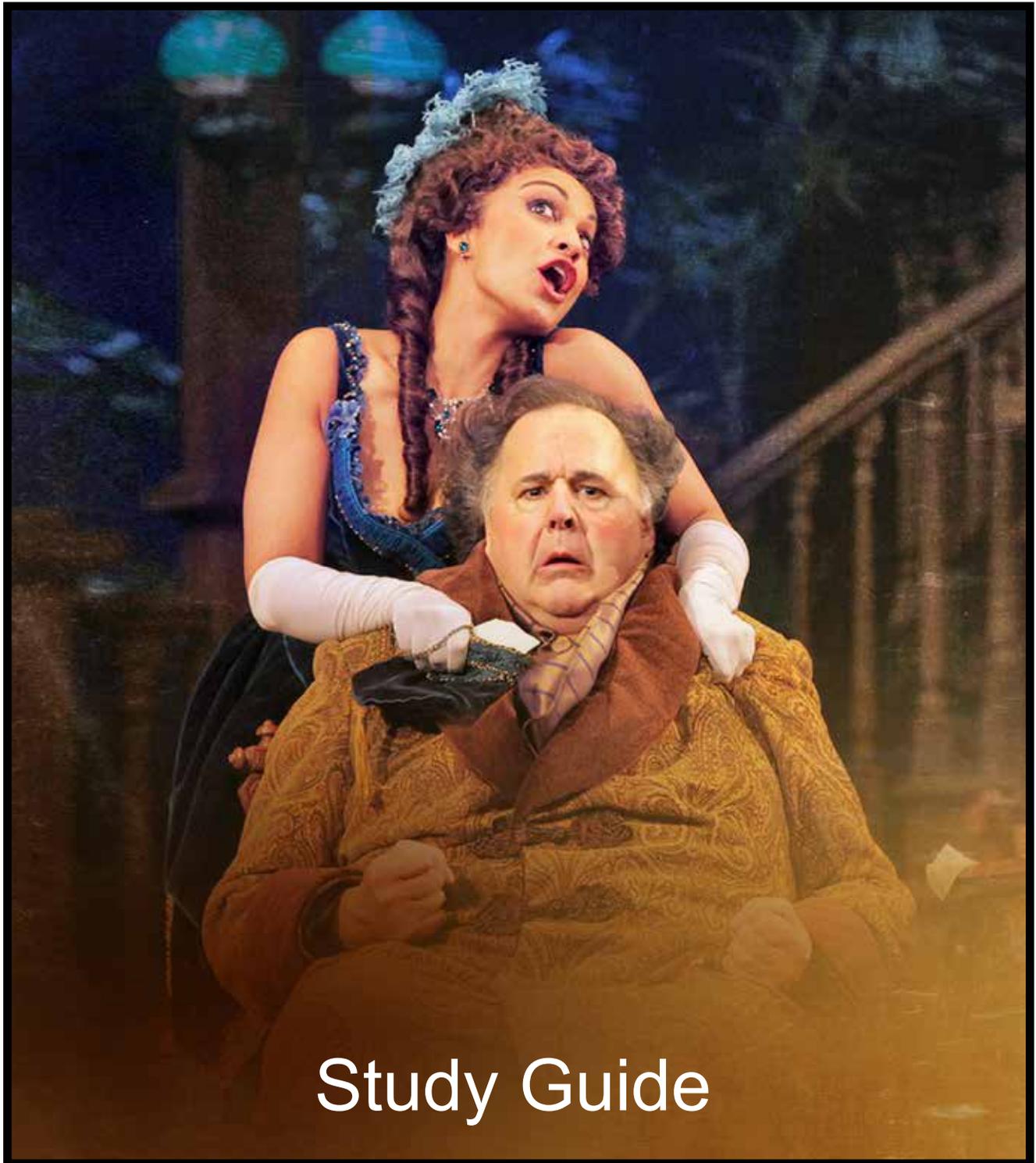


DON  
**PASQUALE**

2013/14 Season



Study Guide

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# DON PASQUALE

# Three Great Resources for Teaching Your Students About Opera

## 1. Student Night

In order to expose student audiences to the glory of opera, Manitoba Opera created Student Night. It's an affordable opportunity for students to watch the dress rehearsal, an exciting look at the art and magic of opera before the curtain goes up on Opening Night, when tension is high and anything can happen. Please note:

- *Don Pasquale* is an opera in three acts, with a running time of approximately 2.5 hours.
- The dress rehearsal is the last opportunity the singers will have on stage to work with the orchestra before Opening Night. Since vocal demands are so great on opera singers, some choose not to sing in full voice during the dress rehearsal in order to avoid unnecessary strain.
- Tickets to Student Night are \$12 per person and are available to schools and educational groups only.

For more information or to book tickets, contact Livia Dymond at 204-942-7470.

## 2. The Study Guide

This study guide has been created to assist you in preparing your students for their visit to the opera at the Centennial Concert Hall. It is our hope that you will be able to add this to your existing curriculum in order to expand your students' understanding of opera, literature, history, and fine art.

Materials in the study guide may be copied and distributed to students. Some students may wish to go over the information at home if there is insufficient time to discuss in class.

## 3. Opera in a Trunk

Bring the magic of opera right into the classroom with our Opera in a Trunk. Each trunk includes costumes, props, books, a cd and dvd of the opera, photographs, activities, and a guide for putting it all together. Rental price is \$50 per trunk for a two-week period.

Available trunks:

*Aida*

*The Daughter of the Regiment*

*The Magic Flute*

*Carmen*

For more information or to book a trunk, contact Livia Dymond at 204-942-7470.

