



THE GRUMPIEST BOY IN THE WORLD

EDUCATION RESOURCE

Victorian Opera respectfully acknowledges the people of the Eastern Kulin Nations as the traditional owners of the land where we honour the continuation of the oldest music practice in the world. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

Sovereignty never ceded.

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INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

Welcome to Victorian Opera's Access All Areas: Livestream Program. This program is built around Victorian Opera's Education production of *The Grumpiest Boy in the World* and is designed for students from Foundation to Grade 6.

Over a series of four livestreamed workshops, you and your students will learn all about opera as an art form and many of the production elements required to stage a show, before watching a performance of *The Grumpiest Boy in the World*. This resource supports the four streamed workshops that comprise the program. It includes additional information on the content covered, as well as extra classroom activities to complete each week.

There are a few things you should do to prepare for some of the activities in the livestreamed workshops.

1. In Workshops 1-3, we will be learning how to sing a section of the chorus from the opera, so that we can sing it together with the orchestral accompaniment in Workshop 4. You'll find the sheet music for this chorus in Appendix A on page 32 of this resource, which you can use to get a head start on learning the music or to practise between each workshop.
2. In Workshop 3, we will meet the director who will teach us how to stage the action. During the workshop, they will ask students watching to get into groups of 3-4 and follow the directions given to guide them through a scene. Please have your students divided into their groups before the workshop begins so that when the activity starts, they can stand up and participate.

REPORTING TO OUR FUNDERS

Victorian Opera's Access All Areas: Livestream Program is generously supported by government grants, and philanthropic trusts and foundations. Through our agreement with these organisations, we are required to produce detailed analyses of our activities. Student and teacher feedback is invaluable for this program and helps inform future programming.

To support the work we do, we would be grateful if teachers can take a few minutes to complete a few questions following each workshop. The survey links can be found below and will be sent out via email.

Pre-Program Survey (available from Monday 1 May)

<https://culturecounts.cc/s/3Vd9wc>

Workshop 1 – Creating the world of *The Grumpiest Boy in the World* (available from Monday 29 May)

<https://culturecounts.cc/s/w48Ev>

Workshop 2 – Directing a scene (available from Monday 5 June) <https://culturecounts.cc/s/6umn7k>

Workshop 3 – What is opera? (available from Monday 12 June) <https://culturecounts.cc/s/4xiwaM>

Workshop 4 – The orchestra (available from Monday 19 June) <https://culturecounts.cc/s/2pMDkm>

We also ask teachers to complete a more detailed survey following the performance that concludes the program.

The survey link will be sent out via email and is also accessible here (available from Friday 23 June) <https://culturecounts.cc/s/6ajpZx>

It would be appreciated if all surveys can be completed by Friday 14 July (end of Week 1 Term 3)

If you have any questions related to the program, please don't hesitate to contact Victorian Opera's Education Manager, Tim Ryan on 03 9012 6659 or via email education@victorianopera.com.au

SYNOPSIS

After the orchestra has tuned and we have welcomed the conductor by clapping, the stage lights come on and we see Zachary at his craft table drawing. Zachary is bored with the real world and wants to create exciting worlds where he is King, where it is always lunchtime at school, where he can tame a lion. His mum puts his artwork on the fridge which disappoints Zachary as his greatest story ends up in the kitchen and goes nowhere else. He wants more from life he wants his work to be celebrated in the great art galleries around the world.

At school, we see his class getting ready for their class photo and Zachary complains about how all the other students get talked about except him. Next, two scientists appear to explain why Zachary's life is so ordinary. They go through the facts: he is aged 7 years and 4 months and lives in the 9th house on 10th street. In fact, he is so ordinary that his dreams are the same as all boys his age. He is very, extra ordinary. Zachary's Mum says being ordinary is very normal but reminds him that there are many different people out in the world. This inspires Zachary to return to his drawing to create a new and exciting world where he truly is extraordinary and the stage changes as Zachary's imagination comes to life.

First in this magical world of Zachary's we meet a giant. Zachary marvels at how different they are until the giant points out that they are wearing the 'same blue watch with the button on top'. This starts to upset Zachary as he wants to be different and doesn't want everyone to be so agreeable. As he calms down from his encounter with the giant, he meets a very hairy creature called Dot and she tells Zachary that everyone in this land has a beard! She sings very high and slides down low, she likes

Zachary. All is well until it becomes clear that their mum's say similar things. Zachary wants to be completely different and when the Teeny Weenies arrive, who are exactly like Zachary just smaller, it all becomes a bit too much.

Zachary climbs a hill to be by himself, until he meets two characters that appear completely different to him. The Sleepy Bird wakes from its snooze and tell Zachary about a dream where it was climbing a tree and then it saw a dog with a dinosaur head. The same dream that Zachary had. This makes him frustrated again. As he leaves the Sleepy Bird, he meets the Jelly Faced Squirrel Monkey, with roller-skate legs. He tells this character that he is angry to which the Jelly Faced Squirrel Monkey replies that they are too! Is Zachary ever to find someone that is not like him?

In his frustration he walks until he then finds a place with lots of people, which makes him wonder if this place will be different. This place is called Grumptown and Zachary finds that everyone is very grumpy and competes to be the grumpiest person. Zachary explains how he gets grumpy, and the town proclaims him the grumpiest boy. At the zoo, he finds a lion who roars, and together they walk through the streets waving. Zachary is happy that he has found something that makes him different and extraordinary – being the grumpiest.

When he returns home, he goes to his room and continues to draw.

CREATIVE TEAM

COMPOSER	Joseph Twist
LIBRETTIST	Finegan Kruckemeyer
CONDUCTOR	Richard Mills AM
DIRECTOR	Elizabeth Hill-Cooper
SET DESIGNER	Louisa Fitzgerald
COSTUME DESIGNER	Jodi Hope
LIGHTING DESIGNER	Peter Darby
WARDROBE SUPERVISOR	Mel Serjeant

TECHNICAL TEAM

HEAD OF PRODUCTION	Daniel Gosling
STAGE MANAGER	Stephanie Grima

ABOUT THE COMPOSER



Joseph Twist is one of Australia's finest composers, working across film music and concert music. His music crosses genres including ancient vocal music, opera, contemporary orchestral music, jazz, music theatre and cabaret.

