STUDY GUIDE

OPERA ON WHEELS 2013

THE ITALIAN GIRL

ADAPTED FROM GIOACHINO ROSSINI’S L’ITALIANI IN ALGERI
BY JENNIFER CRESSWELL

Study Guide also available on line
at: www.toledoopera.org
2013 ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE

Danielle Messina, soprano (Vera)
Danielle earned a Bachelor's Degree in Voice Performance from Carnegie Mellon University in 2009 and a Master's in Vocal Performance from the University of Cincinnati’s College-Conservatory of Music in 2011. While at CCM, she sang the role of Blanche de la Force in its main stage production of Dialogues of the Carmelites by Poulenc. Danielle has since performed with many companies, including Opera Saratoga; Toledo Opera; the Queen City Chamber Opera, where she sang the roles of Bastienne in Mozart's Bastien und Bastienne and Mme. Silberklang in Der Schauspieldirektor in the company's very first production; and Opera Columbus, where she recently sung the role of Musetta in La bohème. Danielle will be joining Kentucky Opera as a Studio Artist for their 2013-2014 Season.

Adrienne Price, mezzo-soprano (Isabelle)
Adrienne completed her Master of Music in Performance and Pedagogy in 2011 and a Professional Performance Certificate in 2012 at Pennsylvania State University. Among the roles she performed at Penn State Opera Theater are Zita in Puccini’s Gianni Schicchi, Mother in Menotti’s Amahl and the Night Visitors, Hänsel in Humperdinck’s Hänsel und Gretel and Nero in Monteverdi’s L’incoronazione di Poppea. She was also a soloist in its 2011 production of Verdi’s Requiem and has performed in the chorus with Chicago Lyric Opera and Lakeland, FL Opera Theatre. In 2012 Adrienne won first place at the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) Easter Region Competition, singing “Cruda sorte” from Rossini’s L’italiana in Algeri.

Ryan Connelly, tenor (Lenny)
Ryan has a Bachelor’s Degree in Vocal Performance from Temple University and in 2011 he completed a Master’s Degree in Voice Performance at the University of Cincinnati’s College-Conservatory of Music. He made his professional debut with Kentucky Opera in the role of Remendado in Bizet’s Carmen in 2011, where he also sang the roles of Don Basilio in Mozart’s The Marriage of Figaro and Njegus in Lehár’s The Merry Widow. In 2011 he also sang Florville in Rossini’s Il Signor Bruschini at the Spoleto Music Festival in Italy, and Bastien in Mozart’s Bastien und Bastienne and Vogelsang in Der Schauspieldirektor on a double bill at Cincinnati’s Queen City Chamber Opera. On the concert stage, Mr. Connelly has sung the Messiah with the Cincinnati Boychoir and Bach’s Weihnachts-Oratorium with the Bourbon Baroque in Louisville, Kentucky. Ryan will be joining Virginia Opera this fall as an Emerging Artist for their 2013-2014 season.

Brandon Coleman, Baritone (Mac)
(Information to be posted soon)
THE ITALIAN GIRL

Adapted from *L’italiana in Algeri* by Jennifer Cresswell

Setting
A Present-Day High School in the American Midwest

Characters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Voice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Isabella, an exchange student from Italy</td>
<td>Mezzo-soprano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mac, a football star who wants to be prom king</td>
<td>Bass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vera, Mac’s long-time girlfriend</td>
<td>Soprano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lenny, a friend of Mac who plays in the marching band</td>
<td>Tenor</td>
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Plot Summary

**Scene 1 (in the hall)**

Three days before the senior prom, Mac has decided to leave his girlfriend, Vera. She is crying and she is angry: Is there someone else? Mac hears her crying and complains that she is too loud and always thinking just of herself. He says: “We’re through. It’s over.” Mac’s friend, Lenny, tells him he is crazy to be leaving Vera. Mac boasts that he will be prom king once he is free to find the “perfect date.” Maybe she will be the new student who has just arrived from Italy. Vera, Mac and Lenny all lament that they must find a date for the prom or they will be all alone.