## *Don Pasquale:* Good To Know

- *Don Pasquale* (pronounced pahs-KWAH-leh) is a comic opera in three acts, composed by Gaetano Donizetti with an Italian libretto by Giovanni Ruffini and Donizetti.
- The last of Donizetti's comic operas, written in 1842, *Don Pasquale* tells the story of an ornery old fool cured of his desire to marry a much younger woman.
- While the original libretto is set in 19th century Rome, Italy, Manitoba Opera's production is set in the American West at about the same time. The music and libretto are unchanged from the original production.
- Donizetti's 64th of some 66 operas, *Don Pasquale* is a staple of standard operatic repertoire, and is considered his comic masterpiece, as well as one of the three most popular Italian comic operas, the other two being Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* and Donizetti's own *The Elixir of Love*.
- The world premiere took place on January 3, 1843, at the Théâtre-Italien in Paris. The production was an immediate success and was soon produced all over Europe and the Western Hemisphere.
- Donizetti's best-known works are the operas *L'elisir d'amore*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and *Don Pasquale*, all in Italian, and the French operas *La favorite* and *La fille du régiment* (*The Daughter of the Regiment*).
- Along with Vincenzo Bellini and Gioachino Rossini, Donizetti was a leading composer of *bel canto* opera, a traditional Italian style of singing emphasizing tone, phrasing, coloratura passages, and technique.
- Manitoba Opera's production stars Peter Strummer as Don Pasquale, Nikki Einfeld as Norina, Brett Polegato as Dr. Malatesta, and Michele Angelini as Ernesto.
- The last time Manitoba Opera staged *Don Pasquale* was in 1997.



Danielle de Niese as Norina in San Diego Opera's *Don Pasquale*  
Photo: © Ken Howard / San Diego Opera

# Production Information

## *Don Pasquale*

November 23, 26, 29

(Dress Rehearsal / Student Night: November 21)

Centennial Concert Hall

Music by Gaetano Donizetti

Libretto by Giovanni Ruffini and Gaetano Donizetti

Premiere Performance: Théâtre-Italien at the Salle Ventadour in Paris on January 3, 1843

Approximately 2.5 hours in three acts, with two intermissions.

Sung in Italian with projected English translations.

### PRINCIPAL CAST

*In order of vocal appearance*

|               |                         |                 |
|---------------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| DON PASQUALE  | <b>Peter Strummer</b>   | <i>Bass</i>     |
| DR. MALATESTA | <b>Brett Polegato</b>   | <i>Baritone</i> |
| ERNESTO       | <b>Michele Angelini</b> | <i>Tenor</i>    |
| NORINA        | <b>Nikki Einfeld</b>    | <i>Soprano</i>  |

Manitoba Opera Chorus

Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra

|                             |                               |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Conductor                   | Tyrone Paterson               |
| Director                    | Robert Herriot                |
| Scenery designer            | Tony Fanning                  |
| Costumes designer           | Helen Rodgers                 |
| Scenery, props and wardrobe | San Diego Opera               |
| Lighting designer           | Bill Williams                 |
| Stage manager               | Evan Klassen                  |
| Assistant stage managers    | Kathryn Ball, Leigh McClymont |
| Projected titles            | Sheldon Johnson               |

# Synopsis

## Act I

The old bachelor Don Pasquale plans to marry in order to punish his rebellious nephew, Ernesto, who is in love with the young widow Norina. Pasquale wants an heir so he can cut the young man off without a penny. He consults Dr. Malatesta, who suggests as a bride his own beautiful younger sister ("Bella siccome un angelo"). Feeling his youth returning, the delighted Pasquale tells Malatesta to arrange a meeting at once. Ernesto enters and again refuses to marry a woman of his uncle's choice. Pasquale tells him that he will have to leave the house, then announces his own marriage plans to his astonished nephew. With no inheritance, Ernesto sees his dreams evaporating. To make matters worse, he learns that his friend Malatesta has arranged Pasquale's marriage.

On her terrace, Norina laughs over a silly romantic story she's reading. She is certain of her own ability to charm a man ("Quel guardo il cavaliere"). Malatesta arrives. He is in fact plotting on her and Ernesto's behalf and explains his plan: Norina is to impersonate his (nonexistent) sister, marry Pasquale in a mock ceremony, and drive him to such desperation that he will be at their mercy. Norina is eager to play the role if it will help her win Ernesto (Duet: "Pronta io son").

## Act II

Ernesto, who knows nothing of Malatesta's scheme, laments the loss of Norina, imagining his future as an exile ("Cercherò lontana terra"). He leaves when Pasquale, impatient to meet his bride-to-be, appears. The old man is enchanted when Malatesta introduces the timid "Sofronia" and decides to get married at once. During the wedding ceremony, Ernesto bursts in and accuses Norina of faithlessness. Malatesta quickly whispers an explanation and Ernesto plays witness to the wedding contract. As soon as the document is sealed and Pasquale has signed over his fortune to his bride, Norina changes her act from demure girl to willful shrew. The shocked Pasquale protests, while Norina, Ernesto, and Malatesta enjoy their success (Quartet: "È rimasto là impietrato").

## Act III

Pasquale's new "wife" has continued her extravagant ways and amassed a stack of bills. When servants arrive carrying more purchases, Pasquale furiously resolves to assert his rights as husband. Norina enters, dressed elegantly for the theatre, and gives him a slap when he tries to bar her way. He threatens her with divorce, while she, in an aside, expresses sympathy for the old man's pain (Duet: "Signorina, in tanta fretta"). As she leaves, she drops a letter implying that she has a rendezvous with an unknown suitor in the garden that night. The desperate Pasquale sends for Malatesta and leaves the servants to comment on working in a household fraught with such confusion. Malatesta then tells Ernesto to make sure that Pasquale will not recognize him when he plays his part in the garden that evening. Alone with Pasquale, Malatesta assures him they will trap "Sofronia" in a compromising situation (Duet: "Cheti, cheti, imminente"). Pasquale agrees to leave everything to Malatesta.

