

YOUR TICKET TO OPERA...

IL TROVATORE

(The Troubador)

A TALE OF TWO UNSUSPECTING BROTHERS DUKING IT OUT FOR THE GIRL OF THEIR DREAMS WITH A REVENGE-SEEKING GYPSY ON THEIR HEELS.

This is **YOUR** opera, **YOUR** stars, **YOUR** night.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Attending an opera in Belk Theater is an experience not to be forgotten. The performance you are attending is the final dress rehearsal in which the cast performs one last full run through of the opera before opening night. Just like a regular performance, there will be an intermission between acts.



Upon entering the theater, notice the production crew's station in the orchestra level seating (the lowest level of seating). The crew is set up with computers and headsets to allow them to communicate with people backstage to ensure that the performance runs smoothly. During this final rehearsal they will be making sure all cues and technical features of the performance are in place. Also notice the supertitles-English translations of the lyrics being sung-that are projected onto a screen above the stage.

Please remember that this is a working performance and the performers on stage are very aware of their audience, especially a distracting audience. The polite audience member should always refrain from talking and stay seated during a performance. Nothing shows more respect and appreciation for the performers on stage than giving them your full attention.

PLEASE DO...

- ...arrive early enough to visit the restrooms and find your seat before the orchestra begins the overture.*
- ...applaud after arias and at the performance's end: shout "Bravo!" for male performers, "Brava!" for females, and "Bravi!" for a group of performers.*
- ...remain quiet and attentive during the performance.*

DON'T FORGET...

- ...to turn off your cell phone and/or electronic devices.*
- ...to refrain from taking photos and videos during the performance.*
- ...to obey all ushers and theater personnel.*
- ...to leave any food, beverages, and gum outside of the theater.*

PARKING

Parking along uptown streets is non-metered after 6:00pm on weekdays. There are numerous lots available to park in for a flat-rate fee as well as a Lynx Lightrail Station in the uptown area. Click here to view more information about the Lynx Lightrail System. The PAC offers \$5 preferred parking passes as well. Click [here](#) to learn more.

THE FACES OF YOUR OPERA

The Librettist: Salvatore Cammarano

(1801-1852)



Before we introduce our librettist let's answer the big question: *what in the world is a libretto?* Answer: the text that is sung in an opera. So, just for the record, a librettist is a person who writes libretto, and it's two *libretti* (rather than librettos).

Now that we've taken care of the semantics, let's talk about Salvatore Cammarano... we'll call him Sal. Sal was born in Naples, Italy and was a pretty popular librettist and playwright, even considered to be a big deal by some. His most famous work was not for Verdi but for another opera composer, Gaetano Donizetti; for the Big Don he wrote the text to *Lucia di Lammermoor*. Sal wrote six other librettos for Donizetti before he started working with our composer, good ol' Giuseppe Verdi. He wrote three complete librettos for Verdi and was in the middle of his fourth-our featured *Il trovatore*-when he died in 1852 at age 51. The text for *Il trovatore* was completed by Leone Emanuele Badare.

Before he got involved in writing opera libretti, Sal directed at the San Carlo Theater in Naples, Italy. When he was 33 he decided to leave the genre of prose (non-metered and not rhyming bodies of poetry and writing) and jumped into opera. Sal also had a sweet spot for Shakespeare. When he died, he left behind a rough outline of his adaptation of Shakespeare's *King Lear*, never to be finished.

The Composer: Giuseppe Fortunino Francesco Verdi

(1813-1901)

What a name! He may have a long name but Giuseppe Verdi made that name known in the world of opera. Verdi was born in Busseto, Italy, and started studying music from the minute he knew what it was. By age 7 Verdi had his first *spinet* (similar to a piano), and was soon playing organ-no easy feat! By the time he was a teen he was even conducting orchestras. As you can see, we've got a talented guy on our hands.

Giuseppi moved on to a bigger city and better studies in Milan, and flip-flopped back in forth between Milan and home, directing and writing music, while he hunted for success. His first opera was nothing to write home about but it wasn't a failure either. It was his *Nabucco* just a few years later that put Verdi on the map. For the next ten years, called the "galley years" (1843-1853), our musical mastermind produced the bulk of his works, including *Il trovatore* at the tail end. And, like his librettist counterpart, Verdi fancied Shakespeare and other literary works as starting points for his works. After the last move to Milan he stayed there, composing until his death by stroke.