Joseph Twist has received wide acclaim for his music for film and television including the successful animated series *Bluey*, as well as arrangements

and orchestrations for many major motion pictures produced in Hollywood.

In 2023, Victorian Opera presents a new production of his 2015 commissioned work *The Grumpiest Boy in the World* at Arts Centre Melbourne.

Victorian Opera's Content Producer, Evan Lawson, sat down with Joseph in the lead-up to this new family-friendly production. Read the article [here](#).



WORKSHOP 1

CREATING THE WORLD OF *THE GRUMPIEST BOY IN THE WORLD*



SET AND COSTUMES

An important element of any theatre production is the set and costumes because they help shape the world the story is based in and make it easier for audiences to engage with the performance.

For *The Grumpiest Boy in the World*, the Costume Designer is Jodi Hope and the Set Designer is Louisa Fitzgerald, here's what they had to say about their designs:

Jodi Hope

In *The Grumpiest Boy in the World* Zachary struggles to discover his place in the world, how he fits in and how he stands out. The costume design uses colour to contrast the ordinary, real-world characters in his life with the vibrant, fantasy characters he creates in his imagination. Through his journey, Zachary discovers that even when looking for difference he has things in common with the people he meets. The design reinforces that commonality visually through costume props like the Mini Zachary puppets and the Giants blue watch.

Louisa Fitzgerald

The Set Design for *The Grumpiest Boy* includes 3 different locations. The first is the kitchen of Zachary's family home which is boring and not very colourful. When Zachary imagines he has travelled to a mountain range, the black space around the kitchen is filled with huge paper mountains. The other imaginary location is Grumptown, which is filled with bright red and orange paper houses. The kitchen set never fully disappears to show that Zachary is only imagining these wonderful places. It is shaped a bit like an open book because I wanted the colourful scenery to spring up around Zachary, as if he's inside a giant pop-up book!

Explore Jodi and Louisa's designs below. What do you think of the use of colour and the shapes?



WHO'S WHO IN THE CREATIVE AND TECHNICAL TEAMS

There are two teams that are responsible for creating the world of an opera. The Creative Team develop the concept of the work, the design and manage the creation of the set, props and costumes. The Technical Team ensure rehearsals and performances run smoothly.

THE CREATIVE TEAM

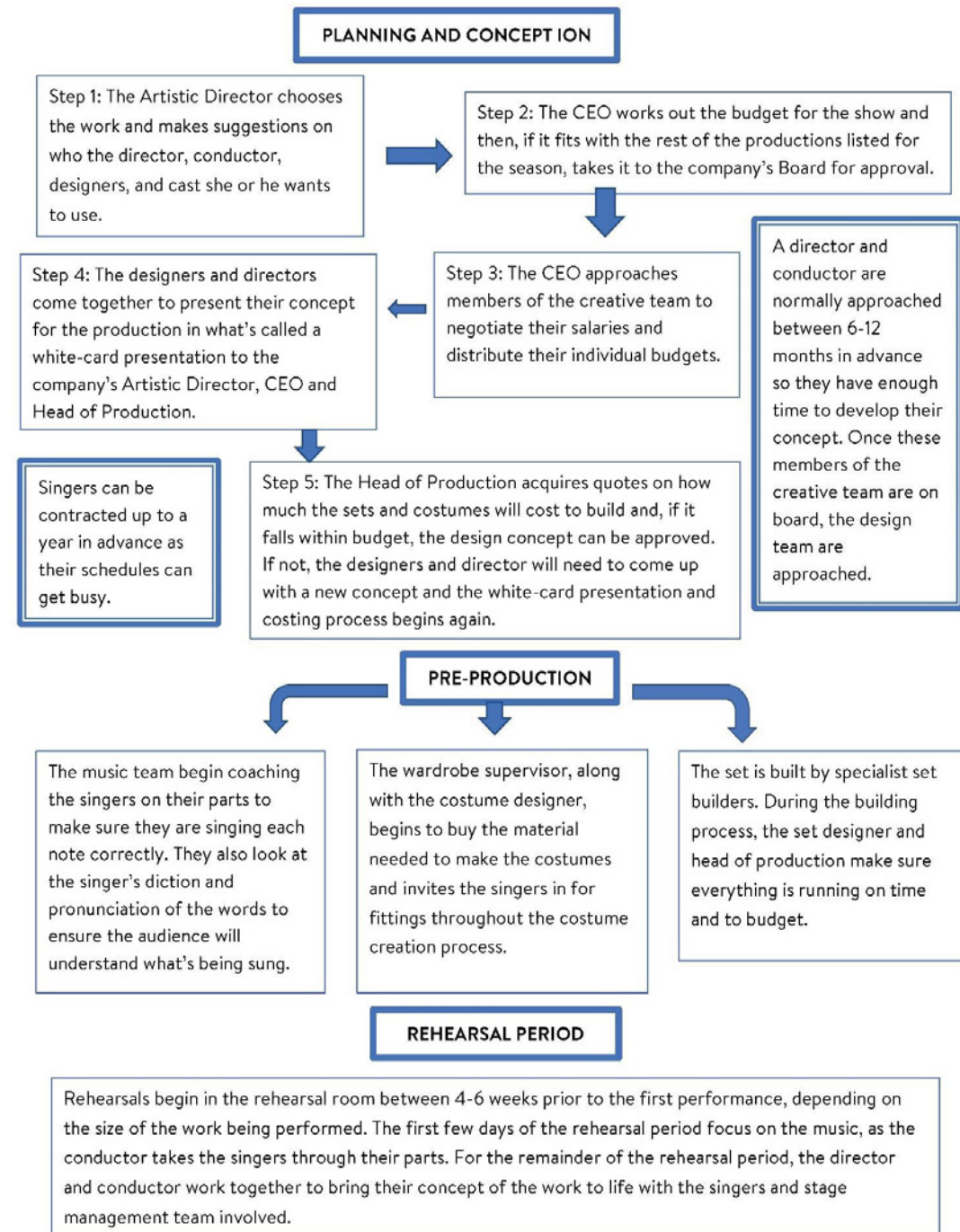
ROLE	ROLE DESCRIPTION
Director	Responsible for how the performers move around on the stage and interact with other performers. Their job is to make sure the story makes sense and is easy to understand for the audience
Conductor	Works in collaboration with the director to ensure that the important aspects of the music and text are made clear to the audience. They are also responsible for rehearsing the orchestra and making sure the sound is balanced so that the singers can be heard over the other instruments.
Set Designer	Works with the director to create the physical environment that the story takes place in. They need to consider where and when the story takes place and how to make this safe for the performers.
Costume Designer	Works with the director to create what the performers wear on stage throughout the performance. They need to consider where and when the story is taking place, and how a performer needs to move on stage.
Lighting Designer	Responsible for creating how the lighting creates atmosphere, mood and context for the action taking place on stage. The lighting design can completely alter the way an performance looks, regardless of the set and costume designs.
Wardrobe Supervisor	Oversees the costume department and works together with the designer to bring the costumes to life. They source fabrics to use when costumes need to be created, source hats, shoes and any other accessories, and oversee costume fittings throughout the creation process.