*continued on next page...*

In the garden, Ernesto serenades Norina, who responds rapturously (Duet: “Tornami a dir che m’ami”). They are interrupted by Pasquale and Malatesta—too late to catch the young man, who slips into the house while “Sofronia” plays the innocent wife. Malatesta announces that Ernesto is about to introduce his own bride, Norina, into the house. “Sofronia” protests she will never share the roof with another woman and threatens to leave. Pasquale can hardly contain his joy and grants permission for Ernesto to marry Norina, with his inheritance. When Sofronia turns out to be Norina, Pasquale accepts the situation with good humor, gives the couple his blessing, and joins in observing that marriage is not for an old man (Finale: “La morale in tutto questo”).

- Courtesy of The Metropolitan Opera



Curt Peterson (Ernesto), Tracy Dahl (Norina), Ryan Allen (Don Pasquale) and Jeff Mattsey (Dr. Malatesta), *Don Pasquale*, Manitoba Opera, November 1997. Photo: Gerry Kopelow

# The Principal Characters

In order of vocal appearance

| Name          | Description                         | Pronunciation    |
|---------------|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| Don Pasquale  | An elderly bachelor                 | pahs-KWAH-leh    |
| Dr. Malatesta | His physician                       | mah-lah-TEHS-tah |
| Ernesto       | Pasquale's nephew                   | ehr-NEHS-toh     |
| Norina        | A youthful widow, Ernesto's beloved | noh-REE-nah      |



THE GARDEN IN "DON PASQUALE."

*Don Pasquale* at its London Premiere, from the *Illustrated London News* of July 8, 1843

## The Principal Artists

### **Peter Strummer** *Don Pasquale*

Peter Strummer was born in Vienna, Austria, and emigrated with his family to Winnipeg, Manitoba, when he was a child. He later moved to Vancouver, British Columbia, where he resided until he went to the United States to undertake his musical education. He is now one of North America's foremost character bass-baritones and has appeared at major opera houses world-wide including the Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Opera, Washington Opera, New York City Opera, Canadian Opera Company, as well as 15 years performing in Germany and Austria. He last appeared with Manitoba Opera as Sacristan in *Tosca* in November 2010.

[www.peterstrummer.com](http://www.peterstrummer.com)



### **Brett Polegato** *Dr. Malatesta*

Brett Polegato is one of today's most sought-after lyric baritones of the operatic stage. He appears regularly on the world's most distinguished stages including those of Lincoln Center, La Scala, the Opéra National de Paris, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Houston Grand Opera, the Teatro Real, and Carnegie Hall. *Don Pasquale* will be Mr. Polegato's Manitoba Opera debut.

[www.brettpolegato.com](http://www.brettpolegato.com)



### **Michele Angelini** *Ernesto*

Michele Angelini is one of today's foremost tenors of the bel canto repertoire. He performs regularly across Europe and North America with such companies as Teatro dell'Opera in Rome, Deutsche Oper am Rhein in Dusseldorf, Royal Opera House, Metropolitan Opera, and Florida Grand Opera. He has also performed in various concerts including an engagement with the New York Choral Society at Carnegie Hall. *Don Pasquale* will be Mr. Angelini's Manitoba Opera debut.

[www.piperanselmi.com/angelini](http://www.piperanselmi.com/angelini)



### **Nikki Einfeld** *Norina*

Winnipeg-born coloratura soprano, Nikki Einfeld, mentored with the legendary Tracy Dahl and has since performed with companies across North America including San Francisco Opera, New Orleans Opera, Canadian Opera Company, Vancouver Opera, and many more. She last appeared with Manitoba Opera as Marie in *The Daughter of the Regiment* in April 2012.

[www.nikkiefeld.com](http://www.nikkiefeld.com)



# The Composer

## Gaetano Donizetti

Born: 1797

Died: 1848

Gaetano Donizetti was born on November 29, 1797 in Bergamo, Italy. He enjoyed tremendous popularity throughout Europe and his operas, together with Bellini's, came to epitomize the Italian Romantic spirit of the 1830s.

Donizetti was given free admission to Simon Mayr's school for choir boys when he was nine years old, and Mayr proved to be a major influence on the composer. In 1814, he provided Donizetti with the financial and moral support he needed to move to Bologna to study counterpoint (the use of multiple melodies). Three years later, when Donizetti returned to Bergamo having decided he would be a composer of opera, Mayr secured a contract for him with a company in Venice for which Donizetti wrote four operas.



Donizetti's first notable work was his production of *Zoraida di Granata* in Rome in 1822. For the next several years he produced two to five operas a year, from one-act farces to full-length serious works; these were presented in Naples, Rome, Palermo and Genoa. In 1828 Donizetti married Virginia Vasselli, and although she bore them three children, none survived infancy. Virginia herself was stricken with cholera and died an early death in 1837. The loss of her companionship is said to have had a profound and lasting impact on the composer.

1830 saw Donizetti's first international success with *Anna Bolena*, and by that time he had written 23 operas.

In 1835, Rossini invited Donizetti to visit Paris to present *Marino Faliero* at the Théâtre-Italien. This was Donizetti's first experience with opera in the grand tradition, and he was impressed with the artistic standards and the lucrative pay. Although he returned to Naples later that year to write and produce *Lucia di Lammermoor* (based on Sir Walter Scott's novel, *The Bride of Lammermoor*), he did not stay long. The death of his wife and his disillusionment with the operatic world of Naples prompted Donizetti to move back to Paris in 1838.