IL TROVATORE HISTORY: MORE THAN MEETS THE EAR



An advertisement for
Il trovatore.

Verdi wrote a whopping 28 operas and close to half of them are the bread and butter of opera literature to this day! In the 1850s our celebrity composer wrote his most popular three operas, often called the “popular trilogy”: these works are *Rigoletto* in 1851, *Il trovatore* in 1853, and *La traviata* also in 1853. This middle piece to the trilogy was premiered on January 19, 1853 at the Apollo Theatre in Rome. The opera was an instant sensation—if they had Facebook in those days there would have been tons of “likes”! *Trovatore*-mania spanned the globe—literally!—quickly and spinoffs in local theaters were a dime-a-dozen. There were over 200 performances of the opera in its first three years.

All this talk about Verdi and we haven’t given credit to the inspiration for the opera: a play. Good ol’ Giuseppi read Spaniard Antonio García Gutiérrez’s play *El trovador* and his imagination was off to the races. His librettist Cammarano tamed some of the composers ideas and the result was the highly popular and extremely successful opera we know today. After this great success, Verdi even turned another of Gutiérrez’s plays into an opera.

Did you know?

Early opera was born as Italian philosophers and artists attempted to revive the combination of poetry, music, and stage visuals that they believe characterized the theater of ancient Greece. They did not have a name for this new art-form—putting all the arts on stage at the same time—**so they called it "work"; and the Italian word for work is *opera***. A new multi-media art-form was born, rather like the birth of the movies in our own day.

SYNOPSIS

Leonora (soprano):

Our leading Lady, in love with our singing suitor

Azucena (mezzo-soprano):

Our angry, revenge-seeking gypsy-mother to our title serenader

Manrico (tenor):

Our melodious hero who is contending for Lady Leonora's love

Count di Luna (baritone):

The cruel, brother-seeking noble who's got the hots for Leonora

Ferrando (bass):

The Count's trouble-making captain

Before we jump into the story, let's get journey back to the 1400s (a.k.a. the 15th century)... we're in Spain during the days of Aragon. Just to the north in the mountains is a gypsy camp... the back story to the whole plot:

Apparently, a gypsy woman put a spell on the Papa Count's two sons so they burned her at the stake! Up came her daughter, Azucena, to avenge mama's death by throwing one of the sons, baby Garcia, on the fire and so began the quest.

The twist? You'll just have to keep reading to find out!

Act I: The Duel

Scene 1 (Count Luna II's palace)

Up goes the curtain and we are at the palace of Aliaferia, the home of Leonora. Count di Luna's soldiers are lazing about while Captain Ferrando tells the tale of the Luna family's bewitching history... And did we mention that the jealous Count (II, the surviving son) has the hots for Leonora but all she can talk about is her secret admirer?

Scene 2 (Nighttime, palace garden)

Lady Leo is on her balcony talking with her gal pal Inez. She 'fesses up about a mysterious knight she met and has fallen head over heels for but Inez doesn't buy it. She hadn't seen our stud since that first encounter except for the other night when he serenaded her! Inez suggests that nothing but trouble will come of this mystery man but suddenly we hear singing... Leonora rushes off to her secret serenader-sure it is her knight-and finds Count di Luna. She is in the Count's arms and up comes her troubadour. The bad boy Count challenges our troubadour to a duel and off they go.

Act II: The Gypsy

Scene 1 (A gypsy camp)

We find Azucena in the middle of the mountainous gypsy camp, recounting her story of mama's dismal death to her fellow gypsies and then again to her son, Manrico. She gives Manrico more details; she stole the Count's younger son so she could throw him into the fire but accidentally picked up her own son! This leads Manrico to have a mild identity crisis about who his mother really is; Azucena reassures him that she is his mother since she saved him and raised him.

Since it's storytime, Manrico tells Mama Azucena how he just dueled with Count di Luna and could have killed him but spared him because of some strange power. He is called off to duty.

Meanwhile, Leonora gets word that her Manny boy did not survive the duel and desperately vows to become a nun.

Scene 2 (The convent's courtyard)

Our Count arrives at the convent with his troop-the convent that just so happens to be in the same town that Manrico was called to-and plans to abduct our leading Lady. Out of the blue comes our singing knight in shining armor to rescue her from abduction! Leonora is overjoyed to find out her crush is still alive.

