



Music I: The Characters

Students will

- Read "The Story of the Opera" and "The Composer"
- Read the information sheet "The Characters" included with the lesson.
- Discuss and answer questions on the appropriate portion(s) of the Activity Worksheet.

Copies for the Student

- "The Story of the Opera"
- "The Composer"
- "The Characters"
- Activity Worksheet

Copies for the Teacher

- "The Story of the Opera"
- "The Composer"
- "The Characters"
- Activity Worksheet

Getting Ready

Print copies for each student on the information sheet "The Characters" and the Activity Worksheet. Decide which section(s) of the worksheet you wish your group to complete. Gather pens, pencils, and additional writing paper as needed for your group.

Introduction

Have your students read "The Story of the Opera" and "The Composer." 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 online selections as you go.

Guided/Independent Practice

Depending on the 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 opportunity for 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. After individual or small group responses have been shared and/or turned in, the class can then formulate comprehensive answers with the teacher asking leading questions to guide the discussion.

Pépito

For Further Study

The teacher may want to have students further research *Pépito*. Teacher can also have students look into Jacques Offenbach, his life and other works by utilizing the Social Studies I lesson. Their findings can be shared with the class at the beginning of a later lesson.

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)

Language Arts

Grade 3

(8) Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Drama. Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Fiction. Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of fiction and provide evidence from text to support their understanding. Students are expected to describe the interaction of characters including their relationships and the changes they undergo. (B)

Grade 4

(6) Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Fiction. Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of fiction and provide evidence from text to support their understanding. Students are expected to describe the interaction of characters including their relationships and the changes they undergo. (B)

Grade 5

(6) Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Fiction. Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of fiction and provide evidence from text to support their understanding. Students are expected to explain the roles and functions of characters in various plots, including their relationships and conflicts. (B)

Pépito

Grade 6

(6) Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Fiction. Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of fiction and provide evidence from text to support their understanding. Students are expected to summarize the elements of plot development (e.g., rising action, turning point, climax, falling action, denouement) in various works of fiction. (B)

Grade 7

(6) Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Fiction. Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of fiction and provide evidence from text to support their understanding. Students are expected to analyze the development of the plot through the internal and external responses of the characters, including their motivations and conflicts. (B)

Grade 8

(6) Comprehension of Literary Text/Fiction. Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of fiction and provide evidence from text to support their understanding. Students are expected to analyze how the central characters' qualities influence the theme of a fictional work and resolution of the central conflict. (B)

Correlates: Language Arts, Drama, Music

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

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

Sources:

Pépito Libretto (TDO Production by Mary Dibbern, 2017)

Online Resources:

www.oxfordmusiconline.com

The Story of the Opera

Setting: Elizondo, a Basque village in Navarre, Spain

Manuelita, the owner of the Blue Bird Hotel, tends to her garden, thinking about Pépito, her betrothed since childhood. She laments his absence, as he is serving in the military in Cádiz. Although she has not received a letter from him in four months, or seen him in three years, she has been saving up her hotel profits in order to help Pépito come home sooner so that they can be married.

Meanwhile, Vertigo, a jack of all trades, fluba player, and owner of the Hotel Crocodile (the rival hotel in town), tries to persuade Manuelita to go on a date with him. Steadfast in her devotion to her fiancé, Manuelita rejects Vertigo's advances.

Later, Manuelita sees her old friend, Miguel, who is home from college in Madrid and searching for a wife. They recall their time together as children, and Miguel realizes that he and Manuelita were destined for each other. Miguel tells her that he and Pépito exchange letters and in their latest correspondence, Pépito had informed him that he is getting married. Upon hearing this, Manuelita rejoices because she is now sure that Pépito is still faithful to her.

Always one to stir up trouble, Vertigo secretly tries to convince Miguel that Manuelita will never love him because she is already engaged to Vertigo. But Miguel is not one to give up easily. When they sit down to eat Vertigo's famous gâteau Basque with a glass of apple cider, Miguel makes sure that Vertigo stuffs himself so full that he falls asleep at the table.

With Vertigo out of the way, Miguel expresses his feelings for Manuelita and tells her that if Pépito really cared, he would have never left her. This gives Manuelita pause. However, she maintains that she is completely devoted to her promise to Pépito and leaves Miguel alone to think about how he has hurt her feelings by speaking ill of Pépito.

