

The Victorian Lyric Opera Company Presents...

Ruddigore



Curriculum Guide

Acknowledgements:

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Lobby display photographs courtesy of Todd and Kiersten Whitehead, & Carlton and Jane Maryott.

Pirates of Penzance

Victorian Lyric Opera Company will present its community outreach performance of the ***Pirates of Penzance*** on Sunday, June 10, 2007 at 2 p.m. in the F. Scott Fitzgerald Theatre. Two children will be admitted for free with each paying adult. Pre-show activities, a backstage tour and a post-show question and answer session with the artists and staff will be included with the performance.



What is Opera?



Opera is a play set to music. The characters sing about their feelings instead of speaking them. Both the orchestra and vocal music help tell the story. The music provides clues to the story: it reflects the characters' feelings, sets the mood of the scene, hints at a turn in the plot, describes an event (such as a storm), and makes the audience feel more strongly about what they see onstage. Opera uses all of the art forms. It combines singing, acting, dance, music, poetry and the visual arts (in scenery, costumes, and lights). Opera has two basic elements: the libretto (Italian for little book) which is the words or text of the opera and the score, which is the music (the vocal and instrumental parts of the music composition).

The Music

Most operas begin with an **overture**, an orchestral introduction to the music of the opera, usually played before the action begins. The overture often introduces themes heard in the opera. Operas are divided into **acts** and further subdivided into **scenes**. Each act is often divided by an **entr'acte** (French for "between the scenes"). Each scene consists of a mixture of **aria** (a song expressing the feelings of one character), **duet** (a song for two characters in which they usually express their feeling for one another), and **ensembles** (songs in which several characters sing the same lines – or different lines at the same time – to express their feelings about the story's actions). The melody that each character sings clearly describes what he or she is feeling. Larger ensembles generally appear at the finale, or end, of acts in the opera. An ensemble for three voices is a **trio**, for four voices is a **quartet**, for five voices is a **quintet**, and so on.



The Voices



Opera singers do not usually use microphones, so their voices must be developed to make a very large sound that projects over an orchestra in a large theatre. There are six major voice types. The highest female voice is the **soprano**. The heroine is usually a soprano. The middle female voice is the **mezzo-soprano**. This voice is darker and warmer sounding than the soprano. Composers use the mezzo voice for villainesses, seductresses, mothers and boys (such as Hansel in *Hansel and Gretel*). The lowest female voice is the **contralto**. This voice type is usually used by composers for older women, wise women, and witches. The highest male voice is the **tenor**. The tenor is usually the hero and/or love interest. The middle male voice is the **baritone**. Composers frequently use this voice for fathers and villains. The lowest male voice is the **bass**. Composers frequently use this voice for older, wise men. In addition to training their voices, opera singers must also train in acting, movement, dance, and foreign languages.



Behind the Scenes



When an audience sees an opera, they are viewing the tip of the production iceberg. Many people are involved in writing, performing, and producing an opera. Most of these people are not seen by the audience.

- A **composer** writes the vocal and orchestral music (called a score) for the opera.
- The **librettist** writes the words (called the libretto) for the opera.
- The **conductor** is responsible for what you hear in an opera. The conductor rehearses both the singers and the orchestra and presides over the performance. This is a complex job, because the conductor must coordinate the work of all the performers.

- The **rehearsal accompanist** plays the piano for music and staging rehearsals when the orchestra is not required.
- The **orchestra** is a group of instrumentalists who provide accompaniment for the voices and play the orchestral score.
- The **director** is responsible for what you see in an opera. The director assists the performers in interpreting their characters as well as determining where and how these characters move throughout the stage area (this is called blocking). The director also coordinates all of the visual elements, collaborating with the designers to create a unified vision of the opera.
- The **designers** create the visual effects and the visual mood of the opera. The **set designer** is responsible for characterizing and defining the performance space through the placement of scenic elements (such as walls, doors, windows, and furniture). The **lighting designer** is responsible for enhancing the visual elements of the performance. The lighting establishes the mood, atmosphere, time of day, source of light (sun, lamps, fire, etc.) and special effects (such as lightning, stars, and so on). The **costume designer** is responsible for the visual appearance of the performers. The costumes establish the time period, locale, and socioeconomic status of the characters as well as the mood and style of the production. The **makeup designer** is also responsible for the visual appearance of the performer. The makeup is used to create an image of the character. It can be used to age a performer, add facial hair, scars, birthmarks and other features to the performer's body, and to heighten the performer's features. The makeup designer is usually responsible for any wigs used by performers. The props designer collects or creates objects (such as furniture, tools, dishes, and so on) that help convey the time and place of the opera. The word "props" is short for properties.
- The **stage manager** is the director's most valuable assistant. The stage manager coordinates all aspects of the technical production, attending all rehearsals, recording all blocking, organizing rehearsals, assembling the prompt book and running the show at each performance.



