

CINCINNATI OPERA

OPERA

STORYBOOK HOUR



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Westward Ho, Carlotta!

by Candace Fleming

THE STORY

Carlotta Carusa is a world-famous opera singer with a voice that can perform miracles. One day, she grows tired of singing on stage. Instead, she wonders what it would be like to sing in the American West. On her journey to the west, she runs into various obstacles that she overcomes using her voice. However, she runs into even more trouble in the Dakota Territory when Skullneck Sam challenges her to a showdown.

Story Comprehension

1. How do the other singers react when Carlotta decides to move west?
2. What is the name of the city Carlotta will move to in North Dakota?
3. How does Carlotta pass time on the journey?
4. What is the name of Carlotta's stagecoach driver? How does he react to her singing?
5. What danger meets the group when the stagecoach wheel breaks? How does Carlotta resolve the issue?
6. What happens when the group arrives in Fort Laramie? How does Carlotta resolve the issue?
7. Why does Skullneck Sam want to have a showdown with Carlotta?
8. What happens to Skullneck Sam's gang members when they battle Carlotta?
9. What happens to Skullneck Sam when he battles Carlotta?
10. Who is declared the town sheriff after the showdown?

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?

Western Slang

The story features characters that use some colloquial terminology, or slang, native to the west. Can you interpret these western terms using more general vocabulary?

Example: Jumpin' jackrabbits is another way of saying Holy Cow or Oh My!

1. Dancin' dingoes

2. Yahoo!

3. Leapin' lizards

4. Madder than a bee-stung buffalo

5. Ripsnotin' rattlesnakes

6. This town ain't big enough for the both of us!

7. Tarnation

8. I'm as happy as a tick on a hound dog

Opera Terms

Complete the word scramble using opera terms.

WORD SEARCH

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

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

Operatic Voices

Complete the crossword using opera voice-types.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

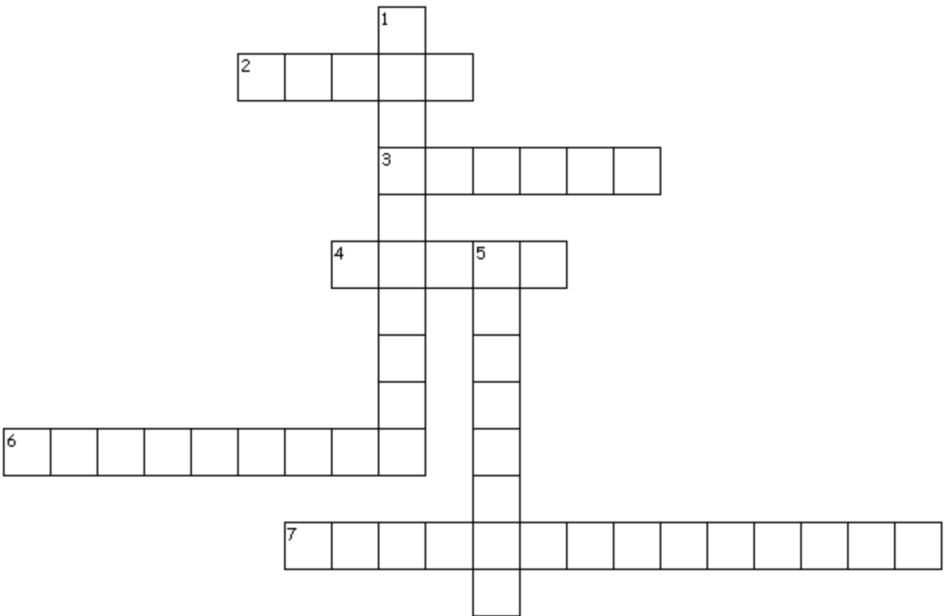
Terms: soprano, mezzo-soprano, alto, contralto, tenor, baritone, bass

Across

2. the lowest female voice
3. the highest male voice
4. the lowest voice
6. the middle male voice
7. the middle female voice

Down

1. another name for the lowest female voice
5. the highest female voice



The Aria

“Non disperar chi sa” is from the opera *Julius Caesar* by George Frederic Handel is an Italian aria about a woman who encourages someone not to worry about the little things in life. Did you notice how Carlotta’s confidence and calm demeanor got her out of many sticky situations? Do you recall a time when you had to keep calm? Perhaps you forgot your homework at home, and had to come up with a solution. Read the lyrics and then write a story about a character who is worry-free, and how it helps (or hurts) their situation.

