

CINCINNATI OPERA

OPERA

STORYBOOK HOUR



CINCINNATI OPERA

Bantam of the Opera

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THE STORY

Luigi the rooster may have been born on the farm, but he isn't like any other rooster there. While other roosters love to crow with the rising sun, Luigi loves to sing! One day, the farmer and his wife decide to head into town to see an opera. Luigi takes this chance to leave the farm behind and head to the city, where he makes his debut at the Cosmopolitan Opera Company as the first opera-singing rooster.

Story Comprehension

1. What kind of rooster is Luigi?
2. While the other roosters crow "cock-a-doodle-doo", Luigi sings a different tune. How do the other roosters react to this difference?
3. What is the title of Luigi's favorite opera aria? What opera is this song from?
4. What is the name of the opera company that the farmer and his wife go visit?
5. Why does Luigi not return home with the farmer and his wife?
6. What voice type is Luigi?
7. How does the opera company react when they hear Luigi sing?
8. What disguise does Luigi use to hide from tenor Enrico Baldini?
9. What happens to Enrico Baldini and his understudy on the night of the performance?
10. Where does Carlotta Tetrazzini suggest Luigi stand during the opera?
11. What happens when Luigi sings in front of the audience?

Opera Comprehension

Please refer to the previous study guides for definitions and help with the following sections.

What is Opera?

Answer the questions to refresh your opera knowledge.

1. What performance elements can be found in opera?
2. What is the definition of opera?
3. Do opera singers use microphones?
4. Where did opera begin?
5. What languages are operas written in?
6. What are the “subtitles” of opera called?
7. What are singers with leading roles in an opera called?
8. What are the background actors and singers in an opera called?
9. Who tells singers how to act and move on stage?
10. Who makes sure the orchestra and singers are working together?

Opera Terms

Complete the crossword using opera terms.

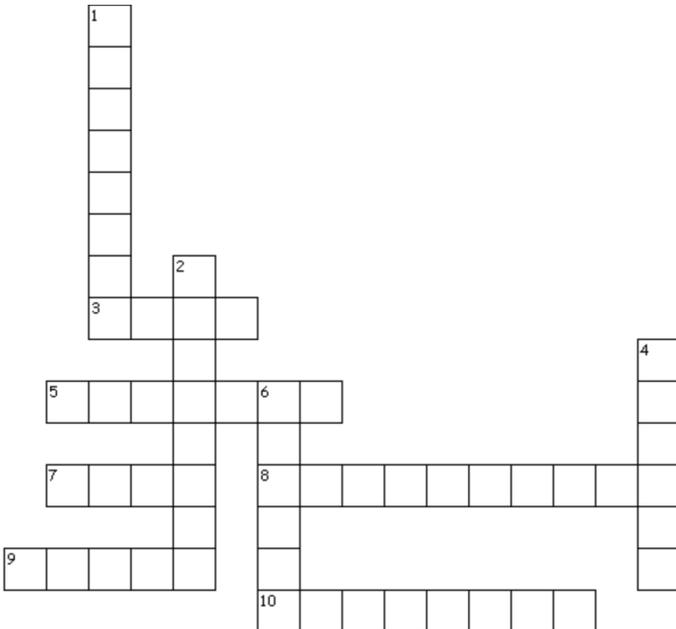
Terms: aria, bravo, coloratura, duet, encore, ensemble, finale, libretto, operetta, quartet

Across

3. a solo song in opera or operetta
5. a song sung by four singers or voices
7. a song sung by two singers
8. ornate vocal writing which demonstrates a singer's vocal agility
9. a compliment shouted by the audience to the performers following an exceptional performance
10. a piece of music to be performed by multiple musicians; also refers to the group performing such a piece

Down

1. usually a light comic opera, an orchestral prelude to the opera
2. the script of an opera; the words the characters sing
4. the final musical number in an opera, often involving multiple soloists and chorus
6. to repeat a given piece of music by popular demand



Operatic Voices

Do you recall the various operatic voice types? Match each voice type based on definition. Then fill in the blank with each story character's voice type.