Vertigo wakes up and realizes that his leg has fallen asleep. He jumps up from the chair in pain and Miguel says that he deserves it because Vertigo lied about being engaged to Manuelita. Vertigo admits that Manuelita "can't stand" him. Suddenly, he realizes that he is late for a church service in San Sebastián where he has promised to play a solo on his fluba! He runs away in a panic.

Manuelita comes out of her hotel. Miguel apologizes and says that he only wants her to be happy. He is so impressed by Manuelita's virtue and loyalty to Pépito that he volunteers to take the young soldier's place in the military so that Pépito may return to marry Manuelita.

When he returns from church, Vertigo, who is also the town's postman, announces that he has just found a letter that Pépito sent to Manuelita over a year ago. Miguel hurries to open it and reads with great joy that Pépito has married another woman!

Manuelita is shocked. How could Pépito betray her? After much deliberation, Manuelita realizes that her loyalty to Pépito was not out of love, but out of the obligation to keep the promise she made so many years ago. Seizing his chance, Vertigo quickly asks Manuelita to marry him, but Manuelita declares she will marry Miguel instead, as her feelings for him are true.

Though unhappy at his own misfortune, Vertigo cannot let a lucrative business opportunity pass him by. He agrees to bake the wedding cake and play his fluba for Miguel and Manuelita, who are ecstatic that they can finally be together.

The Composer

In the early 1800's, Jacques Offenbach's father, Isaac Juda Eberst, moved from his native Offenbach am Main, Germany to the ghetto in Cologne, Germany. Here he worked as a bookbinder, music teacher, and composer and a cantor at a synagogue. He became known as "Der Offenbacher" and then later was simply called Offenbach.

On June 20, 1819, Jacob Eberst was born. Jacob was one of seven children. His father taught him to play the violin. In 1899, Jacob learned to play the cello. With his cello, Jacob formed a successful trio with his older brother, Julius (1815-1880) who played the violin, and his younger sister, Isabella (1817-1891) who played the piano.

In 1833, Jacob published his first composition. In November of the same year, Jacob's father took both Jacob and Julius to live and study in Paris. At the Conservatory, open only to French nationals, Jacob's father pleaded with the director to let Jacob play. Finally, the director consented and gave Jacob an almost unknown Italian cantata to sight-read and play on the cello. Halfway through the cantata the director cried out, "The ruling is wrong. You are a pupil of the Conservatory!" This is how Jacob began studying at the Conservatory.

While in Paris, Jacob came to be known as Jacques Offenbach. His father had made certain that both he and his brother sang in the choir at the synagogue in Paris. In the years following 1834, Jacques played in orchestras, gave music lessons, and copied music manuscripts. He became a familiar figure in the best salons in Paris.

In January of 1839, Jacques gave his first public concert with his brother who was now called Jules. In March of 1839, Jacques received his first commission for a musical score. He continued as a cello virtuoso and toured both Germany and England in the early 1840's.

Jacques Offenbach became a Catholic and married a young Spanish woman, Herminie d'Alcain in August 1844. He met Herminie at the salon of her mother, who was married to an English concert agent. Through this connection, Offenbach traveled to London to perform. One of his concerts was at Windsor Castle.

By 1848, Offenbach had conducted an orchestra in a Parisian theater and had established himself as a composer of dance music. Later that same year, the revolution broke out in Paris and Offenbach returned to Germany. Offenbach returned to Paris in 1849 to be the conductor at the Theatre Francaise, but was anxious to gain more recognition as a composer. He spent the summer of 1853 in Cologne with family to build his strength in order to win commissions and performances. Originally intended to be entitled *Vertigo*, *Pépito* received its premiere at the Théâtre des Variétés in Paris on October 28, 1853.

In June of 1855, Offenbach leased a small theater in the Champs-Elysees called the Theatre Marigny and procured a license from the government to present musical plays. The theater was near the site of the International Exposition that the Emperor of France, Napoleon III, had opened in May. Offenbach renamed the theater Bouffes-Parisiens and opened with a program of one-act operettas. One of these operettas ran for 400 performances and was a command performance before Emperor Napoleon III.