THE TECHNICAL TEAM

ROLE	ROLE DESCRIPTION
Head of Production and Production Manager	Is in charge of hiring and organising the casual staff needed to bump-in and bump-out the set, the stage management team, as well as the designers and wardrobe team. They also keep track of spending to make sure that all the above-mentioned elements are kept within budget.
Stage Managers	They work backstage and ensure that all the cast are on stage when they need to be, the props are kept in order and are also responsible for calling cues for when the lights, sounds and various set elements need to change throughout the show.
Mechanists	Their job is to put the set together before a performance and pull it apart once the performance season has ended. They can also work during a production if there are elaborate scene changes.

THE CREATION PROCESS

While audiences often see opera from the performance point of view, there is a lot that goes on in the background. This diagram outlines the step-by-step process from the planning and conception stage, through to the rehearsal period and time in the theatre.



WORKSHOP 1 – ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY ONE: SINGING PRACTICE

In Workshop 1, we begin learning to sing a section of a chorus from *The Grumpiest Boy in the World*. Practise singing the first section that we covered in the workshop together as a class from rehearsal mark A to rehearsal mark B.

The music can be found in Appendix A on page 32 of this resource.

ACTIVITY TWO: THE WORLD INSIDE ZACHARY'S IMAGINATION

Read Finegan Kruckmeyer's *The Grumpiest Boy in the World* together as a class. And then complete one of the following activities

DRAW OR PAINT

Using different colours draw or paint a picture of what you think Grumptown looks like. When you have finished explain your picture to the class.

BUILD A DIORAMA

Using an old shoe box, build a diorama of what you think Grumptown looks like. Get creative and use different materials.

Present your diorama and explain to the rest of the class the items that you used and why you used them.

ACTIVITY THREE: DRAW A CHARACTER'S COSTUME

Pick one of the characters listed below and design their costume. Use different colours and materials to create different textures. Explain your design to the rest of your class.

- Zachary
- Mum
- Dad
- Scientist #1
- Scientist #2
- Giant
- Dot
- Sleepy Bird
- Jelly Faced Squirrel Monkey
- Grump 1
- Grump 2

ACTIVITY FOUR: VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT WORKSHEET

In this workshop we have learnt about the different jobs that need to be done in order for a production to appear on the stage. Connect the roles below to the correct role description using different coloured pencils or textas.

ROLE	ROLE DESCRIPTION
Director	Responsible for creating how the lighting creates atmosphere, mood and context for the action taking place on stage. The lighting design can completely alter the way an performance looks, regardless of the set and costume designs.
Conductor	Oversees the costume department and works together with the designer to bring the costumes to life. They source fabrics to use when costumes need to be created, source hats, shoes and any other accessories, and oversee costume fittings throughout the creation process.
Set Designer	Works with the director to create the physical environment that the story takes place in. They need to consider where and when the story takes place and how to make this safe for the performers.
Costume Designer	Works with the director to create what the performers wear on stage throughout the performance. They need to consider where and when the story is taking place, and how a performer needs to move on stage.
Wardrobe Supervisor	Responsible for how the performers move around on the stage and interact with other performers. Their job is to make sure the story makes sense and is easy to understand for the audience
Lighting Designer	Is in charge of hiring and organising the casual staff needed to bump-in and bump-out the set, the stage management team, as well as the designers and wardrobe and make-up teams. They also keep track of spending to make sure that all the above-mentioned elements are kept within budget.
Head of Production or Production Manager	Their job is to put the set together before a performance and pull it apart once the performance season has ended. They can also work during a production if there are elaborate scene changes.
Stage Managers	They work backstage and ensure that all the cast are on stage when they need to be, the props are kept in order and are also responsible for calling cues for when the lights, sounds of various set elements need to change throughout the show.
Mechanists	Works in collaboration with the director to ensure that the important aspects of the music and text are made clear to the audience. They are also responsible for rehearsing the orchestra and making sure the sound is balanced so that the singers can be heard over the other instruments.

ACTIVITY FIVE: COLOURING IN WORKSHEET

Zachary is in the middle of this group of people, can you see is lightning bolt shirt?

Costume designer: Jodi Hope

Costume colourist: _____





WORKSHOP 2

WHAT IS OPERA?



WORKSHOP 2 – WHAT IS OPERA?

WHAT IS OPERA?

Opera, as a European art form, has been in existence since the 1600s and became especially popular in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Today there are many styles of opera performance, but they all have one thing in common – an opera is a play that is sung.

The predominant languages of opera are Italian, French, German and English.

The main difference between opera and music theatre is amplification: music theatre is usually amplified while opera is not. In addition, music theatre usually includes spoken dialogue as well as music and dance. Opera, on the other hand, uses recitative – a singing style designed to imitate natural speech.

WHERE DID OPERA COME FROM?

The origin of opera can be traced back to the Ancient Greeks who lived over 2,000 years ago. The advances in society that this sophisticated civilisation developed included the invention of a city-state (polis) resulting in a golden age of culture, music, art, poetry and drama, including beautiful sculpture, remarkable architecture and the creation of classical poetry, such as the Iliad and Odyssey of Homer. Ancient Greece had a profound influence on the discovery and advancement of science, physics, maths, astronomy and geometry, producing the influential philosophers Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and Cicero, who approached the big questions of life often in a genuine scientific way, daring to question and challenge traditional conventions and prejudices of their age. The Ancient Greeks also loved the theatre, with playwrights including Sophocles, Aeschylus and Euripides writing enduring works that informed the future dramatic structures of playwriting.