During his first two years in France, Donizetti's operas were performed in four Paris theatres, much to the chagrin of other contemporary French composers. He rewrote the score of *Lucia* for a French production, and though not the artistic success of the Italian original, the exposure it received established his reputation as an eminent European composer. Among the many operas Donizetti wrote in his later years were *La fille du régiment* (1840), *La favorite* (1840), *Don Pasquale* (1843) and *Dom Sébastien* (1843). *Don Pasquale* became an overnight success at Paris's Théâtre-Italien and was widely regarded as a comic masterpiece.

In rehearsal for his last opera, *Dom Sébastien*, Donizetti's behavior became erratic and obsessive. It was discovered that Donizetti was suffering from cerebro-spinal degeneration of syphilitic origin, and he was sent to a sanatorium near Paris. Although he was returned home to Bergamo in October of 1847, Donizetti was paralyzed and unable to speak more than monosyllables. He was attended by friends and family until his death on April 8, 1848.

-Published with the permission of the Canadian Opera Company

# The Librettist

## Giovanni Ruffini

Born: 1807

Died: 1881



Giovanni Ruffini was a writer and Italian patriot born in Genoa, Italy. He had been condemned to death as an enemy of the state and was living in exile in Paris in 1842 when it was suggested to him by Jules Janin (newly appointed director of Théâtre-Italien) that he might offer his services to Donizetti as a librettist. Donizetti told him exactly what he required for his latest project, *Don Pasquale*, but not that he intended to adapt music he had already written for other purposes. Ruffini duly wrote the draft libretto from the original text of *Ser Marcantonio* dating back to 1810, but Donizetti changed so much from Ruffini's version that Ruffini became angry and refused to allow his name to be included in the programme for the premiere at the Théâtre Italien in Paris January 3, 1843.

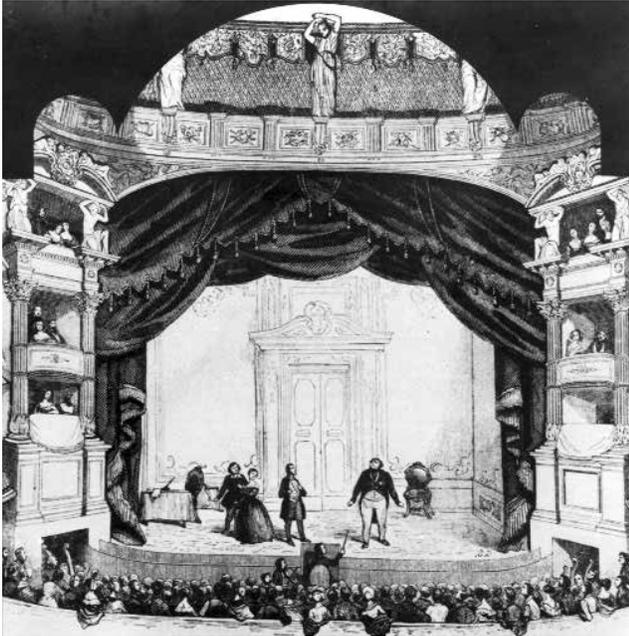
### What is a Libretto?

Libretto means "little book" in Italian. It refers to the written text of an opera set to music by the composer. Today, we commonly refer to an opera as being 'by' the composer of the music, but the text is a vital component and is normally written first. In earlier times it was often regarded as more important than the music, and it was common for audience members to purchase the libretto to read.

Early composers were usually contracted to set music to a pre-existing text. Only later did composers (such as Mozart and Verdi) work in close collaboration with their librettists. A few composers – notably Wagner – wrote their own texts.



# The History of *Don Pasquale*



An engraving of the *Don Pasquale* premiere at Théâtre-Italien, Paris, 1843

*Don Pasquale* is Donizetti's 64th opera, composed toward the end of his career, during November of 1842. At the time of its composition, Donizetti had just been appointed music director and composer for the imperial court of Emperor Ferdinand I of Austria.

Donizetti claimed that he composed the music for *Don Pasquale* over a remarkably short period of about 11 days. However, this did not include orchestration, which was completed during the rehearsal process and Donizetti re-used some of the music he had already written for other purposes.

The libretto was written by both Giovanni Ruffini and Donizetti after Angelo Anelli's libretto for Stefano Pavesi's *Ser Marcantonio* (1810), which was derived from *Epicœne*

or *The Silent Woman* by Ben Jonson (1609). Ruffini had been condemned to death as an enemy of the state and was living in exile in Paris in 1842 when it was suggested to him by Jules Janin (newly appointed director of Théâtre-Italien) that he might offer his services to Donizetti as a librettist. Donizetti told him what he required for *Don Pasquale*, but not that he intended to adapt music already written for other purposes. Ruffini duly wrote the draft libretto from the original text dating back to 1810, but Donizetti changed so much from Ruffini's version that Ruffini became angry and refused to allow his name to be printed in the programme for its premiere performance.

*Don Pasquale* was given its premiere on January 3, 1843 by the Théâtre-Italien at the Salle Ventadour in Paris, with Donizetti conducting the first performance. Performed by four of the most celebrated singers of the day, including Luigi Lablache in the title role (pictured right), it was an immediate success and was soon produced all over Europe with its first performance in Italy at La Scala in Milan on April 17, 1843. *Don Pasquale* was recognized at the time as, and is still considered, Donizetti's comic masterpiece, and remains one of the most popular of his some 66 operas.