Meet the Orchestra



There are four basic families of instruments in the orchestra:

Strings: violin, viola, cello, double bass

Woodwinds: piccolo, flute, clarinet, bass clarinet, English horn, oboe, bassoon, contrabassoon

Brass: trumpet, trombone, French horn, tuba

Percussion: drums, xylophone, castanets, gong, triangle, cymbals, chimes, and tambourine

In addition to these instruments there are keyboards (such as the piano and harpsichord), and plucked instruments (such as the harp). Opera orchestras vary in size, both in number of different types of instruments and the number of instruments within each instrument group. The opera orchestra will often perform from the pit. This is a space which is lower than and in front of the stage. The orchestra is led by the conductor.

Who Is Who in *Ruddigore*

- **Richard Dauntless** - Robin (Ruthven's) extremely good looking, adopted half brother who is just returning from his naval pursuits. He always follows his heart. Tenor.
- **Rose Maybud** – The beautiful niece of Hannah. She values etiquette as the supreme virtue. Soprano.
- **Sir Ruthven Murgatroyd** – Disguised as **Robin Oakapple**, a young farmer with extremely good etiquette. Baritone.
- **Dame Hannah** – Rose's small, feisty, and wise aunt who has pledged herself to eternal maidenhood. Mezzo Soprano.
- **Mad Margaret** – Desperately in love with Sir Despard, she has gone insane due to his cruel treatment. Mezzo Soprano.
- **Old Adam Goodheart** – Robin (Ruthven's) faithful servant. Bass.
- **Sir Despard Murgatroyd** – Sir Ruthven Murgatroyd's younger brother. He has held the title of the wicked baronet for ten years, thinking his older brother is dead. Baritone.
- **Sir Roderic Murgatroyd** – A ghost who is mad at Sir Ruthven for not committing enough crimes. He is the former baronet and loves torturing the present baronet. Baritone.
- **Zorah** – The head bridesmaid who strongly wants a marriage, any marriage to occur. Soprano.
- **Ruth** – A professional bridesmaid.
- **Chorus of Officers, Ancestors, Villagers and Professional Bridesmaids**

Glossary

Act I:

- **The Witch's Curse** - "each lord of Ruddigore, despite his best endeavor shall do one crime or more, once every day forever"
- **what took place, I ween, shook his composure boasted** - believe
- **and thus with sinning cloyed** - fed up; usually with something sweet (but not here)
- **I shipped... in a revenue sloop** - I sailed ... in a medium-sized Customs patrol boat
- **she proved to be a frigate and she up with her ports, and fires with a thirty-two** - the well-armed fighting ship opened her gun-ports (shutters) & fired a 32-lb. cannon shot
- **which paralyzed the Parle-voe... only a darned Mounseer... Froggee answers with a shout ... to fight a French fal-lal** - slang terms for Frenchman, or in this case a French ship. *Fal-lal* suggests foppery.
- **she is sartin for to strike** - certain to strike her colors, i.e. lower her flag in surrender
- **we up with our helm and we scuds before the breeze** - turned, to sail with the wind
- **belay... 'Vast heavin'** - stop ... Stop sighing
- **and a Barrowknight to boot, if all had their rights** - slang for Baronet
- **A Crichton of early romance** - James Crichton (1560-1583) brilliant Scottish adventurer
- **stir it and stump it** - boast, as in making stump speeches (campaign speeches)
- **From Ovid and Horace to Swinburne and Morris** - Ovid and Horace are famous classical Roman poets; Swinburne a Victorian aesthetic poet; William Morris was a poet as well as a designer of wallpaper and household furnishings, of the Pre-Raphaelite school.
- **Is it meet that a stranger should so express himself?** - proper
- **...be permitted to salute the flag I'm a-goin' to sail under?** - salute also means kiss
- **a better hand at turning-in a dead-eye don't walk a deck** - applying tension to kind of crude block-and-tackle apparatus for tightening the shrouds of a mast
- **Hearts often tack** - change directions
- **Cheerily carols the lark over the cot** - cottage