In the following thousand years, much of the knowledge and skills Ancient Greece had established was lost, particularly in the sciences and arts. For example, the art in what we refer to the Middle Ages had lost some of the scientific application that had made Greek art and sculpture so lifelike. From about the 1300s, Italian scholars set out to rediscover many of the Ancient Greeks' innovations. This period was called the Renaissance, which translates literally as 'rebirth'. Founded in Florence, it marked a period of enlightenment and the rediscovery and study of culture, philosophy, art, architecture and science. Highly influential artists such as Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Botticelli, Raphael and Donatello; philosophers; writers; and mathematicians including Galileo, Shakespeare, Erasmus and Copernicus contributed a wealth of knowledge during this era.

One art form the Renaissance scholars were particularly interested in was Greek theatre. The texts had survived time, but the performance practice indications had been lost. Scholars knew from writings by philosophers such as Aristotle and Plato that the plays were accompanied by music and this helped raise the emotional impact of the works. But how? What did the music do? How were the lines sung?

A group of thinkers and musicians from Florence called the Florentine Camerata, met regularly to determine how the musical accompaniment might have sounded and supported the text. They invented a new art form in which the dialogue in a play would be sung. They decided to call the new art form 'Opera', which simply meant 'a work'. The first truly successful opera was called *L'Orfeo*. It was composed by Claudio Monteverdi and is still performed today.

Following the great success of this work, opera became popular all over Europe and then the world. The style of opera and the way it was performed developed over the centuries to reflect the culture of the time. At its height in the 1800s, opera was performed regularly in theatres in every major city.

VOICE TYPES AND SINGING STYLES

There are seven voice types in opera, each of which is defined by the range of notes they can sing and their vocal quality.

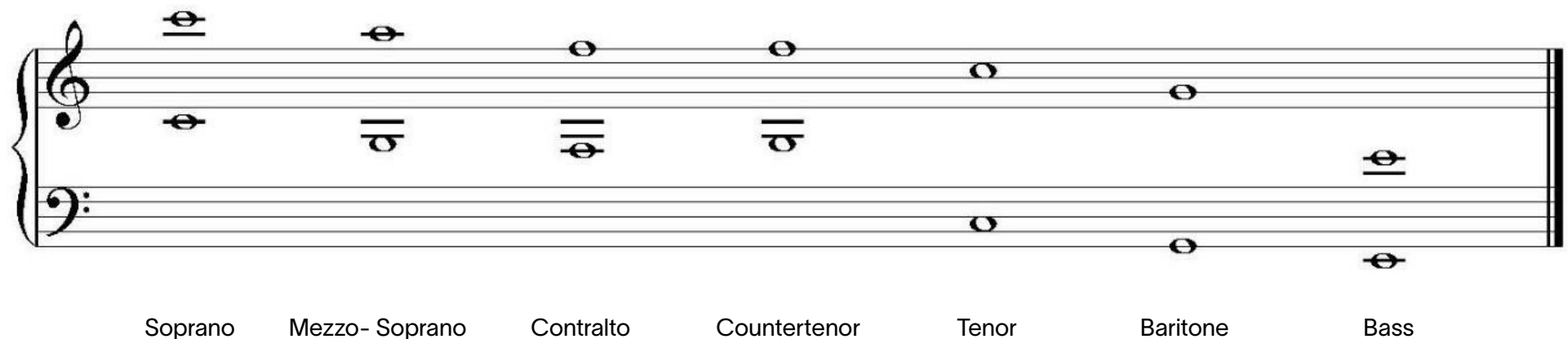
There are three female operatic voice types, although most operas only have soprano and mezzo-soprano roles.

- **Soprano** – the highest sounding female voice with a vocal range from middle C up to the C two octaves above.
- **Mezzo-Soprano** – slightly lower than the soprano with a vocal range from the G below middle C to the A two octaves above.
- **Contralto** – the lowest sounding female voice and rarely used in opera today. The vocal range for this voice type is from the F below middle C to a high F one octave above.

There are four male voice types, although the countertenor voice is mainly used in operas from the Baroque period (1600-1750).

- **Countertenor** – the highest sounding male voice with almost the same vocal range as a mezzosoprano; the G below middle C to a high F one octave above.
- **Tenor** – a high sounding male voice that usually takes the leading male role. The vocal range for this type is roughly from the C below middle C to the C above.
- **Baritone** – the middle sounding male voice with a vocal range from the second G below middle C up to the G above.
- **Bass** – the lowest sounding male voice which has a vocal range from the E above middle C to the E two octaves below; however, some bass singers can sing lower.

Below is a diagram that illustrates where each voice type sits on a music stave.



There are further categories of voice defining the kind of voice quality and the type of music they can sing. The composer will consider voice types to highlight the different characters – for example, to differentiate between a King and a Servant, or a Princess and a Witch.

A few of these are:

- **Coloratura** – a very high range with the ability to sing complicated parts with agility.
- **Dramatic** – a heavy sounding, powerful voice.
- **Lyric** – an average sized voice with the ability to sing long, beautiful phrases.
- **Heldentenor** – The 'heroic tenor', a very big role that requires a powerful sound.

Follow the links below to hear examples of what these voices sound like:

Classical female voices - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AIPFAww8X-U>

Classical male voices - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gRL7shs23Wc>

The voice types used in *The Grumpiest Boy in the World*, can be seen below

Zachary Briddling - Tenor

Mother – Mezzo Soprano

Father - Baritone

Scientist 1 - Soprano

Scientist 2 - Baritone

Giant - Bass

Dot - Soprano

Bird - Soprano

Jelly Faced Squirrel Monkey - Soprano

Grump 1 – Mezzo Soprano

Grump 2 - Baritone

COMPOSING FOR OPERA

When it comes to opera and music theatre, the composer is responsible for writing the music while the words are often written by a librettist (read more on page 5 of this resource). Although these parts are written individually, there is a lot of collaboration between the composer and librettist to bring the final version of the work together.