Luigi Lablache as Don Pasquale,  
Artist: Dominique Lintricoire (1796-1854)

# Opera Buffa

*Opera buffa* is an Italian term meaning “comic opera” which is used to describe the Italian comic operas of the early 1700s to mid 1800s.

Opera buffa originated in Naples, Italy and arose as a parallel genre to that of the more serious, *opera seria*. Opera seria dealt mainly with subjects of interest to its audience of kings and nobility, and had plots that revolved around gods, wars, and the triumphs and tribulations surrounding royal life. Opera buffa, in contrast, usually involved comic characters and relatable situations, as in Mozart’s *Le Nozze di Figaro* and Rossini’s *The Barber of Seville*. The genre developed from the *intermezzi* (short comic operas that were performed between the acts of serious operas).



*Don Pasquale* is considered to be one of the last true opera buffas. The genre began to fall out of favour by the mid-19th century, as opera-goers gravitated towards the influences of Verdi and Wagner.

## Characteristics of Opera Buffa:

- Everyday settings and relatable situations
- Comic characters influenced by *commedia dell’arte*
- Simple vocal writing (*basso buffo* as the associated voice type)
- Patter song: A comic song which is sung at a high speed with a rapid succession of rhythmic patterns in which each syllable of text corresponds to one note. The text is often filled with difficult, tongue-twisting lyrics. Patter songs are frequently reprised (to get the singers to sing them even faster).

A patter song in *Don Pasquale* can be heard in the last section of each of Pasquale’s and Malatesta’s verses in their duet “Cheti, cheti, immantimente” in Act 2, plus a reprise in which they sing their patter simultaneously.

- Set numbers are linked by *recitativo secco*: a dialogue that, rather than sung as an aria, is sung with the rhythms of ordinary speech, by using only a few pitches. Accompaniment is by *continuo*, which is usually a harpsichord (in the case of *Don Pasquale* however, the recitativo is accompanied by strings).
- Ensemble finale: A long, formally organized conclusion to an opera act which includes all principal characters.

# Bel Canto

Bel Canto (Italian for “beautiful singing”) is the term to describe the elegant Italian vocal style of opera that originated in the mid-1700s and flourished through the first decades of the 19th century. Donizetti was one of the three leading bel canto composers. He wrote *Don Pasquale* in 1842, at the end of what was known as the *bel canto era* (approximately 1805-1840).

## Characteristics of Bel Canto Singing:

- A smooth style of singing, or legato, across the entire range
- Agility and flexibility that enables the singer to manage vocal embellishments with ease
- Lack of noticeable breath sounds and excessive vibrato
- Clear attack and diction
- Full, even tones
- A well-focused timbre
- Refined breath control that governs graceful phrasing



Mathilde Marchesi (1821–1913), a leading Paris-based teacher of bel canto sopranos

## The Three Leading Composers of Bel Canto Opera:



Gaetano Donizetti (1797-1848)



Gioachino Rossini (1792-1868)



Vincenzo Bellini (1801-1835)

# Commedia dell'arte

Many of the comedic elements of *Don Pasquale* are inspired by those of *commedia dell'arte* (literally, “comedy of professional artists”), a type of comedy developed in 16th and 17th century Italy, characterized by improvised text based on plot outlines (scenarios), physical comedy, and various stock characters. The art form quickly spread throughout Europe, with many of its elements persisting into present-day theatre.

*Don Pasquale* features one of *commedia dell'arte*'s most popular stock characters, as well as one of the genre's most common plots: the struggles of young lovers, or *innamorati*, whose union is hindered by one or several elders (*vecchi*), a jealous guardian. The *innamorati* seek assistance from a servant or trickster, called *zanni* (from which the word “zany” derives) who, with cunning intervention, bring the play to a happy conclusion.



Four Commedia dell'Arte Figures by Artist  
Claude Gillot (1673-1722)

| <i>Don Pasquale</i> character | Commedia character              | Commedia character description   |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Don Pasquale                  | Pantalone ( <i>vecchi</i> )     | A wealthy merchant: rich, greedy, and naive. Constantly loses against wit and improvisation.   |
| Ernesto                       | Pierrot ( <i>innamorati</i> )   | In love with Columbina. Originally tended to play pranks and insult other characters for humor; later came to be known for innocence and dreaminess. |
| Norina                        | Columbina ( <i>innamorati</i> ) | A comic servant playing the tricky slave type. Flirtatious and wily. Is also known for her strange creativity.                                       |
| Dr. Malatesta                 | Scapino ( <i>zanni</i> )        | A trickster. Self-preservation and self-interest are his main concerns.  |

# The American Old West

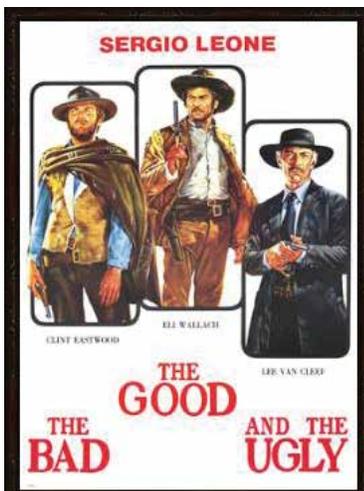
While *Don Pasquale* is usually set in Rome, Italy during the early 19th century, Manitoba Opera's production is set in a Hollywood-style American Old West at around the same time. The libretto and music are unchanged though some of the action may be different from that of the traditional performance. The production concept for Manitoba Opera's *Don Pasquale* is inspired by the mythic Old West as portrayed in *Spaghetti Western* style films.

