and to culture. The student is expected to describe aurally-presented music representing diverse styles, periods, and cultures. (A)

**Grade 7**

(5) Historical/cultural heritage. The student relates music to history, to society, and to culture. The student is expected to classify aurally-presented music representing diverse styles, periods, and culture. (A)

**Grade 8**

(5) Historical/cultural heritage. The student relates music to history, to society, and to culture. The student is expected to classify aurally-presented music representing diverse styles, periods, and cultures. (A)

**Correlates:** Language Arts, Drama, Social Studies

**Gardner's Intelligences:** Verbal-Linguistic, Musical, Interpersonal

**Bloom's Taxonomy:** Knowledge, Comprehension, Application, Analysis, Evaluation, Synthesis

**Bibliography**

Freeman, John W., The Metropolitan Opera Stories of the Great Operas, W. W. Norton and Company, 1984.

Goulding, Phil G., Ticket to the Opera, Fawcett Columbine/Ballantine, 1996.

Parker, Bill. "Le Docteur Miracle" libretto & essay in accompanying booklet, Bizet: *Le Docteur Miracle* sung by Christiane Eda-Pierre, Robert Massard, Rémy Corazza, Lyliane Guitton with the Orchestra of Radio France conducted by Bruno Amaducci. Allegro Corporation OPD-7077, 2010. Compact disc.

Warrack, John and West, Ewan, The Oxford Dictionary of Opera, Oxford University Press, 1992.

**Online Resources**

<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>

[www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com)

**Discography**

Label: Opera D'Oro, a division of the Allegro Corporation

Bizet: *Le Docteur Miracle*

Conductor: Bruno Amaducci

Orchestra: Orchestra of Radio France

**Artist(s):** Eda-Pierre, Christiane; Massard, Robert; Corazza, Rémy; Guitton, Lyliane; Salviat, Catherine; Camion, René; Viret, Claire; Pralon, Alain.

## The Characters

**Laurette:** (*soprano*) Laurette is the daughter of Padua's mayor. She is a young woman in love with a captain in the army named Silvio. She wants to marry Silvio, but her father has planned to have her marry the local pharmacist. Laurette has been raised to obey her father, but deeply wishes to marry her true love. Listen as she sings "I Know What You Think About Him."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TLA765zyr0A>

**Veronica:** (*soprano/mezzo-soprano*) She is the wife of the Mayor and Laurette's stepmother. She tries to support her husband, but also wants Laurette to be happy. Veronica honors her husband's wishes, and seems surprised when her Laurette agrees to marry a stranger to save her father's life. Listen to "I Wonder What That Noise Was!" as Veronica sings a trio with her husband and stepdaughter.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hooGNVmmUVg>

**The Mayor:** (*baritone*) He is the Mayor of Padua, the town in which the story is set. He does not like Silvio, and does not like soldiers in general. A man of responsibility and power, he is used to getting his way. Little does he know that he will have help in changing his mind. Listen to the Mayor sing in "I've Been Blessed."

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VpLqY\\_uvmDM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VpLqY_uvmDM)

**Silvio/Pasquin/Doctor Miracle:** (*tenor*) Silvio is a captain in the army. He has fallen in love with Laurette, and wishes to marry her. He knows that her father will not agree to the marriage. Laurette's father will not even allow them to speak to each other. Silvio has figured out a plan to trick the Mayor. He impersonates both Doctor Miracle and Pasquin to get near Laurette and fool the Mayor into agreeing to their marriage. Listen to Silvio, disguised as Pasquin, sing in "I'll Climb Up On Your Roof" and as Doctor Miracle, with the mayor's family, in "Dear Laurette, If You Still Love Me."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0RXhXyWLa0A>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fPNKMfsQRRc>

**All four characters** give a notable comic performance in "Make Way for the Omelet" as Pasquin creates a foul smelling omelet for the family to show off his great cooking skills. This quartet received an encore performance (meaning it was repeated at the demand of the audience) at the first performance of *Doctor Miracle* in 1857. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q6lbVIPXW08>

# The Story of the Opera

*Doctor Miracle* is a one-act comic opera. The story is set in the town of Padua, Italy, in the 19th century. The action takes place in the home of the town's mayor.

The opera opens with the Mayor, his second wife Veronica, and his daughter, Laurette, sitting on their terrace. They hear a loud noise and see a door-to-door salesman, Doctor Miracle, selling his cure-all remedy. Unknown to the family, Doctor Miracle is really Silvio, a military captain in disguise who is in love with Laurette.

After a time, the three turn their attention away from Doctor Miracle. The Mayor informs his daughter that he has hired a new servant, Pasquin, to replace his old servant whom he had fired for passing love notes between Silvio and Laurette. He leaves to retrieve Pasquin.

Laurette is soon lost in her own thoughts, singing of her love for Silvio. However, her father already has plans for her to marry the local chemist. He does not like Silvio and has told Laurette she is not allowed to even speak to him.

The Mayor returns with Pasquin and introduces him to Laurette and Veronica. The family does not realize Pasquin is really Silvio, once again in disguise. The Mayor asks the ladies to leave so he can speak to Pasquin alone. After a few minutes of conversation, the Mayor realizes he and Pasquin will get along famously as they both share a deep dislike for soldiers. He is further impressed when Pasquin informs him that he is an excellent chef and asks him to put his culinary skills to use by making lunch for the family.

Pasquin makes an omelet for the family's lunch. The awful smell and taste of the omelet send the Mayor and his wife running from the house. This gives Silvio the chance to remove his disguise and indulge in a love duet with Laurette. When the Mayor returns, he finds the pair and orders Silvio out of the house.

Soon a letter arrives with a message for the Mayor stating that the omelet he tasted was poisoned and there is no antidote. The family panics. When they realize that the village doctor is out of town, the Mayor sends for Doctor Miracle. Doctor Miracle arrives and agrees to save the day, but only if he is granted Laurette's hand in marriage. The Mayor agrees to the marriage and scrambles to get the prescription from Doctor Miracle. When he begins to read it, he realizes that he was never actually poisoned, and the "Doctor" reveals that his true identity is Silvio. The Mayor is furious when he realizes he has been tricked and tells Silvio that he will never marry Laurette. Finally, after the family and Silvio plead with him, the Mayor gives in to the merry mood and joins in celebrating Laurette's happiness. All is well, and everyone is happy.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **Activity Worksheet Part I**

1. Who do the Mayor and his wife believe Silvio to be when they first hear him that morning? Why?

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2. Do you think it is fair for the Mayor to not like any soldier, without even trying to get to know them? Why or why not?

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3. Which of the characters are more like the people in your life? Why?

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4. Which of the character(s) do you consider to be the hero(es) of the story? Why?

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **Activity Worksheet Part II**

5. Do you think the Mayor will try to break up Silvio and Laurette, or continue to support their marriage? Why?

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6. If you were one of the characters in the opera, would you have recognized Silvio in his two disguises? Why or why not?

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7. Do you think Silvio's plan to trick the Mayor was a good plan? Why or why not?

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8. Do you think that Laurette and Silvio have had enough time to really get to know each other well enough to get married? Why or why not?

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### **Activity Worksheet Part III**

9. What do you think is the intended lesson of this story?

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Many operas are treated as concept operas, with stories that can take place in any time or location. *Doctor Miracle* was originally intended to be set in a small Italian town in the 19th century, but could be staged as a story in a modern setting in just about any country. It might even be staged as something from the future. Please use separate paper if needed to answer the following questions.

10. Would a different time or place in which the story is portrayed change the story in any real way? Why or why not?

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11. If you were to perform this opera, what location and time period would you like to use?

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