WORKSHOP 2 – ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY ONE: SINGING PRACTICE

In Workshops 1 and 2, we've been learning to sing a section of the chorus from *The Grumpiest Boy in the World*. Practise singing the first and second sections that we covered in the workshop together as a class from rehearsal mark A to rehearsal mark C.

The music can be found in Appendix A of this resource.

ACTIVITY TWO: CAN YOU PICK THE VOICE TYPE?

Play your students sections of the link below, as per the time indications provided alongside each voice type listed, and ask them to name the voice type they hear.

Information on the voice types listed below can be found on pages 17 and 18 of this resource.

Listen here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hLfvkwTnJVM>

Soprano: 1"31'-2"27'

Mezzo-Soprano: 4"54'-5"56

Countertenor: 4"28'-4"53'

Tenor: 3"28'-4"27'

Baritone: 0"56'-1"30'

Bass: 2"28-3"27

Helpful hint: Make sure your students can't see the video as it gives away the answers!

ACTIVITY THREE: COMPOSITION FUN

Ask your students to come up with a rhythmic pattern the length of a 4/4 bar.

Once everyone has prepared their rhythms, stand in a circle and ask everyone to clap their rhythm out one at a time. Start with the teacher and go clockwise. Try and complete this activity so there's no space between each person's rhythm.

If you'd like to hear it back, record the activity with an audio recorder and play it back to the class.

To make this activity more challenging, repeat it with a composed melodic pattern in place of the rhythmic pattern.

ACTIVITY FOUR: COMPREHENSION AND RESEARCH WORKSHEET

Working in pairs, read the section below about what opera is and then answer the questions. When you have completed the comprehension questions research what Chinese Opera is.

Opera, as a European art form, has been in existence since the 1600s and became especially popular in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Today there are many styles of opera performance, but they all have one thing in common – an opera is a play that is sung. The main languages that are sung in opera are Italian, French, German and English.

The main difference between opera and music theatre is amplification: music theatre is usually amplified while opera is not. In addition to singing, music theatre usually includes spoken dialogue and dance. Opera, on the other hand, uses recitative--a singing style designed to imitate natural speech.

1. When did European Opera begin to develop?

2. What is an opera?

3. What are the main languages that are sung in opera?

4. What is recitative?

5. List the 2 differences between Musical Theatre and Opera

Research

There is an even older form of opera called Chinese Opera. Continue working with your partner, go to https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_opera and find out when Opera began in China.

Colour is very important when design costumes and make-up in Chinese opera, from the same webpage, find out what the following colours represent in Chinese Opera.

- **Red** means
- **Black** means
- **White** means
- **Blue** means
- **Yellow** means
- **Purple** means
- **Green** means
- **Gold and silver** means

Which of the colours above would Zachary have in costume if *The Grumpiest Boy in the World* was performed as a Chinese Opera?



WORKSHOP 3

DIRECTING A SCENE



WORKSHOP 3 – DIRECTING A SCENE



ABOUT THE AUTHOR: FINEGAN KRUCKEMEYER

Finegan Kruckemeyer is an internationally renowned playwright with his plays being performed around the world and translated into different languages. Born in Ireland, he moved to Australia as a young child and learnt his theatre craft in South Australia before moving to Tasmania to be a writer of plays. He won the first Sidney Myer Creative Fellowship which is an important award for Australian Artists. *The Grumpiest Boy in the World* was originally a short story which later became a play and then, of course, this opera which you will be watching.

A MESSAGE FROM THE AUTHOR

It's always a wonderful thing to experience your words being brought to life onstage.

Before entering the rehearsal room, they sit there in printed form, polite and quiet and waiting – before that joyous moment when an actor lifts them off the page and breathes life into them. Suddenly that text is something to be shouted or whispered, to be passed quietly between friends or thrown across a theatre in anger. That transformation, from words scribbled down to words picked up, is a pleasure.

But there is another, even more magical, transformation that I've been able to experience from time to time – and this is to watch a line of dialogue being rolled around the wonderful, labyrinthine mind of a composer, to find it married with just the right notes and, finally, to hear it delivered (in all its operatic glory) by a masterful singer.

So it went with this project, as a story that began life as a play in England, now switches costume and reenters the theatre as an opera in Australia. Richard Mills and Elizabeth Hill-Cooper first sowed the seed with the prescience and bravery that comes with great artistic directorship. They invited me to embark on a new adventure, as partnered with brilliant composer Joe Twist (a name crying out to become a character in a future play!).

This team recognized the potential for a Grumpiest Boy spoken to become a Grumpiest Boy sung, and the musical world that Joe then crafted has an energy all its own – it is a score that, to this layman's ear, is playful and textured and very hard to be grumpy about at all. Jodi Hope's costume designs (literally) complete the picture, fantastical worlds made tangible, the peculiar now rendered wonderfully familiar.

This play's hero Zachary Briddling wishes to become something new and so sets himself off into an unknown wilderness, exciting and unnerving in equal measure. This story, it seems, wishes to do the same – it has journeyed across artforms, been awed by those encountered (thankfully opera singers in rehearsal rooms, as opposed to ogres in caves), and finally emerged all the better for it.

FINEGAN KRUCKEMEYER

STAGING THE ACTION

The Director of a production is responsible for organising the movement on stage and ensuring the performance makes sense to the audience. Before rehearsals begin, the director usually undertakes some research of the work and studies the libretto and music score to begin working on a concept of the world and story they want to present on stage. They collaborate heavily with the design team to establish a strong idea of what the set and costumes will look like and how the lighting will add to and highlight the overall story.

Over the course of the rehearsal period, the director works with the singers to stage the action in a process called 'blocking'. Through the blocking process, singers become familiar with their movements within the space before moving into the theatre to rehearse it all on stage.



INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTOR

What are some of the themes you're looking forward to exploring in this opera?

Essentially, this work is all about finding ones own personality. Being comfortable in your own skin and seeing the commonalities among all beings. I love the phrase "same, same but different".

Where does a lot of the story happen in this opera, and how will you make this clear to the audience?

This story starts and ends in the family home, then Zachary takes us on a journey of imagination. To show this we will use isolated areas of the stage to show the different locations and lean a lot on the Lighting Designer to define the space to show the various locations.