- **Cytherean posies** - lovers' bouquets (the island of Cythera is associated with Aphrodite)
- **With flattery sated, high-flown and inflated** - filled to capacity
- **from charms intramural to prettiness rural** - literally, between (city) walls
- **the sudden transition is simply Elysian** - the heaven-like part of the Greek underworld
- **Come Amaryllis, come Chloe and Phyllis** - poetic names for rustic Arcadian maidens
- **... stone from a strong catapult (a trice)** - rope-and-pulley arrangement (for a catapult?)
- **ought you to stand off-and-on** - nautical for tack in and out along a shore; hence; to dither
- **His rightful title I have long enjoyed** - in the sense of "had the use of"
- **but when completely rated Bad Baronet am I** - established
- **When I'm a bad Bart I will tell taradiddles** - short for Baronet; taradiddles are fibs
- **adieu with good grace to my morals sententious** - expressed as maxims or clichés

Act II:

- **without the elision** - without skipping anything (e.g. his first name), and pronounced fully
- **Valley-de-sham** - valet-de-chambre, or personal servant (a gentleman's gentleman)
- **When the night-wind howls in the chimney crows** - hooded chimney tops
- **when the footpads quail** - robber or highwayman (to quail is to recoil in fear)
- **away they go with a mop and a mow** - gestures and grimaces
- **with his ladye-toast** - lady to whom toasts are drunk
- **With a kiss, perhaps, on her lantern chaps** - long thin jaws, looking hollow-cheeked
- **On Thursday I shot a fox** - Fox-hunting country gentlemen protected foxes assiduously so their sport would be better. Shooting one was considered outrageous
- **suffering much from spleen and vapours** - melancholy and nervous weakness
- **No I'm a dab at penny readings** - an expert at a wholesome kind of "improving" entertainment with music, recitations, and readings
- **In fact we rule a National School** - church-connected school for the poor

- a gentle district visitor - church worker who helps clergymen in pastoral visits
- Eschew melodrama - abstain from or give up
- give them tea and barley-water - thin barley broth used medicinally
- Basingstoke - a commonplace town southwest of London (on the rail line to Cornwall)
- pure and blameless ratepayer - taxpayer
- When the tempest 'gan to lower - (rhymes with sour) threaten
- help him... like the mouse in the fable - a mouse helped a lion in one of Aesop's
- why I do not pipe my eye - cry

Glossary courtesy of The Gilbert and Sullivan Very Light Opera Company

Background of *Ruddigore*

Ruddigore, or the Witch's Curse was the tenth collaboration between Gilbert and Sullivan. It opened at the Savoy Theatre on January 21, 1887 to mixed reviews. After opening night, the title was changed from *Ruddygore* (a combination of words that was thought to be too horrific) to the current *Ruddigore*, and edits were made to shorten the second act. The operetta then enjoyed a moderately successful run, although it was not revived again until the 1920's. Subsequent revivals have restored much of the edited second act.

Ruddigore is a satire of the melodramas that were popular during the childhood of Gilbert and Sullivan's audiences. In parodying the melodrama, Gilbert and Sullivan were making a point about the easy, hollow morality depicted in these plays. The Jolly Jack Tar, the wicked baronet, the beautiful, pure, and chaste heroine, the honest, true, and stalwart hero, the sobbing madwoman, the sudden revelation of identity-- all are stock elements of this particular theatrical genre.