In 1857, Offenbach's entire theater company traveled to London, England to perform for eight weeks at the St. James Theatre. His brother, Jules, conducted the orchestra and traveled with the company to London.

In 1860, Jacques Offenbach became a naturalized Frenchman. He was appointed a Chevalier of the Legion d'honneur in 1861. By 1861, Jacques and Herminie's family had grown to include four daughters and a son. His work in theaters was so successful that Offenbach purchased and maintained two homes, one in the city and a second one at a resort city.

Pépito

The Composer cont.

During the 1860's, Offenbach's more than 100 musical operettas brought him acclaim and prosperity. "The Toast of the New Empire," critics described his operettas as exhilarating, always tuneful, and original. Composers copied his style. Rossini called him "the Mozart of the Champs-Elysees."

In 1871, the Second Empire in France collapsed. Offenbach's music temporarily went out of fashion resulting in financial losses, which forced him into bankruptcy in 1875. Offenbach traveled to New York City and Philadelphia in 1876 and gave 40 concerts. Even though the critics were not complimentary, Offenbach considered his tour a financial success.

Beginning in 1877, Jacques Offenbach started to compose *The Tales of Hoffmann*. His main preoccupation was to complete a serious opera. From 1877-1880, Offenbach experienced success in London and Paris with his new and revived works. Yet Offenbach was in poor health and was concerned that he would die before he could complete his opera. In September 1880, during a rehearsal for *The Tales of Hoffmann*, he collapsed. On October 4, 1880, Jacques Offenbach died. Offenbach's family requested the composer, Guiraud, to complete the score of *The Tales of Hoffmann*. It premiered in Paris at the Opera-Comique in February 1881.

Jacques Offenbach's contributions to the musical world can be measured with his outstanding development of the operetta, which was the precursor of today's popular Broadway musicals. Yet, it is *The Tales of Hoffmann*, the opera, for which he is best, remembered. It remains one of the most popular operas in France. It has been produced on hundreds of stages in many other countries. In the United States alone, at the Met, there have been 210 performances over 27 seasons, from 1913 to 1993. Jacques Offenbach (born Jacob Eberst) did indeed accomplish his goal to compose a successful serious opera.

Pépito

The Characters

Manuelita: (soprano) A young hotel owner. She is engaged to Pépito, who is away fighting in the army. Manuelita misses her fiancé and is trying to find a way to save up enough money to pay someone else to take his place in the army so he can come home to her. She remains faithful to Pépito even when other men in the village try to pursue her.

Vertigo: (baritone) The town barber (and mailman) who also owns the hotel next to Manuelita's. His hotel serves a wonderful dessert, a gateau Basque, which Vertigo says is the best in the world. This causes trouble for Manuelita, since not as many guests stay in her hotel. Vertigo would like to marry Manuelita and combine their two hotels into one. Manuelita can't stand Vertigo.

Miguel: (tenor) A young scholar. His father summons him home from his studies to find a wife. Miguel and Manuelita were childhood friends and used to pretend they were married. When he returns and sees her all grown up, he falls in love and their fond memories and connection are rekindled. Miguel is also friends with Pépito, so his engagement to Manuelita complicates matters.

Music Excerpts

Excerpt I: Miguel comes home and sees his friend Manuelita. They talk about his homecoming (Duet).

<https://youtu.be/DydMPRcAZmc>

Excerpt II: Vertigo tells us about himself.

<https://youtu.be/JIX6CxurZLE>

Pépito

Name _____

Date _____

Part I

Activity Worksheet

1. Who are the protagonist and the antagonist of the story? Give examples from the plot to support your answers.

2. Using context clues, determine what time period you think the story took place in. What clues in the story lead to your conclusion?

3. What do you like about Manuelita's character? What do you dislike?

Pépito

Part II

Activity Worksheet

4. Do you think Vertigo was really in love with Manuelita? Why or why not?

5. When Miguel reveals his feelings to Manuelita, his approach makes her angry. What was his mistake and what could he have done differently?

6. Do any of the characters remind you of someone in your life? Which character and why?

7. Do you believe Manuelita and Miguel will stay together? Why or why not?