The **American Old West** (also known as the **Wild West**) comprises the history, geography, people, lore, and cultural expression of life in the Western United States, just about anywhere west of the Mississippi River, during the American westward expansion. After the War of 1812, much of America's attention turned to exploration and settlement of its territory to the West. Although this expansion began as early as the 17th century, the *Old West*, which has been given tremendous popular attention in the media, refers to the period beginning in the early 19th century until the early 20th century.

This westward expansion was also known as the *Wild West* because it was perceived as a hostile time with pioneers forcing Native Americans from their lands and traveling through and settling in harsh landscapes.



The cowboy, the quintessential symbol of the American West



A movie poster for *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*

The **Spaghetti Western**, also known as Italian Western, is a sub-genre of Western films that emerged in the mid-1960s in the wake of Italian director Sergio Leone's film-making style and international box-office success. These films portrayed the Old West as a mythic place where rules didn't apply and scores were settled with gun slinging and shootouts. Music played an important role in these films. The most well-known spaghetti westerns were scored by Italian composer Ennio Morricone. The cast often included Italian, Spanish, German and American actors, and often featured a fading Hollywood star, or sometimes a rising one like the young Clint Eastwood in Sergio Leone's trilogy of spaghetti westerns (*A Fistful of Dollars*, *For A Few Dollars More*, and *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*).

## A Short Overview of Opera

An opera, like a play, is a dramatic form of theatre that includes scenery, props and costumes. In opera, however, the actors are trained singers who sing their lines instead of speaking them. An orchestra accompanies the singers. A conductor coordinates both the singers on stage and the musicians in the orchestra pit.

Opera consists of many dimensions: the human voice, orchestral music, the visual arts (scenery, costumes and special effects), drama (tragedy or comedy), and occasionally dance. The melding of these elements creates a multi-dimensional theatrical experience.

Opera has its roots in Greek drama and originated in Florence, Italy, in the late 1500's, with a small group of men who were members of the Camerata (Italian for society). The intellectuals, poets and musicians of the Camerata decided they wanted words to be a featured aspect of music. They used ancient Greek drama as their inspiration, including the use of a chorus to comment on the action.

The Camerata laid down three principles for their new art form:

1. The text must be understood; the accompaniment must be very simple and should not distract from the words.
2. The words must be sung with correct and natural declamation, as if they were spoken, and must avoid the rhythms of songs.
3. The melody must interpret the feeling of the text.

The first significant composer to fully develop the ideas of the Camerata was Jacopo Peri (1561-1633), whose opera *Dafne*, based on a Greek myth, was performed in 1594 and is regarded as the first opera.

Operas are divided into scenes and acts that contain different types of vocal pieces for one or many singers. An aria is a vocal solo that usually focuses on a character's emotions rather than actions. A recitative is sung dialogue or speech that occurs between arias and ensembles. It helps to further the action of the story and shape the relationships between the characters.

The story of the opera is written as a libretto: a text that is set to music. Composers write the score or the music for the opera. Sometimes the composer will also write the text of the



The Sydney Opera House

opera, but most often they work with a librettist. In the past, the libretto was also bound and sold to the audience. Today, the audience can easily follow the plot with the use of surtitles - the English translation of the libretto, which are projected onto a screen above the stage.

There are several differences between opera and musicals like *The Phantom of the Opera*. One significant difference is the 'partnership' found between the music and the drama in an opera. While musicals use songs to help tell a story, in an opera, the music contributes to the drama, it does not only accompany it.

The musical style is another important difference between the two art forms; opera is usually classical and complex, while musicals feature pop songs and sometimes rock and roll. Also, singers in musicals have microphones hidden in their costumes or wigs to amplify their voices. The voices of opera singers are so strong no amplification is needed, even in a large venue. Furthermore, operas are almost completely sung while the use of spoken words are more common to musicals. There are some operas with spoken words and these are called singspiels (German) and opéra-comique (French). Examples are Mozart's *The Magic Flute* and Bizet's *Carmen*, respectively.



The Metropolitan Opera (1937)

## Bringing an Opera to the Stage

Opera combines many great art forms to make something completely different. First and foremost are the performers who portray characters by revealing their thoughts and emotions through the singing voice. The next very important component is a full symphony orchestra that accompanies the singing actors and actresses, helping them to portray the full range of emotions possible in the operatic format. The orchestra performs in an area in front of the singers called the orchestra pit, while the singers perform on the open area called the stage. Wigs, costumes, sets and specialized lighting further enhance these performances, all of which are designed, created, and executed by a team of highly trained artisans.

The creation of an opera begins with a dramatic scenario crafted by a playwright or dramaturg who, alone or with a librettist, fashions the script or libretto that contains the words the artists will sing. Working in tandem, the composer and librettist team up to create a cohesive musical drama in which the music and words work together to express the emotions revealed in the story. Following the completion of their work, the composer and librettist entrust their new work to a conductor who, with a team of assistants (repetiteurs), assumes responsibility for the musical preparation of the work. The conductor collaborates with a stage director (responsible for the visual component) in order to bring a performance of the new piece to life on the stage. The stage director and conductor form the creative spearhead for the new composition while assembling a design team which will take charge of the actual physical production.