What is your favourite part of this opera?

It might be a little silly, but I really like all of it. It's such a fun story, it moves through the scenes really quickly. Zachary is a great character and so are all the creatures he conjures up. ALL OF IT!

WORKSHOP 3 – ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY ONE: SINGING PRACTICE

In Workshop 1, 2 and 3, we've been learning to sing a section of a chorus from *The Grumpiest Boy in the World*. Practise singing the sections that we covered in the workshops together as a class from rehearsal mark A to the end.

The music can be found in Appendix A on page 32 of this resource.

ACTIVITY TWO: VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT

Write out the definitions of the words listed below and then use them in a sentence. If you don't know what they mean, look them up in the dictionary.

- Playwright
- Novelist
- Critic
- Ordinary
- Extraordinary
- Extra Ordinary
- Internationally-renowned
- Aria
- Gesture
- Stage Blocking
- Facial Expressions

ACTIVITY THREE: RECREATE A SCENE

Working in groups of three to recreate a scene from *The Grumpiest Boy in the World*, the script for this activity is provided in Appendix B of this resource. Just say the lines, no need to sing them.

- 1) As a class, review the key points about directing a scene that Elizabeth spoke about in the workshop.
- 2) Then in your groups, read through the script.
- 3) Assign the three characters in the scene to different people in your group – Scientist 1, Scientist 2, and Zachary.
- 4) Work together to stage the scene thinking about your positions, movements, gestures, and facial expressions.
- 5) When it's ready, perform it to the rest of your classmates.

Remember to consider the key points about directing a scene that Elizabeth spoke about so that what you perform makes sense to the audience.

ACTIVITY FOUR: WRITE YOUR OWN ARIA WORKSHEET

An ARIA is a song that a main character would sing by themselves, or as a solo. It pauses the action of the story, or opera, and allows the character to express the emotions they are feeling at a certain point in the story.

VICTORIAN
OPERA

Today you are going to write the words for your own aria for Zachary, follow the instructions in the left-hand column and then write your answers in the right-hand column. Your answers to the instructions will be your aria for Zachary.

Choose one of the moments in the story when Zachary is feeling frustrated or grumpy.

1. Briefly outline what has happened in the story to make him feel this way (3 sentences)

2. Write one question or statement that sums up what Zachary is thinking or feeling at this point. (This is the main theme for your aria)

3. What does Zachary need to do to stop feeling this way? (2 sentences)

4. Rewrite your question from instruction 2.

Rewrite your answers in this column so that we can just see your work. This is your Aria for Zachary.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



WORKSHOP 4

THE ORCHESTRA



WORKSHOP 4 – THE ORCHESTRA

THE ORCHESTRA

The orchestra is one of the important elements of opera. Some operas can call for an orchestra of up to 100 musicians, while others only call for a smaller group, also known as a chamber orchestra. The orchestra for *The Grumpiest Boy in the World* is a chamber orchestra and is made up of nine musicians. Look at the table below to see what instruments are used and the instrument families they come from.

INSTRUMENT	INSTRUMENT FAMILY
2 Violins Viola Cello Double Bass	String family
Clarinet	Woodwind family
Trumpet	Brass family
Piano	Keyboard family
Glockenspiel Marimba Woodblock Triangle Tambourine Ratchet Car Horn Conga Bass Drum Snare Drum Suspended Cymbal Hi-Hat Cymbal (or Drum-Kit)	Percussion family

AT THE THEATRE

BUMPING IN THE SET

When the set is installed in either the rehearsal room or on the theatre stage, the process is called a 'bump-in'. Similarly, when the set is taken out of either of these venues, the process is called a 'bump-out'.

In the case of *The Grumpiest Boy in the World*, which is being performed in the Playhouse at Arts Centre Melbourne, the set will be bumped-in three days before the opera's first performance. Once the set and lighting are installed, the cast, creative team and orchestra rehearse the work to practise in the performance space, which usually differs quite a bit from the rehearsal space.

The rehearsal process inside the theatre usually follows the following order:

Piano technical rehearsal

This rehearsal is for the stage managers who have the chance to run through the opera to make sure all the technical cues and cast entrance and exit cues are correct. This rehearsal is accompanied by a piano.

Sitzprobe

The sitzprobe is, translated literally from the German language as 'sitting down rehearsal'. It is the first time the cast come together with the orchestra and sing through the opera without having to wear their costumes or perform any of their actions.

Piano dress rehearsal

The piano dress rehearsal is a dress rehearsal for all the cast and stage management crew to run through the production. The cast are dressed in their costumes and are accompanied by the piano.

Stage orchestral rehearsal

The stage orchestral rehearsal is the first time the cast and orchestra come together to rehearse the work on stage. The cast are usually in costume and will perform all their actions.

General rehearsal

The general rehearsal is the final run through of the opera before its first performance. The cast are dressed in their costumes with full hair and makeup and are accompanied by the orchestra. Sometimes a small audience attends this rehearsal, which gives the rehearsal more of a performance feel.

WORKSHOP 4 - ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY ONE: SINGING PRACTICE

Across the four workshops, we've learnt to sing a section of the chorus part from *The Grumpiest Boy in the World*. Keep practicing the excerpt so you can sing along with the cast members and orchestra during the performance.

The music can be found in Appendix A of this resource.

ACTIVITY TWO: LEARN THE SOUND OF THE INSTRUMENTS

Listen to the sound each of the instruments listed below using Melbourne Symphony Orchestra's Learn app. To access the app, visit <https://msolearn.com.au/>

Violin
Viola
Cello
Double Bass
Clarinet
Trumpet
Percussion

ACTIVITY THREE: NAME THE INSTRUMENT

Play each link listed below and ask your students to name the instrument.