**Scene 2 (in the boys’ locker room)**

Lenny remembers a girl that he used to chat with on Facebook, with whom he shared all his hopes and dreams, and who understood everything about him. He has never met her, but keeps her in his heart. Mac arrives and makes fun of Lenny’s dreaming. Mac suggests that Lenny help him out by asking Vera to the prom. After all, Vera and Lenny have a lot in common: they both love music and they both love Mac! Lenny is shocked and tells Mac that he can’t play games like that with his friends.

**Scene 3 (in the hall)**

Isabella, the new exchange student from Italy, is excited to be in America, but also homesick. She wonders if she will meet her American Facebook friend, Lenny. Will he remember her? What will she say to him if she does meet him? Maybe she will find love when she finds him. Mac sneaks in and hears Isabella as she sings of finding love. She notices him and says hello. Mac, suddenly very awkward, just stands there while she smiles and walks away. In his aria, Mac, sings of Isabella’s beauty and charm: what a great prom queen she would be. They would make the “perfect couple.” Isabella hears Mac and asks him what his name is. Mac, once more struck silent, runs off. Isabella, puzzled by his awkwardness, wonders how Mac can think that he is charming or amusing.

Vera and Lenny join Isabella. Lenny consoles Vera by telling her that Mac is acting like a jerk. Isabella asks them if Mac is the silly one who keeps going on about being prom king. Vera bursts into tears, saying that she still loves Mac. Lenny and Isabella discover that they were Facebook friends and now have found each other in person. They sing the trio: Can you believe that guy, Mac? Who does he think he is? We’ll teach him a lesson he’ll never forget!”
**Scene 4: (in the lunch room)**
Lenny tells Mac that Isabella wants Mac to save a seat for her, as she thinks he is cute. Mac is thrilled and thinks up the following plot: Mac will sneeze at one point after she arrives, cueing Lenny to leave so that Mac can ask Isabella to the prom. Mac invites Isabella to sit beside him and then proceeds to tell her what a cool guy he is, the coolest guy in the school. Isabella does not understand the word, cool. Mac starts to sneeze. Lenny just keeps saying: Bless you! They all three sing together, but with different words:

- **Isabella:** I must teach this guy a lesson. He must learn what it is to be a true friend. He is used to always winning. What a lesson he will learn.
- **Mac:** Isabella is so beautiful. We’ll be the perfect couple at the prom. We’ll look perfect together. Why is Lenny not leaving when I sneeze?
- **Lenny:** My heart belongs to Isabella. What a lesson he (Mac) will learn.

**Scene 6: The Lesson (in the hall the next day)**
Lenny alerts Mac to Isabella’s confusion at lunch the day before. She thinks Mac does not like her. What Mac needs to do is what boys in Italy do when they meet a girl they like: they speak to her in a very high voice, like a little girl. It’s called “Pappataci.” Mac, while a bit doubtful at first, agrees to try it out if it is the key to winning the girl of his dreams. The famous Pappataci quartet begins, with different words being sung by each person:

- **Mac:** Once I get better at this Pappataci, Isabella will not be able to resist me.
- **Isabella:** Bravo to Mac for his Pappataci; Bravo to Lenny for carrying off the trick on Mac.
- **Isabella and Vera:** Mac is learning how it feels to be foolish. The tables have turned.
- **Lenny:** Have I done the right thing in setting Mac up? It is all harmless fun and he deserves it.

When Mac realizes that he has been tricked, he accuses Lenny of not being his friend. Lenny, Vera and Isabella all agree that Mac is learning just now what it really means to be a friend.