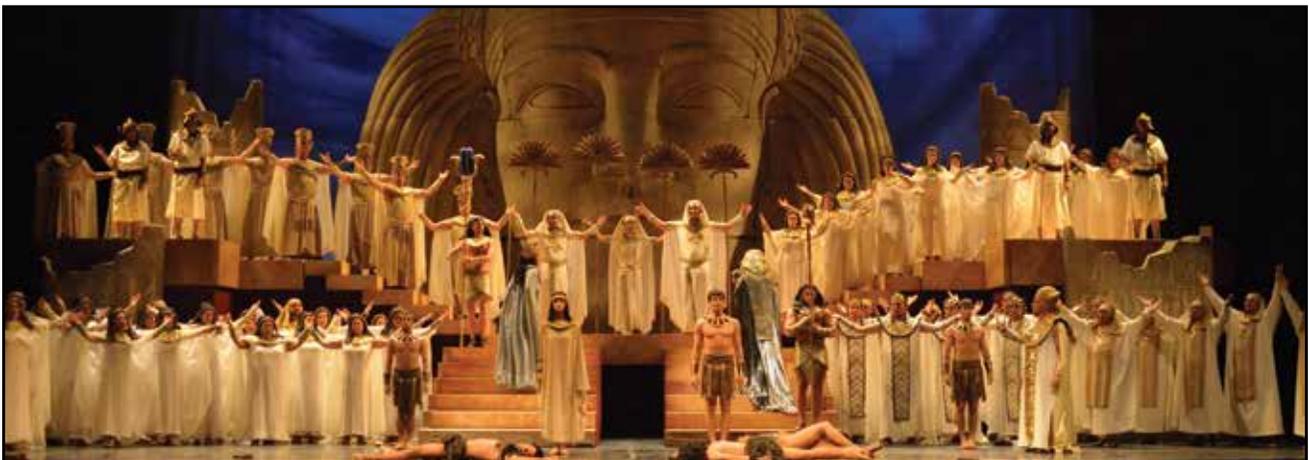


Wendy Nielsen (Tosca) and Richard Margison (Cavaradossi), *Tosca*, Manitoba Opera, November 2010. Photo: R. Tinker

Set designers, lighting designers, costume designers, wig and makeup designers and even choreographers must all be brought on board to participate in the creation of the new production. The set designer combines the skills of both an artist and an architect using “blueprint” plans to design the actual physical set which will reside on the stage, recreating the physical setting required by the story line. These blueprints are turned over to a team of carpenters who are specially trained in the art of stage carpentry. Following the actual building of the set, painters, following instructions from the set designers’ original plans, paint the set. As the set is assembled on the stage, the lighting designer works with a team of electricians to throw light onto both the stage and the set in an atmospheric, as well as practical way. Using specialized lighting instruments, colored gels and a state-of-the-art computer, the designer, along with the stage director, create a “lighting plot” by writing “lighting cues” which are stored in the computer and used during the actual performance of the opera.

During this production period, the costume designer, in consultation with the stage director, has designed appropriate clothing for the singers to wear. These designs are fashioned into patterns and crafted by a team of highly skilled artisans called cutters, stitchers, and sewers. Each costume is specially made for each singer using his/her individual measurements. The wig and makeup designer, working with the costume designer, designs and creates wigs which will complement both the costume and the singer, as well as represent historically accurate period fashions.

The principals are the people who have the major roles in an opera. They are professional singers. Principals usually arrive about three weeks before the first performance, with all of their music memorized and a good sense of their character. In rehearsal, they work with the director who helps them block each of the scenes. The director works with the principals to develop their characters and their voice. For the first two weeks they are accompanied by a rehearsal pianist. The week of the show, they move into the Concert Hall and begin work rehearsing on stage with the orchestra in the pit.



*Aida*, Manitoba Opera, April 2013. Photo: R. Tinker

# The Operatic Voice and Professional Singing

Operatic singing, developed in Europe during the 17th century, places intense vocal demands on the singer. Opera singers rarely use microphones, and therefore must project their voices to fill a large theatre and be heard above an orchestra.

An opera singer learns to use his or her body as an amplification device. By controlling the muscles of the diaphragm, the singer can regulate the amount of breath used. The diaphragm expands and contracts, regulating the air that passes through the vocal cords, causing them to vibrate. The speed of this determines the pitch. As the sound passes through the mouth, it resonates in the upper chest cavities and the sinus cavities of the face and head. These cavities act as small echo chambers that amplify the sound.

Each person's vocal tract is constructed differently. The roles that a singer performs are dependent mostly upon their vocal range, but within the vocal ranges, there are many colours and weights of voice that contribute. Vocal colour refers to the richness of the sound and vocal weight refers to how powerful a voice sounds.

Many singers begin their operatic training in university. Opera students study singing, music history, composition and vocal pedagogy (voice teaching). In addition to music classes, they study diction and often at least one foreign language. After university, their first professional roles are usually small parts, but if they continue to study and train, they may move on to the bigger principal roles.

Professional singers develop a number of roles in their repertoire. Since the principal artists are required to have their parts memorized before rehearsals begin, singers must prepare well in advance of each contract. Even well established singers have voice teachers, and often acting coaches, who help them refine their singing techniques.

Physical health is a major priority to a singer. Contrary to popular belief, not all opera singers are overweight. Opera singers once believed that excessive weight gave added volume and richness to the voice. However, now we know that physical fitness can give similar benefits to a voice. Plus, the overall health benefits of being in shape overshadow any loss of vocal power. Most singers, like professional athletes, try to avoid tobacco, alcohol, and caffeine.

## VOCAL CATEGORIES

### Women

**SOPRANO:** Similar to a flute in range and tone colour. Usually plays the heroine in the opera since a high, bright sound can easily suggest youth and innocence.

**MEZZO-SOPRANO:** Similar to an oboe in range and tone colour. Called an alto in choral arrangements, this voice can play a wide variety of characters including gypsies, mothers, and young men (trouser role).

**CONTRALTO:** Similar to an English horn in range and tone colour. Usually play unique roles including fortune-tellers, witches, and older women.

### Men

**TENOR:** Similar to a trumpet in range, tone, color and acoustical "ring." Usually plays the hero or the romantic lead in the opera.

**BARITONE:** Similar to a French horn in tone color. Often plays the leader of mischief in comic opera or the villain in tragic opera, sometimes even the hero.