Violin - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fS-8J5pa2AQ>

Viola - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0xtk_SPv7y0

Cello - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uUUBo-8_8Jo

Clarinet - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hnO9EML6wAs>

Trumpet - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mrly0aFIWq4>

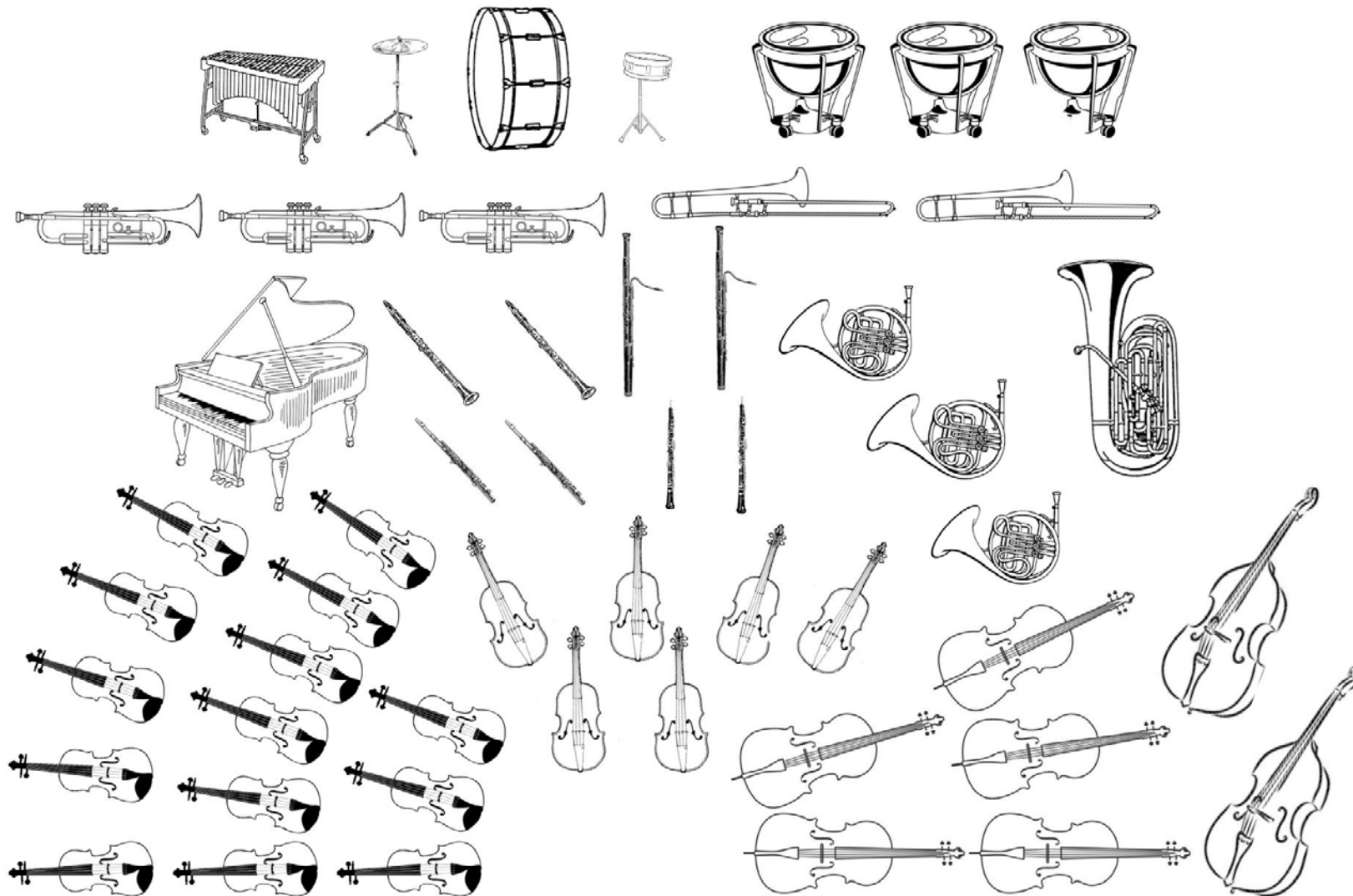
Percussion - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qD_TpWfbag8

ACTIVITY FOUR: WHAT DO THE INSTRUMENTS LOOK LIKE WORKSHEET

On page 27 of this resource is the list of instruments in the orchestra for *The Grumpiest Boy in the World*.

Find those instruments and circle them in the picture to the right, using a different coloured pencil for each instrument.

NB: Not all of them are in the picture.



APPENDIX A

Use the music provided in this appendix to practice each section of the chorus excerpt from *The Grumpiest Boy in the World* that you learn each week.

Voice

The Grumpiest Boy in the World

Libretto by
Finnegan Kruckmeyer

Final Chorus

Composed by
Joseph Twist

A $\text{♩} = 132$ 3

f

It is you Zach-a-ry Brid-dling! - who is in no way mid-dling! - You're the su-per-est thing! You're the

B $\text{♩} = 148$

King-i-est King You-re the su-per-est thing! You're the King-i-est Ki - - - ng Ah - - -

ff *mf*

C $\text{♩} = 132$

ff *f*

- - - - - Zach-a-ry Brid-dling! Zach-a-ry Brid-dling!

THE GIANT 3 **DOT** **EVERYONE** 3 3 3 3

You are the su-per-est King You're the grump-i-est King! You are the Grump-i-est e-ver! The grump-i-est grump in the world! *ff* in the

sfp *ff*

world!

The Grumpiest Boy in the World

Libretto by
Finnegan Kruckmeyer

Final Chorus

Composed by
Joseph Twist

$\text{♩} = 132$

A

f

It is you Zach-a-ry Brid - dling! - who is

mp

f

3

7

in no way mid - dling! - You're the su - per - est thing! You're the King - i - est King You-re the su-per-est thing! You're the

3

3

B

♩ = 148

12

King-i-est Ki - - - - - ng Ah -

ff *p* *ff* *mf*

3 3 3 3

18

- - - - -

mf *mp*

27 ♩ = 132

C

ff

f

f

Zach-a - ry Brid - dling! Zach-a - ry Brid - dling!

31

THE GIANT

DOT

EVERYONE

You are the su - per - est King You're the grump - i - est King! You are the Grump - i - est e - ver! The

36

grump-i-est grump in the world!

ff in the world!

sfz *sf*

APPENDIX B

Use the excerpt provided below from Victorian Opera's production of *The Grumpiest Boy in the World* to complete 'Activity four: Recreating a scene' after you watch Workshop 3.

Assign the characters to different people in your group and work together to stage the scene.
When it's ready, perform it to the rest of your classmates.