Madame Tussauds Wax Museum

Marie Tussaud lived during the latter part of the 18th century and the first part of the 19th century in France. She was skilled in wax modeling. She created wax figures of many famous persons, including Voltaire, Rousseau, and Benjamin Franklin. During the French Revolution she created death masks of prominent victims of the guillotine. In 1802 Madame Tussaud went to England. She

created a permanent exhibition of her wax figures in Baker Street in London in 1835. The most popular part of her exhibit was the "Chamber of Horrors," which included victims of the French Revolution, murderers and other criminals. Madame Tussauds Wax Museum grew to be a major tourist attraction in London. Today there are Madame Tussauds Wax Museums in Amsterdam, Las Vegas, New York City, Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Hollywood.

Melodrama and *Ruddigore*

The Victorian stage melodrama emphasized plot and powerful emotional situations over characters and character development. Thus the melodrama featured a limited number of stock characters: the hero, the villain, the heroine, an old man, an old woman, a comic man and a comic woman usually engaged in a sensational plot featuring themes of Love and Murder. Often the good (but not very clever) hero is duped by a scheming villain, who has eyes on the damsel in distress until fate intervenes at the end to ensure the triumph of good over evil. Early silent films had similar themes in films such as *The Perils of Pauline*. Radio also incorporated elements of melodrama in serial radio shows such as *Little Orphan Annie*. Today we can see the influence of the Victorian melodrama in the mystery genre and in horror films, where virtuous characters win, wicked characters are destroyed and good always triumphs over evil.

In *Ruddigore* Gilbert meshes melodrama and satire, two forms of theatre that extremely distort theatrical elements. The easy moral absolutes of the melodrama are revealed to be worthless. Gilbert has his characters respond rigidly to situations according to their stereotype: Despard is good in Act II, so he urges Ruthven to return to being good because that is what a "moral" person would do. Characters are clearly aware of the differences between expected behavior and their own inherent natures (thus, for example, Despard atones for each of his evil deeds with a benevolent one). The major characters distance themselves from their bad or evil traits by blaming them on external forces such as a shy or bashful nature or an etiquette book. Robin, Rose and Richard sing of following the dictates of one's heart, and conveniently each heart orders its possessor to do what is socially unacceptable but privately beneficial. The ensuing series of betrayals is balanced by remarkable displays of loyalty and goodness by Despard, Margaret, Hannah, and Adam (ironically those characters with the melodramatic labels of wicked, mad, ugly, or old).

The Hornpipe and the Gavotte

During the performance you will see a form of traditional dance called the hornpipe. There are several traditional folk dance forms of the hornpipe. The one presented in **Ruddigore** is the most common form, generally referred to as a sailor's dance. It is danced wearing a hard shoe, and dates back to the mid-18th century (although the roots of this folk dance date back to an English baroque dance). It is usually danced in common or 4/4 time. The dance was very popular in the 19th century. The best known examples are *The Sailor's Hornpipe* and *The Groves Hornpipe*.

You will also see a dance form called the gavotte, which originated as a French folk dance during the Baroque period. The dance is performed by a group of dancers at a moderate tempo, and is notated in 4/4 or 2/2 time. Many 19th century composers incorporated gavottes into their musical writings (such as Massenet in his opera **Manon**, and Sullivan, again, in **The Gondoliers**). Modern musicals such as **Candide** and **My Fair Lady** have also included gavottes.

Ruddigore Word Search

The words below the puzzle are related to VLOC's production of *Ruddigore*. See how many words you can find in the puzzle.

G A R S Y N O R E H G R S B E
K Z E W A D I T G X O O A A S
D E N O T I R A B X P S E U A
E I M F D S L B L R S R L T R
S G A E T O T O A L O L E E E
R I Y M P Q M N R G I H T N P
U L L F S I O A I V E V I O O
C B D M C E P D A O H K Q R T
S E D A L B D N A S K C U B H
Y R O F M U D I R O Z Z E M G
M T Z F R S D V R O G C T C I
M E L O D R A M A B H T T R L
O P E R E T T A D I C H E I B
A T J G E T T O V A G K R M K
W I T C H P B H E R O I N E C

BARITONE

BASS

BRIDESMAID

BUCKS AND BLADES

CRIME

CURSE

ETIQUETTE

GAVOTTE

GILBERT

HERO

HEROINE

HORNSPIPE

LIGHT OPERA

MAD

MELODRAMA

MEZZO

OPERETTA

RUDDIGORE

SAILOR

SOPRANO

SULLIVAN

TENOR

VILLAIN

WITCH