Act III: The Gypsy's Son

Scene 1 (a campsite outside the town)

We are now at Count di Luna's military camp when a suspicious character has been brought in to be questioned. Ferrando, remembering her face from an incident years ago-an incident that involved the death of the Counts brother and a gypsy witch-recognizes her as Azucena. When she realizes what troubles she is in she calls for Manrico's help. This not-so-smooth move gives the Count another reason to seek vengeance on her; she is dragged off to be locked up.

Scene 2 (the chapel's waiting room)

Leonora and Manrico are waiting at the chapel to get hitched. He is calming her fears about Count di Luna's revenge on Manrico when the troubadour gets word of his mama's lock up and the bonfire being built. Sound familiar? He leaves his Lady behind as he rushes off to rescue mommy dearest, Azucena.



Act IV: The Ordeal

Scene 1 (A prison room in castle Aliaferia)

We find Manrico locked up and Leonora contemplating saving him when Count di Luna shows up, along with his usual troop of goons, and orders Manrico and Azucena to the chopping block. Leonora is so upset by this that she offers the Count a deal: she'll go with the Count if he will spare her dear Manny's life. Of course, the Count falls for the offer but what he doesn't know is that the Lovely Leonora has poisoned herself.

Scene 2 (A prison cell)

Azucena and Manrico are resting in the same prison cell, reminiscing of their good ol' days in the mountains with the rest of the gypsies. Leonora enters with the good news that Manrico can flee the prison and troops but when he finds out how she made the deal he is repulsed! Well, the poison starts to do its deed to Leonora and Manrico changes his tune.

His beloved Leonora dies and the Count enters. When he realizes he was duped he orders that Manrico be executed immediately and drags Azucena to the window to watch her "son" die. Man, this Count is a serious guy! Just as Manrico dies Azucena gets the last laugh by informing the Count di Luna that he was his own brother!

Did you know?

Opera and musical theater are a hotly debated topic. There are many gray areas in each of these forms that overlap. Two unarguably different factors of opera and musical theater are: opera singers do not use amplification for their voices whereas musical theater singers do; and the vocal techniques used for singing in each genre are different-musical theater singers "belt" and opera singers use classical technique.

Another difference is that the majority of operas are completely sung and do not contain dialogue (except for some operettas) and musical theater uses dialogue with intermittent songs.

GOOD GUYS VS. BAD GUYS: YOUR PLOT



Step 1 Have students complete the Good Guys and the Bad Guys chart from familiar stories. Then have them determine the basic plot from these stories and write it down in the “What happened?” section. Have students share their basic plot to show that every complex story has a simple core.



Story Title	Good Guys	Bad Guys	What Happened?	Back Story
Star Wars				
Harry Potter				
Spider-Man				
Il Trovatore				

*Use characters: Luke Skywalker, Princess Leia, Darth Vader, Harry Potter, Lord Voldemort, Spider-Man, Green Goblin.

Step 2

Much like the familiar stories, more of the background unfolds as *Il Trovatore* progresses. For example, as *Star Wars* continues, Luke Skywalker finds out that Darth Vader is his father. This is oftentimes referred to as the “Back Story”: describes experiences and relationships in the lives of the characters prior to the present. Having a back story can change the feel of the story. Ask students what the back story is in *Spider-man* (when Spider-man finds out that the Green Goblin is really his best friend’s father.).

Complete the “Back Story” column in the Good Guys Vs. Bad Guys chart for the familiar stories, either individually or as a class.

Step 3

Divide the students into 4 groups. Give each group a synopsis of one act from the opera, making sure to emphasize Scene 2 from each act. (As these are the scenes with the most important information.) Have the students determine the simple plot core for their assigned act. They should be able to accomplish this task in one, possibly long, run-on sentence. Then have each group share with the class.

***Advanced Option:** Have students create a “freeze frame” scene for their act. Each student must take on a character and, using their one sentence, create a picture of what is occurring in this scene. Then share with the class.

Step 4

Have students fill in the blanks for the Good Guys and Bad Guys for *Il Trovatore* based on the previous step's outcome.