Isabella tells Mac that Lenny is the only one she would ever go to the prom with, but there is someone else who would really love to be Mac’s date. Mac is worried that he has looked really foolish with the Pappataci. Isabella suggests that Mac only need to apologize to Vera. In fact, they all need to apologize. Mac asks Vera to the prom. They have all found their perfect prom dates. Everyone is a King and Queen of the prom.
About the Composer

Gioachino Rossini (1792-1868) was born on February 29, 1792 in Pesaro, a small port on the east coast of Italy that was then a part of the Papal States. During his youth, Rossini witnessed the turmoil of a changing Europe—the French Revolution was in progress, King Louis XVI was sent to the guillotine, and Napoleon Bonaparte commanded the French army in Italy. The little town of Pesaro was governed by changing foreign powers. While his musician parents were away performing, the little boy Rossini was left in the care of his grandmother. Rossini began academic and musical training in Bologna, and by 18 made his professional debut as an opera composer. Within three years, Rossini designated himself a maestro di cartello, a composer whose name alone guarantees an audience. During 1813, Rossini oversaw the staging of Il Signor Bruschino, Tancredi, and L'italiana in Algeri (The Italian Girl in Algiers) in Venice, plus Aureliano in Palmire in Milan. The first of Rossini's operas to hold a firm place in the repertory, L'italiana was based on the popular legend of Roxelane, slave girl of Suleiman the Magnificent, and appealed to the prevailing taste for things oriental. With successive triumphs, Il barbiere di Siviglia (The Barber of Seville) and La Cenerentola (Cinderella), “Rossini fever” took the continent by storm. By the time he visited Paris, Vienna, and London, he was probably the most famous man of the age.

Rossini took only 27 days to compose The Italian Girl in Algeria, which was first performed in Venice on May 22, 1813. In fact, he composed his music effortlessly and was known to have said: “Give me a laundry-list and I'll set it to music.” He had composed 21 operas by his 21st birthday! However, in 1829, at the age of 37, Rossini stopped composing operas and retired. There are several explanations given for his early retirement: his health; the death of his mother; or his belief that his type of opera was not going to be popular in the coming years.

Discussion Questions: In 18th century Italy, there were music celebrities, such as the composer Gioachino Rossini, who drew audiences just by their name alone.

1. Who do you think would be considered a Maestro di Cartello* today?
2. What performers would cause people to go immediately to the web, or stand in line at the theater, to purchase tickets?
3. For whom would you stand in line?
4. Have you ever been to a live musical performance that was sold out? Who was the artist or what was being performed?

*Maestro: an Italian term that indicates high respect for a master musician such as a composer, a performer, a conductor, music director or a music teacher.
Cartello (definition): an Italian term that can mean poster, signboard or a placard used for advertising.
Maestro di cartello: The two words together refer to a master musician whose name on a poster advertising a performance would guarantee a full house, with all seats in the theater sold very quickly.
Opera Buffa or Comic Opera

The Italian Girl is a perfect example of opera buffa, an Italian term used to describe comic operas written in Italy throughout the 18th and into the 19th centuries. Opera buffa was made for and depicted real people in real situations (rather than kings and queens and members of the nobility). Characters in the story were types that had originated in commedia dell’arte, a type of theater that originated in 16th century Italy. Examples of such types are: the self-important fool or buffoon, the beautiful, smart woman, and the handsome, sincere young man.

Rossini was truly a master of opera buffa. The humor in his comic operas comes not only from the libretto (the story or plot). He also planned hilarity in his music. For example, in The Italian Girl, characters laugh, and even sneeze, to music! Another characteristic of opera buffa is the use of humorous patter songs* sung at a very fast tempo, with each syllable corresponding to one note. The vocal artist must be capable of clear enunciation so that the audience can understand the fast-paced words. What is the effect of patter passages sung breathtakingly fast and precisely articulated? It’s all about rhythm, beats and comic timing. It’s very funny.