Soprano	The lowest male voice
Mezzo-Soprano	The middle female voice
Alto/Contralto	The highest male voice
Tenor	The lowest female voice
Baritone	The highest female voice
Bass	The middle male voice

Luigi, the rooster _____

Enrico Baldini, the operatic male lead _____

Carlotta Tetrizzini, the operatic female lead _____

Romeo Manicotti, understudy (the person who fills in if the original lead is unable to perform) _____

The Aria

“La donna è mobile” is from the opera *Rigoletto* by Giuseppe Verdi. It is an Italian aria about a man in love with a woman who always changes her mind. Have you ever been “on the fence” about an issue? Perhaps it was about what color shirt to wear, or what to eat for lunch. Read the lyrics and then write a story about a character that is torn between two decisions.

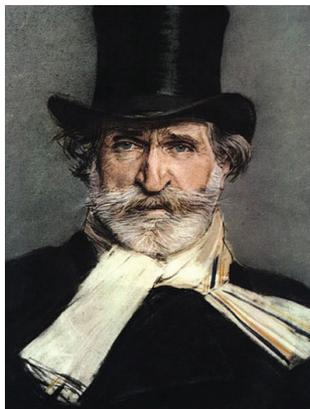
Lyrics and Translation

La donna é mobile

La donna è mobile	Woman is fickle
Qual piuma al vento,	Like a feather in the wind,
Muta d'accento — e di pensier.	She changes her voice — and her mind.
Sempre un amabile,	Always sweet,
Leggiadro viso,	Pretty face,
In pianto o in riso, — è menzognero.	In tears or in laughter, — she is always lying.
È sempre misero	Always miserable
Chi a lei s'affida,	Is he who trusts her,
Chi le confida — mal cauto il cuore!	He who confides in her—his unwary heart!
Pur mai non sentesi	Yet one never feels
Felice appieno	Fully happy
Chi su quel seno — non liba amore!	Who on that bosom—does not drink love!
La donna è mobile	Woman is fickle
Qual piuma al vento,	Like a feather in the wind,
Muta d'accento — e di pensier,	She changes her voice—and her mind,
E di pensier,	And her mind,
E di pensier!	And her mind!

About the Composer

The Composer, or the person who wrote the music, for *Rigoletto* was Giuseppe Verdi. This great composer was born in 1813 in a small Italian village. Here are some fun facts about him!



•**Modest Means:** Verdi was born into a poor family. However, he received a musical education from a wealthy neighbor. Verdi then went on to marry his music patron's daughter.

•**Tragedy Strikes:** Verdi's wife and his two children sadly passed after the production of his first few operas. In his state of grief, Verdi's next opera failed and he vowed never to compose again.

•**A Symbol of Independence:** Luckily, Verdi returned to composition after he received inspiration from a dream of a free and united Italy. His works eventually coming to symbolize Italian independence.

•**A Fierce Rivalry:** Giuseppe Verdi and German composer Richard Wagner were two of the most influential individuals in 19th-century opera. However, they both severely disliked one another, despite the fact that they never met!

•**From Rags to Riches:** Due to its contemporary nature, Verdi's *La Traviata* was a huge failure when it premiered. However, over time, it has come to be one of the most performed and beloved operas in the world.

•**Long Live Verdi:** At the end of his life, Verdi was a huge Italian icon. He suffered from a stroke and died shortly after. To this date, his funeral is the largest attended public assembly in Italy. Verdi is buried in Casa di Riposo per Musicisti, a rest home for retired musicians, which he established.

Create Your Own Disguise

Luigi isn't the only one who can dress in disguise! In order to hide from the human tenors of the opera house, Luigi dresses in a cape and hat. Follow the instructions below to create your own cape!

Materials:

- 1 & ½ yards of fabric
- 1 yard of ribbon
- Scissors



Steps:

1. Lay fabric out and fold one of the long ends over 1 inch
2. Use your scissors to cut snips in the fold, all along the long end of the cape
 - a. Cut snips 1 inch apart from one another
3. Open the fold, and weave ribbon in and out of the snips
4. Pull ribbons tight, so that the cape forms
5. Once the ribbon is through, use ribbons to tie cape around your neck



Color