As you continue, students will be able to see, that even the complex story of *Il Trovatore* has a simple plot core. There are 5 big ideas to this story:

1. Count di Luna loves Lenora
2. Manrico loves Lenora
3. Lenora loves Manrico
4. The Count hates and fears Manrico – he wants him dead.
5. Manrico loves his mother.

Have the students discuss what back story unfolds as the opera continues, and fill in the blank for *Il Trovatore*. Refer to the acts they worked on in their groups.

Step 5

Look back at the “Big Ideas” section. Have students answer the following questions:

Are these 5 ideas still the main points of the storyline?

How does knowing the back story change your outlook on any of these 5 ideas?

Did you know?

Opera is a centuries-old art form but new operas are still being written! Some newer operas include *Doctor Atomic* by John Adams, *Einstein on the Beach* by Philip Glass, and *Little Women* by Mark Adamo. Take a listen to some of these selections and hear how opera has moved into the 21st century!

MOVE TO THE MUSIC

One of the most well-known musical selections from *Il Trovatore* is referred to as the “**Anvil Chorus**”. This selection is sung by the Gypsy Chorus and talks of how they work to make their crafts and then set off to sell their wares. But how might one go about doing the same dreary thing day in and day out? Well the answer lies within the music!



Step 1

Play the selection of the “Anvil Chorus” from the beginning, up to 1.23 minutes, just allowing the students to listen.

You can listen here: <http://tinyurl.com/TrovatoreAnvil>

Have the students brainstorm what could be occurring during this scene. And when they recognize a familiar tune, have them raise their hand.

Allow students to share their thoughts of what is happening. Divide students into groups of 4 – 5 and have them create a scene to go along with the music. Each character should have a part. No talking is necessary, just acting in pantomime. Give the students 5-10 minutes to set up their scene and practice. Then share with their classmates.

Have students grade one another using the following rubric:

1. Did the students each have characters?
2. Did they use good pantomime, with large gestures and clear facial expressions?
3. Were you able to tell what was going on in the scene?
4. Do you think they interpreted the music well?
5. What is one way the group could have improved their scene?

Step 2

After each group shared, play the selection again with video and audio, and allow students to see the characters in action. How do their imagined scenes differ from the actual events?

Advanced Option: What does it mean? The most familiar section of the music holds the answer to the question mentioned above, How might one go about doing the same dreary thing day in and day out? Ask students what their thoughts are for this question. Then share the answer from the music. How do their thoughts differ? Do they think the musical answer is a decent one?

The Italian Answer:

Dagli! Martella!
Chi del gitano i giorni abbella? (sung twice)
Chi? Chi I giorni abbella?
La zingarella!

Translated Answer:

Have at it! Hammer!
Who makes a gypsy man's days beautiful?
Who? Who makes days beautiful?
The gypsy maiden!

HAVE IT YOUR WAY: A TICKET TO CHANGE

Within these love stories, it always seems as if one character has reign over all. It is they who make the decisions for everyone involved. However, if one could have their way and not be influenced by another, the stories would change drastically.

Step 1

Name the main characters and their desires/outcomes.

Examples:

Manrico – wants to marry Lenora/but ends up dying for his mother’s sake

Lenora – wants to marry Manrico/but ends up dying so she will not end up with Di Luna

Count di Luna – wants to marry Lenora/ends up alone since he ordered execution of Manrico



Place students into small groups. Allow them to create a scene using the characters from the opera. The first scene needs to follow the same storyline as *Il Trovatore*. Then allow one character to “have it their way” and change the scene to where they achieve their goal.

For example: Lenora hears Manrico singing from her apartment. Count di Luna has come to see Lenora, only to find she likes Manrico. The Count challenges Manrico to a duel If Lenora had it her way ... Lenora hears Manrico singing from her apartment. Count di Luna has come to see Lenora, only to find she likes Manrico. The Count succumbs, realizing Lenora would be happy with Manrico.

Step 2

Have students perform completed scenes for the class, using the following rubric to peer grade:

1. Did the original scene follow the opera storyline?
2. Did one character change to have it their way?
3. Were the characters able to use clear, projected voices?
4. What is one thing you liked about the scene?
5. What is one thing you would change about the scene?

***Written Option:** Instead of having students act out the scenes, they could tell their “If I had it my way...” opinions as if the character was having a day dream, writing in a journal, or writing to a best friend. How might the main character wish things would be?