

OPERA
CAROLINA *presents*

The Barber of Seville



Music by Gioachino Rossini
Libretto by Cesare Sterbini



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Opera Carolina is proud to be a partner with the North Carolina Arts Council
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What is an opera?

An opera is drama set to music. There are singers on the stage and an orchestra in the orchestra pit accompanying them. Other dramatic elements found in an opera include sets, props, and costumes. In most operas the singers *sing* all of the words. Sometimes the singers may sound like they are talking but they are in fact singing the recitative. You will learn more about recitative in our production of *The Barber of Seville* and later in this performance guide.



Our Composer: Gioachino Rossini

Gioachino Rossini was born in Pesaro, Italy in 1792. Rossini loved to have fun when he was a young boy and often played practical jokes on people. Rossini's parents were very supportive and encouraged him to take music lessons. With his passion for music and good fun, many people believed that Rossini was prepared to be a great composer of comic operas.



The Barber of Seville

In 1816, Rossini was hired to write the opera, *The Barber of Seville*, which is based on a famous play. He had only 67 days to write the opera—and he did it!!

The premiere of *The Barber of Seville* was a disaster. One of the singers tripped and got a bloody nose, a cat wandered on the stage, and the audience booed and hissed with disapproval. However, the second performance was a triumph!

The Barber of Seville has become so popular that even cartoons, such as Woody Woodpecker and Bugs Bunny, use parts of the story and the music.

Did you know?

Rossini was born in to a family of musicians. His father played the trumpet and his mother was an opera singer!

Think about your skills. Do you share any of your talents with other family members?

General Opera Terms

Aria	a song in an opera that is sung by one person. The words and the music usually express a very strong feeling about something
Chorus	in opera, a group of singers who sing together; also a piece of music sung by such a group of singers
Ensemble	a song in an opera that is sung by more than one person: “duet”= two people; “trio”= three people; “quartet”= four people
Libretto	(Italian for “little book”) the text of words of an opera. The person who writes a libretto is called a “librettist”
Operetta	a play with both speaking and singing, sometimes called “comic opera”

The Barber of Seville Vocabulary

Suitor	a man who courts a woman
Court	to engage in social activities leading to marriage
Guardian	a person who cares for persons or property
Ward	a person who is under the protection or in the custody of another
Notary	someone who is legally empowered to witness signatures and certify a document's validity
Leech	a person who lives off another person; to attach oneself to another
Bribe	make illegal payments in exchange for favors or influence; payment made to a person in a position of trust to corrupt his judgment

Meet the Characters



Rosina—soprano

She is in the custody of Dr. Bartolo but falls in love with Count Almaviva.

Count Almaviva—tenor

He falls in love with Rosina when he first sees her in Madrid, Spain. He follows her to Seville, Spain but must be very clever to win her away from Dr. Bartolo.



Dr. Bartolo—baritone

He has taken Rosina as his ward because he wants to marry her for her money. He loses in the end.

Figaro—baritone

The *barber* is the factotum—the man who provides everything to everyone—in this story. Figaro knows all that happens in Seville and in Dr. Bartolo's house. He is critical to the outcome of our story.

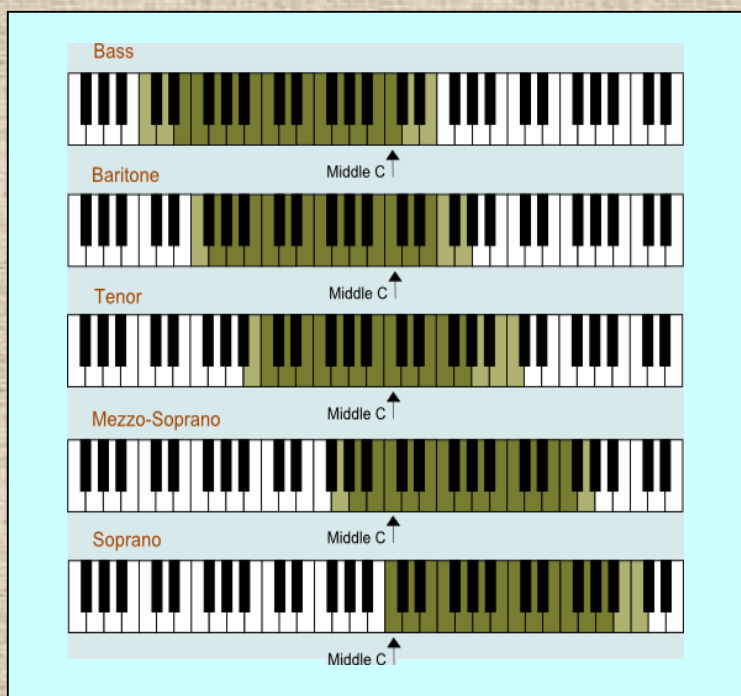


Don Basilio—bass

He is Rosina's music teacher and a friend to Dr. Bartolo. Don Basilio is loyal only to himself and can easily be bribed with money.