Discussion Questions (after the performance):

1. What kind of person is Mac? Isabella? Lenny? Vera?

2. What problem or dilemma does Lenny face? How does he solve it? Does he have help?

3. Do any of the characters in the The Italian Girl change? How do they change and what caused the change?

4. Who sings a patter song during the opera? Could you understand all the words?

5. What made you laugh when you were watching The Italian Girl?

*Famous patter songs:
“Figaro, Figaro, Figaro” in Rossini’s opera, The Barber of Seville

“I am the very model of a modern major general” in Gilbert & Sullivan’s operetta, The Pirates of Penzance
About Opera

What is Opera?
Opera is drama or comedy told in music through powerful, unamplified voices. Opera combines all the art forms—vocal and instrumental music, theater, drama, visual art and often dance—into one complete theatrical experience. When successfully produced, an opera’s directing, singing, acting, stage setting, lighting, conducting and orchestral playing will create an unforgettable spectacle that can move audiences to tears or elation—or both.

The Basic Elements of Opera

Singing Is The Primary Method Of Expression.
The most important aspect of opera to understand is that opera is a dramatic presentation that is sung instead of spoken. The characters express their thoughts and feeling in song rather than speech. However, because it takes longer to sing something than to say it, the action may sometimes seem more drawn out than in a play.

Opera Combines Many Different Art Forms.
The excitement of opera comes from its use of multiple art forms. Opera combines singing, acting, orchestral music, poetry, dance, mime, scenery, costumes and lighting in a unique art form all its own. In fact, the word "opera" is an Italian word derived from the Latin word "opus," which means work (as in work of art).

An Opera Tells A Story.
An opera is performed on a stage with scenery, props and lighting. As in a play, the characters wear costumes, make-up and wigs. However, in opera the characters sing rather than speak their lines, which are accompanied by piano, small ensemble or full orchestra. Opera stories come from many different sources: mythology, the Bible, fairy tales, literary classics and history. Operas may be about mythological gods, historical heroes, royalty, or ordinary people from the past or present. The words sung in an opera are written down in a libretto (Italian for "little book"). The libretto is sometimes sung in a language other than English, depending on the nationality of the composer and librettist (the author of the libretto).

If the opera is sung in a foreign language, the libretto is usually translated into English. A synopsis, which is a summary of what happens in the story, may be read before attending an opera. The libretto and synopsis of most well known operas can be found in libraries; recordings on cassette and compact disk are also available. A synopsis is usually provided in the printed program at a live performance; English translations of the libretto are often projected on a screen over the stage so that the audience can easily follow the story.

The Music In An Opera Reflects The Mood And Events In The Story.
The combination of vocal and orchestral music to tell a story creates an art form and an impact very different from that of a play. The addition of music to telling a story tends to
greatly increase the emotional intensity of events. Even if you cannot understand the words being sung, the music provides many clues. It reflects a character's feelings; it hints at a turn in the plot; it may even describe an event (a storm, for example). If something sad or frightening is about to happen, you may hear a warning in the music before the action takes place.

**An Opera Is Structured Like A Play.**

Most operas begin with an overture, which is an introductory piece of instrumental music that often presents musical themes heard in the opera. As in a play, an opera is divided into one or more acts and various scenes that contain a mixture of arias (one singer), duets (two singers), ensembles (more than two singers, such as trios, quartets, etc.), scenes with a chorus, and sung dialogue called recitative.

**The Creative Team**

Many people work together to create an opera production. Members of the creative team include the singers, the conductor, the stage director, and the designers (sets, lighting, costumes, wig and make-up). These careers are available to everyone, and often involve many years of study and hard work to master.

**The Conductor**

Few people realize that the conductor determines and directs the performance that the public hears. The conductor communicates information about the music and the timing of the show to the singers on the stage and to the orchestra through the gestures he makes, often using a baton. The conductor is usually referred to as “Maestro” or “Maestra.” The conductor trains for his/her work just like the singers. They must be able to play the piano and must have a broad knowledge of singing, the orchestra, and music in general. The orchestral score, with approximately twenty staves (individual lines) of music, must be studied and mastered long before rehearsals even begin. The conductor uses the music as a guide as he or she coaches the singers and the orchestra toward a great performance.