Lyrics and Translation

Non disperar chi sa

Non disperar, chi sa?
se al regno non l'avrai,
avrai sorte in amor.
Mirando una beltà
in essa troverai
a consolar un cor.

Do not despair, who knows?
But that you will have the same luck
in reigning as you have in romance.
Gazing on your beauty
You find in it the way to
charm a heart.

About the Composer

The composer or the person who wrote the music of *Julius Caesar* was George Frederic Handel. This great Baroque (music composed from 1600 to 1750) composer was born in 1685 in Halle, Germany. Here are some fun facts about him!

A Secret Start: Handel showed musical talent very early on. However, his father, believing music wasn't a lucrative source of income, was against him studying the art, and forbid him from owning a musical instrument. Handel was forced to practice in secret while his parents slept.

The Surprise Talent: While traveling with his father, someone put Handel in front of an organ, and to everyone's surprise, he played it! After this, he received musical tutoring and mastered composition for the organ, violin, and oboe by ten years old.

A Self-Promoting Man: Through his skills, Handel was invited to perform operas in Italy. Seizing this opportunity, Handel introduced himself to many major Italian musicians, and began composing operas. At the end of his career, he would produce about 50 operas.

Musical Royalty: Handel eventually came to compose and perform music for the Kings and Queens of England, including King George I and Queen Anne. From there, he became the Master of the Orchestra at the Royal Academy of Music, and founded the first Italian opera company in London. He later became a British citizen, Anglicizing his name to George Frideric.

A Close Cut: George Handel had a fierce rivalry with fellow composer Johann Mattheson that resulted in the two of them dueling. Mattheson struck Handel in the chest with a sword, but it was luckily stopped by a button on Handel's jacket. Despite this fight, Handel and Mattheson were able to reconcile and become friends afterwards.

In Sickness and In Health: Being a highly sought after musician and composer came with a lot of health issues for Handel. Throughout his career, he suffered from stress-related anxiety and depression. He even suffered two strokes that left his fans wondering if he would ever compose music again. Yet despite the odds, Handel recovered quickly from the strokes and continued his musical work.

A Generous Death: Handel was known for being a very generous man. When he died at the age of 74 (a very generous age for the time period), he left all of his assets to his servants and charities.



Create Your Own Hat

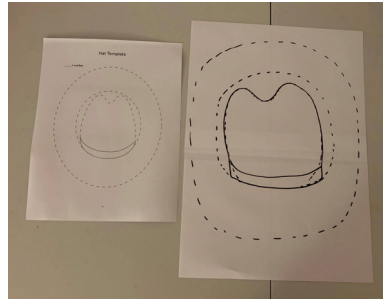
You can't travel to the American West without a cowboy hat!
Follow the instructions below to create your own cowboy (or girl) hat!

Materials:

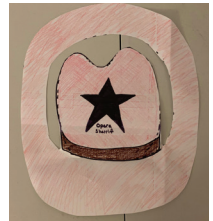
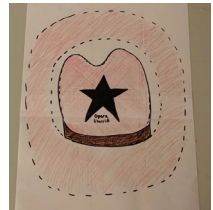
Pencil Scissors
Coloring tools Cardboard/paper

Steps:

1. Draw the hat template onto a piece of cardboard/paper. The outer set of dotted lines is the brim of the hat. The inner set of dotted lines will fit around your head. If you do not have a piece of cardboard/paper big enough, glue/tape two pieces of paper together to make a bigger size paper.
 - a. Hat Template (on following page)