Berta—mezzo soprano

She is the servant and confidant of Rosina. She often provides insight into the actions of the characters.



Voice Types

Bass: Lowest male voice

Baritone: Middle male voice

Tenor: Highest male voice

Mezzo Soprano: Middle female voice

Soprano: Highest female voice

A Twisted Journey for Love

START

Our story starts with Figaro,
The Barber of Seville.

Count Almaviva tells
Figaro, that he saw Rosina in
Madrid, fell in love, and
followed her to Seville.



The Count, pretending to be
Lindoro, sings to Rosina
outside her balcony and she
falls in love with him.



Figaro then tells the
Count to disguise
himself as a soldier so
he will be allowed into
Dr. Bartolo's home,
where Rosina lives.

The Count
arrives at
Dr. Bartolo's
house
disguised as
a soldier.
The Count
passes a
note to
Rosina
explaining
that he is
actually
Lindoro.



Dr. Bartolo becomes suspicious and demands to see the note.

Secretly,
Rosina
exchanges
Lindoro's
letter for her
laundry list.
She then
gives her
list to
Dr. Bartolo.



Dr. Bartolo
realizes that he
will lose
Rosina if he
doesn't marry her
quickly. He tells
Don Basilio to
bring a notary
to marry them.

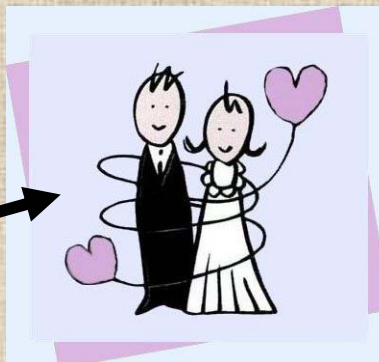
Dr. Bartolo convinces
Rosina that Lindoro
has deceived her—so
Rosina agrees to
marry Dr. Bartolo.



Count Almaviva, also
known as Lindoro
and the soldier,
arrives to reveal
his true identity
to Rosina.

While Dr. Bartolo is away, Count
Almaviva bribes Don Basilio to be
a witness to his marriage to
Rosina.

When Dr. Bartolo
returns, he realizes
that he has lost.



FINISH

Understanding Recitative

Recitative: a conversation set to music imitating natural speech. The recitative usually moves the story along and is sometimes called “sing-speak”.



Stage Directors & Recitative

The stage director tells the singers where to stand, how to move, and how to act. In the production of *The Barber of Seville*, the stage director works with the singers to determine which word or words in the recitative should be emphasized.

Pretend you are the stage director...

The dialogue below is taken from a scene where the Count and Dr. Bartolo have an argument.

Prior to this scene, the Count pretends to misunderstand the correct way to pronounce Dr. Bartolo's name. This is an insult to Dr. Bartolo and makes him very angry.

INSTRUCTIONS: Pretend you are the stage director and determine which words in the following lines of recitative are most important.

Dr. Bartolo: What the devil are you doing, what the devil are you doing?

The Count: Do be quiet, Doctor Dodo! If you think that I am leaving, you are very very wrong.

Dr. Bartolo: Won't you go?

The Count: I mean to stay here

Dr. Bartolo: I shall never let you stay, sir. Now be going on your way sir, or I'll have to throw you out!



What to listen for during the opera:

Largo al factotum is the famous aria sung by the Barber. You may know it from Bugs Bunny cartoons when you hear the words “Figaro, Figaro, Fi.....garo.” Listen for this famous tune at the very beginning of today’s performance.

A character in an opera sings an aria to tell the audience about some strong emotion he/she may feel like happiness or sadness. The first time we meet Rosina she is singing an aria about a “choice” she has made. What is she trying to choose?

An ensemble must consist of at least three people singing together. Near the end of the opera we hear Rosina, the Count, and Figaro trying to figure out an escape plan. They talk about being very quiet as they escape by a ladder. How do the singers use the music to make us believe that they will “leave softly?”

AUDIENCE ETIQUETTE

Students who make up a great audience will:

- sit quietly and not talk to those sitting beside them
- sit up straight in their seats and keep their feet on the floor
- clap or shout bravo (or brava) when they hear something that they like

Finishing up



Bravo: a word that is shouted to show approval when a male character does a great job.

Brava: a word that is shouted to show approval when a female character does a great job.

Barber on the Web

Want to know more about Rossini’s *The Barber of Seville*, check out these great websites:

- Search operacarolina.org for a detailed synopsis, recommended recordings, and more about Rossini.
- Search youtube.com to find the Bugs Bunny & Woody Woodpecker episodes that use *The Barber of Seville*
 - for Bugs Bunny, search ‘Rabbit of Seville’
 - for Woody the Woodpecker, search ‘Woodpecker, Barber of Seville’