**The Stage Director**

An operatic stage director faces all the challenges of a theatrical stage director, plus a few special operatic concerns. The opera must be staged to obtain the greatest emotional effect by moving the singers about with a natural flow that enhances the meaning of the story without interfering with the music. The composer has built the framework within which the stage director must work. Entrances, duets, fights, exits, shipwrecks, and all other stage “business” must take place within a specified number of measures or beats. Action must be compressed or extended as written by the composer. Like a conductor, a stage director must be completely familiar with the musical score. He/She must know Italian, French, German, or whatever language is being sung, as well as have a working knowledge of everything and everyone both on stage and backstage.
The Process of Producing an Opera*

In the world of professional opera the singer has the part or role fully memorized before the first rehearsal. Singers are often hired to sing a role several years in advance. If the role is new to them they need to learn the notes and the language and they need to interpret the basic character on their own.

Voice teachers help to make the voice work technically correct and vocal coaches help with the language, style, and character development. Coaches also play the entire score on the piano so the arias and duets are learned in the context of the whole. Singers are always in the process of learning new roles so that they can work in many places, including other countries.

The design team is made up of a set designer, lighting designer, costume designer, and wig and make-up designer. Their job often begins years before the actual rehearsal process by choosing a look, a style, and a flow for the production. They then work with the opera company to build the sets and costumes.

The entire cast of an opera isn’t assembled until approximately three weeks before the opening night. The singers—who are chosen by audition—come from around the world and may not have met each other before the first rehearsal. The conductor leads them through the music with piano accompaniment, showing them his or her interpretation of tempo and phrasing. The stage director shows them where and when and how to move around the stage and how to interpret the drama. This collaboration of conductor and stage director brings to life the opera’s plot and music.

The opera is staged in a rehearsal room first. It moves to the theater’s stage just a few nights before opening. It is then that the orchestra is brought into the process, along with the technical aspects of theater such as lights, costumes, sets, and scenery. Technically and logistically, the opera usually comes together in just about five days.

*Compiled by Mrs. Alice Lemle, Music Specialist, Greenwood Elementary, Washington Local Schools, Toledo, OH

The Operatic Voice

A true (and brief) definition of the “operatic” voice is a difficult proposition. Many believe the voice is “born”, while others believe that the voice is “trained.” The truth lies somewhere in between. Voices that can fulfill the demands required by an opera have several things in common. First, a strong physical technique is needed to allow the singer to sustain long phrases through the control of both the inhalation and exhalation of breath. Second, the voice (regardless of its size) must maintain a resonance in both the head (mouth and sinuses) and the chest cavities. The Italian word, “squillo” (squeal) is used to describe the brilliant tone required to penetrate the full symphony orchestra that accompanies the singers. All voices are defined by an actual voice “type.”
Operatic Voice Types

Women:

Soprano: The highest female voice, similar to a flute in range and tone color. Usually plays the heroine in the opera since a high, bright sound can easily suggest youth and innocence.

Mezzo-Soprano: The middle-range female voice, similar to an oboe in range and tone color. Called an alto in choral arrangements, this voice can play a wide variety of characters including gypsies, mothers and even the part of a young man (trouser role).

Contralto: The lowest female voice, similar to an English horn in range and tone color. Usually plays unique roles including fortune-tellers, witches and older women. Not frequent in opera.

Men:

Tenor: The highest male voice, similar to a trumpet in range, tone color and acoustical “ring.” Usually plays the hero or the romantic lead in the opera.

Baritone: The middle-range male voice, similar to a French horn in tone color. Often plays the leader of mischief in comic opera or the villain in tragic opera, sometimes even the hero.

Bass: The lowest male voice, similar to a trombone or bassoon in tone color. Usually portrays old, wise men, or foolish, comic men.

The vocal parts overlap each other. The notes that are high for a baritone to sing are low for a tenor. The notes that are low for a baritone to sing are high for a bass. For this reason you may see a high range mezzo-soprano singing a soprano’s role or a low range baritone singing a bass’ role.

The following terms can be used to describe special characteristics in a vocal range:

Coloratura: a light, bright voice that has the ability to sing many notes quickly, usually with an extended upper range.