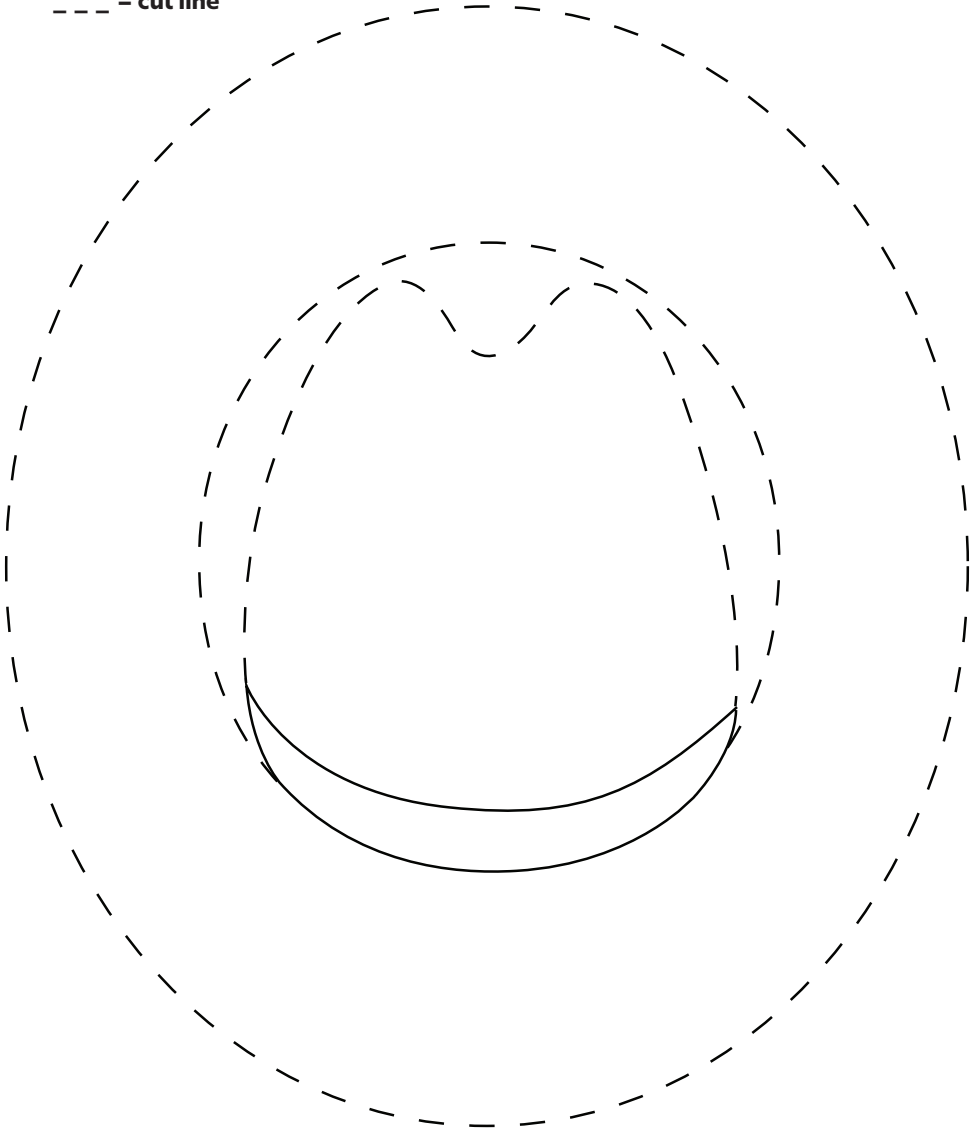


2. Decorate the hat however you like.
3. Cut the shape from the cardboard/paper. Tip: To easily cut the dotted lines inside of the hat, fold one side of the hat and make a snip. Then straighten the hat out again and cut from the snip.
4. Once everything is cut, pop out the middle of the hat by folding it against the brim.
5. Wear and enjoy!



Hat Template

--- = cut line



Color