SCENE 3

SCIENTIST 1

The phenomenon of Zachary Briddling: aged eight years. And four months. And living in the ninth house. On 10th Street. With one mother and one father. Is a strange phenomenon. Because Zachary Briddling...

SCIENTIST 2

Is awf'ly middling. Zachary's height, is the normal height, of a normal boy, of his normal age.

SCIENTIST 1

Zachary's hair, lies the way, of a normal boy's, on a normal day.

SCIENTIST 2

Zachary's dreams, are precisely the dreams, that all normal guys tend to dream.

ZACHARY

I'm climbing a tree. Now I'm falling, falling. Now there's a dog. But it's not a dog. It's half a dog, with a dinosaur head.

SCIENTIST 1 & 2

Half a dog with a dinosaur head.

Half a dog with a dinosaur head. Half a dog with a dinosaur head.

ZACHARY

It still barks though

SCIENTIST 2

Zachary Briddling, is impossibly possible. He has an av'rage ten fingers, a normal ten toes.

SCIENTIST 1

Normal cheeks and, betwixt, a normal nose. Normal feet placed inside his normal shoes. He's a lot more normal than me.

SCIENTIST 2

And a lot more normal than you. At first, he thought, he was, extr'ordin'ry.

SCENE 3

SCIENTIST 1 & 2

Ha-ha-ha-ha-ha-ha-ha-ha

But no. he is just EXTRA

ZACHARY

ORDINARY

SCIENTIST 1 & 2

He is VERY ORDINARY

ZACHARY

I wish they were kidding but Zachary Briddling

SCIENTIST 1

Is awf'lly, terribly

SCIENTIST 2

horribly, normally

SCIENTIST 1 & 2

oh so normally

SCIENTIST 1 & 2 + CHORUS

Zachary Briddling, Zachary Briddling, is awf'lly, terribly, terribly, horribly

ZACHARY, SCIENTIST 1 & 2

horribly normally oh so terribly, verily normally Middling

(Zachary launches into another fit of frustration)

ZACHARY

Ah. Ahhh. AHHHHHH

My normalness is killing me mother

GLOSSARY

Amplification – A process used to increase the volume of sound.

Aria – An elaborate composition for solo voice with instrumental accompaniment.

Arrangement – In music, a reconceptualization of a previously composed work.

Bar – Also called a measure. The section between two bar lines containing the number of beats as indicated by the time signature.

Baritone – The male voice between the tenor and bass.

Bass – The lowest male voice.

Baton – A white stick used by conductors to conduct with, allowing the conductor greater visibility.

Beat – The regular pulse of the music.

Blocking – Design and plan the movements of singers or actors on stage or on a film.

Caricature – A ludicrous take on something, usually with a satirical tone.

Choreographer – The person who designs and creates the movement of the performance, usually in dance form.

Chorus – In opera or music theatre this refers to a large body of singers.

Chorus master – The person responsible for the rehearsal and preparation of the chorus prior to production.

Composer – The person who writes the music.

Concertmaster – The lead violinist of the orchestra.

Conductor – The person who interprets and directs the orchestra or musical performance, coordinating the performers and keeping the time through the technique of hand movements.

Contralto – The lowest female voice.

Countertenor – The highest male voice.

Crescendo – Used as a marking in music to indicate a gradual increase of volume.

Designer – The person who designs the overall look of the production, including the sets, costumes, props and lighting.

Director – The person who controls the artistic and dramatic aspects of the production, realising the conceptual and interpretation of the work.

Dress rehearsal – Often the final rehearsal of all the component parts of the production in full costume.

Ensemble – A group of people that perform together.

Finale – The last movement in a work of several movements.

Harmony – The chordal structure of a musical composition in contrast to the linear structure, which supports the melody line.

Hero / Heroine – In its modern form, the hero/heroine is a protagonist character who fulfils a task and restores balance to the community. He/she is a born leader, whether they know it or not, as well as a real survivor who has faith in good. Others are willing to believe in this person and will follow them.

Key – The tonal centre around which a composition is based, usually indicated by a key signature.

Libretto – The text of an opera or music theatre work.

GLOSSARY

Mezzo-soprano – The second highest female voice.

Monologue – A long speech by one actor in a play or film.

Notes – The tones of definite pitch made by a musical instrument or human voice.

Opera – A staged drama set to music, comprised of vocal pieces with instrumental accompaniment and usually with orchestral overtures and interludes.

Orchestra – A large ensemble of instruments divided into four main sections: strings, woodwind, brass and percussion.

Orchestration – Utilisation of the instrumentation of an orchestra in the writing of a composition.

Overture – An instrumental composition intended as an introduction to an opera or other music theatre work.

Protagonist – The leading character or one of the major characters in a play, film or novel.

Pulse – The underlying beat of a piece of music.

Range – The range from the lowest to highest notes that are played or sung.

Recitative – A vocal (singing) style designed to imitate the natural inflections of speech, used in opera where dialogue might be used in other forms of music theatre.

Rehearsal – Where the performers and the creatives develop the production, shaping lines, songs, movements etc.

Rhythm – The regular and irregular pattern of notes of different length in the music.

Repetiteur – A pianist who works as an accompanist and vocal coach for opera.

Scale model box – A scale miniature of the set design made from foam core and card.

Score – The notation showing all the parts of a work, both instrumental and vocal.

Solo – A piece of music performed by a single performer either alone or with accompaniment.

Soprano – The highest female voice.

Sound Designer – The person who designs the additional sound used in a production.

Stage Manager – The person who manages the running of rehearsals and performances, managing all the components of the production during performance.

Staves – A set of five parallel lines on and between which musical notes are written to indicate its pitch. **Surtitles** – A translation of the words being sung on stage projected onto a screen above the stage.

Synopsis – A summary of the story.

Tempo – The speed of a composition.

Tenor – A high male voice.

Timbre – The quality or character of a musical sound or voice, distinct from its pitch and intensity.

Time signature – A notation used to specify how many beats in a bar and the note value equivalent to the beat.

Tone – The interval of a major second or a sound of definite pitch and duration.

Vocal range – The human voice falls into a range from the lowest to highest notes they can reach. The normal range is around two octaves and is traditionally broken into seven voice types, (from highest to lowest) soprano, mezzo-soprano, contralto, tenor, baritone and bass.

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