Lyric: A light to medium weight voice, often singing beautiful sweeping melodies.

Dramatic: Dark, heavy and powerful voice, capable of sustained and forceful singing.
WORD SEARCH

Refer to the information in this study guide. Words can be up, down, forward, backward, or diagonal.

Word Hints: Characters from The Italian Girl (4), the Creative Team (5), Operatic Voice Types (9)
CROSSWORD

Refer to the information in this study guide.

Across
5. A theatrical production incorporating vocal and instrumental music, acting, costumes, dance, poetry, scenery, and lighting.
7. The composer of *The Italian Girl*.
8. An opera is structured like this.
9. Dialogue that is sung rather than spoken.
10. A humorous genre of opera. (two words)
12. An instrumental introduction to an opera.

Down
1. A song performed by an ensemble of three singers.
2. A song performed by an ensemble of four singers.
3. An Italian term that indicates high respect for a master musician, such as a conductor.
6. The Italian term meaning “little book.” This is where the composer gets the words for his/her opera.
8. A song sung at a very fast tempo. (two words)
10. The Latin word for “work.”
11. A song performed by an ensemble of two singers.
PUZZLE ANSWER KEY

Word Search

The Italian Girl characters

Isabella
Mac
Vera
Lenny

The Creative Team

Conductor
Stage Director
Singers
Designers
Stage Manager

The Operatic Voice

Soprano
Mezzo Soprano
Contralto
Tenor
Baritone
Bass
Coloratura
Lyric
Dramatic

Crossword

Across
5. Opera
7. Rossini
8. Play
9. Recitative
10. Opera buffa
12. Overture
13. Singing

Down
1. Trio
2. Quartet
3. Maestro
4. Aria
6. Libretto
8. Patter song
10. Opus
11. Duet
Activities Matched to State of Ohio Benchmarks

Music

Historical, Social and Cultural Contexts
-K-4: Identify and respond to music of historical and cultural origins.
  • Activity: Attend performance of Opera on Wheels touring opera, *The Italian Girl*, sung in English and adapted to a modern-day setting, from Gioachino Rossini’s *L’italiana in Algeri*. The music is in the bel canto, opera buffa style, with stock characters based on the Italian commedia dell’arte.
-5-8: Identify composers and classify them according to historical periods.
  • Activity: Read about and describe what made Rossini’s comic operas so popular in his lifetime and up to today. During his time, the middle 1800’s, Rossini was the most popular composer in Italy.

Analyzing and Responding
-K-4: Discuss and evaluate group music performance.
  • Activity: Write a paragraph and draw pictures depicting favorite parts of the opera performance.
-5-8: Apply appropriate criteria to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of a music performance.
  • Activity: Write a review of the performance as if for a newspaper or for a recommendation to a friend. Mention specific reasons for liking the performance (e.g., artists sung with feeling and words were understandable; artists acted their parts well in terms of gestures, movement and relationship to other characters; artists sung well together in duets and other ensemble pieces; scenery, props and costumes created an effective setting for the opera).

Valuing Music and Aesthetic Reflection
K-8: Demonstrate audience behavior appropriate for the context and style of music performed.
  • Activity: Review audience behavior for an opera performance (applaud and yell bravo or brava after a part that is particularly moving) and demonstrate the behavior during the performance.
-K-4: Show how music communicates meaning of text, feelings or images.
  • Activity: Identify patter songs and the use of music to express sounds such as laughter or sneezes. Rossini uses those techniques for comical effect.
5-8: Justify one’s personal preference in music, using music vocabulary.
  • Activity: Review the opera’s music and subject matter and identify how it reinforces the emotional content of the story. Discuss students’ favorite music. How is it different from that of *The Italian Girl*? Compare the music of *The Italian Girl* to music in movies, musicals or other operas that students have seen.

Connections, Relationships and Applications
K-4: Identify and describe roles of musicians in various music settings.
  • Activity: Describe what the roles of musicians are in an opera: vocal artists who also must act the part of characters in the opera’s story and accompanists who range from the pianist in Opera on Wheels to a member of a full orchestra with conductor.
5-8: Demonstrate that subject matter of other disciplines is interrelated with that of music.
• Identify and describe the different art forms that opera includes: (1) stories drawn from literature and myth or created from current or historic events; and (2) visual arts as represented in the sets, costumes and lighting of an opera production.

• Identify various careers in music and select those of special interest. Opera, because it integrates a number of art forms, has many career opportunities: vocal artist; orchestra member; orchestra conductor; stage director and stage manager; rehearsal pianist; set designer and builder; costume designer; wig and make-up specialist; and those who manage the company that produces opera (e.g., executive director; artistic director; development or fundraising director, accountant, etc.).

**English/Language Arts**

Operas are often considered to be mainly about music. However, since operas are stories that are told in music, there is a natural connection between this art form and the subject area of English/Language Arts. The opera experience, with its combination of musical, dramatic and visual elements, can help students learn more about story structure, character development, emotions such as love and jealousy, and universal themes such as “power corrupts”, “love may require sacrifice” or “It’s what on the inside that counts.”

**Kindergarten**
**Reading Applications: Literary Text:**
- Identify characters and settings in a story.
- Retell or re-enact a story that has been heard.

**Writing Applications:**
- Dictate or write simple stories, using letters, words or pictures.

**First Grade**
**Reading Applications: Literary Text:**
- Identify characters, settings and events in a story.
- Retell beginning, middle and ending of a story, including its important events.

**Writing Applications:**
- Write responses to stories that include simple judgments about the text.
- Produce informal writings (e.g., messages, journals, notes) for various purposes.

**Grade Two**
**Reading Applications: Literary Text:**
- Describe characters and setting.
- Retell the plot of a story.
- Identify the theme of a text.

**Writing Applications:**
- Write responses to a story by comparing the story to other texts, or to people and events in students’ own lives.

**Grade Three**
**Reading Applications: Literary Text:**
- Describe methods author uses to influence readers’ (audience members’) feelings and attitudes. Refer to both the music and libretto (story or plot) of the opera.
-Identify stated and implied themes.

Writing Applications:
-Write responses to novels, stories and poems (or operas) that demonstrate an understanding of what happened in the opera and support judgments with specific references to events or musical passages in the opera.
-Produce informal writings in journals, for example.

Grade Four
Reading Applications: Literary Text:
-Describe the thoughts, words and interactions of characters.
-Identify the main incidents of a plot sequence, identifying the major conflict and its resolutions.
-Determine the theme and whether it is implied or stated directly.

Writing Applications:
-Write responses to novels, stories and poems (or operas) that include a simple interpretation of a literary (or opera) work and support judgments with specific references to the text (or the opera production) and to prior knowledge.
-PROduce informal writings in journals, for example.

Grade Five
Reading Applications: Literary Text:
-Explain how a character’s thoughts, words and actions reveal his or her motivations.
-Identify the main incidents of the plot sequence and explain how they influence future action.

Writing Applications:
-Write responses to novels, stories and poems (or operas), organize an interpretation around several clear ideas, and justify the interpretation through the use of examples from the opera production.
-Write formal and informal letters that follow letter format, include important information and demonstrate a sense of closure. For example, write a friend about the experience of seeing an opera, why it was so great, and how it was different from other entertainment experiences.
-PROduce informal writings in journals, for example.

Grade Six
Reading Applications: Literary Text:
-Identify the main and minor events of the plot, and explain how each incident gives rise to the next (is this really possible from an actual performance?).
-Distinguish how an author (opera composer or librettist) establishes mood and meaning through word choice, figurative language and syntax or music.

Writing Applications:
-Write response to novels, stories, poems and plays (or operas) that provide an interpretation, critique or reflection and support judgments with specific references to the opera production.
-Write persuasive essays that establish a clear position and include organized and relevant information to support ideas.
-PROduce informal writings in journals, for example.