**BASS:** Similar to a trombone or bassoon in tone color. Usually portrays old, wise men, or foolish, comic men.

HIGHER

LOWER

## VOCAL COLOURINGS

**COLORATURA:** A light, bright voice that has the ability to sing many notes quickly, usually with an extended upper range.

**LYRIC:** A light to medium weight voice, often singing beautiful sweeping melodies.

**DRAMATIC:** Dark, heavy and powerful voice, capable of sustained and forceful singing.

## Glossary: Important Words in Opera

**ACT:** a section of the opera that is then divided into scenes.

**ARIA:** means “air” in Italian. This is a piece of music written for a one singer (soloist), usually with instrumental accompaniment.

**ASIDE:** a secret comment from an actor directly to the audience that the other characters cannot hear.

**BARITONE:** the middle singing range of the male voice.

**BASS:** the lowest singing range of the male voice.

**BASSO BUFFO:** a bass singer who specializes in comic characters.

**BASSO PROFUNDO:** the most serious bass voice.

**BATON:** short stick that the conductor uses to lead the orchestra.

**BEL CANTO:** Italian phrase literally meaning “beautiful singing.” A traditional Italian style of singing emphasizing tone, phrasing, coloratura passages, and technique. Also refers to the operas written in this style.

**BLOCKING:** directions given to the performers for movement on stage.

**BRAVO:** a form of appreciation shouted by audience members at the end of a particularly pleasing performance. Technically, bravo refers to a male performer, brava refers to a female performer and bravi refers to many performers.

**BUFFO:** from the Italian for “buffoon.” A singer of comic roles (basso-buffo) or a comic opera (opera-buffa.)

**CADENZA:** a passage of singing, often at the end of an aria, which shows off the singer’s vocal ability.

**CASTRATO:** a castrated male prized for his high singing voice.

**CHOREOGRAPHER:** the person who designs the steps of a dance.

**CHORUS:** a group of singers of all vocal ranges, singing together to support the vocal leads.

**CLASSICAL:** the period in music which comes after the Baroque and before the Romantic, roughly from the birth of Mozart to shortly after the death of Beethoven. It represents the greatest standardization in orchestral form and tonality.

**COLORATURA:** elaborate ornamentation of music written for a singer using many fast notes and trills. Also used to describe a singer who sings this type of music.



Jeffrey Springer (Turiddu), *Pagliacci*, Manitoba Opera, April 2004. Photo: R.Tinker

**COMPOSER:** the individual who writes all the music for both voice and instrument.

**COMPRIMARIO:** a nineteenth century term referring to secondary or supporting roles such as confidantes, messengers, and matchmakers.

**CONTRALTO:** the lowest female voice range.

**CONDUCTOR:** the person responsible for the musical interpretation and coordination of the performance. The conductor controls the tempo, the dynamic level, and the balance between singers and orchestra. You will see this person standing in the orchestra pit conducting the musicians and the singers.

**COUNTERTENOR:** a male singer with the highest male voice range, generally singing within the female contralto or mezzo-soprano range.

**CRESCENDO:** a build in the volume or dynamic of the music.

**CUE:** a signal to enter or exit from the stage, to move or to change lighting or scenery; or a signal given by the conductor to the musicians.



Jeff Mattsey (Don Giovanni) and Stefan Szkafarowsky (Commendatore), *Don Giovanni*, Manitoba Opera, November 2003. Photo: R.Tinker

**CURTAIN CALL:** occurs at the end of the performance when all the cast members and the conductor take bows. This can occur in front of the curtain or on the open stage.

**DESIGNER:** a production can have two or three designers: a lighting designer, a costume designer, a set designer, or someone who is both costume and set designer. They work closely with the stage director to give the production a distinctive look.

**DIVA:** literally *goddess* in Italian. An important female opera star. The masculine form is *divo*.

**DRESS REHEARSAL:** the final rehearsal before opening night, includes costumes, lights, makeup, etc. Sometimes it is necessary to stop for adjustments, but an attempt is made to make it as much like a regular performance as possible.

**DUET:** music that is written for two people to sing together.

**ENCORE:** a piece that is performed after the last scheduled piece of a concert. An encore is usually performed because the audience wants to hear more music even though the concert is over.

**ENSEMBLE:** a part of the opera written for a group of two or more singers. This may or may not include the chorus.

**FALSETTO:** the upper part of a voice in which the vocal cords do not vibrate completely. Usually used by males to imitate a female voice.

**FINALE:** the last musical number of an opera or an act.

**GRAND OPERA:** spectacular French opera of the Romantic period, lavishly staged, with a historically based plot, a huge cast, an unusually large orchestra, and ballet. It also refers to opera without spoken dialogue.

**HELDEN:** German prefix meaning “heroic.” Can also apply to other voices, but usually used in “heldentenor.”

**HOUSE:** the auditorium and front of the theatre excluding the stage and backstage areas.

**IMPRESARIO:** the proprietor, manager, or conductor of an opera or concert company; one who puts on or sponsors an entertainment manager, producer.

**INTERLUDE:** a short piece of instrumental music played between scenes and acts.

**INTERMISSION:** a break between acts of an opera. The lights go on and the audience is free to move around.

**LEITMOTIF:** A melodic passage or phrase, especially in Wagnerian opera, associated with a specific character, situation, or element.

**LIBRETTIST:** the writer of the opera's text.

**LIBRETTO:** Italian for *little book*. It is the text or story of the opera.

**LYRIC:** used to describe a light-to-medium-weight voice with an innocent quality, capable of both sustained, forceful singing and delicate effects.

**MAESTRO:** means "master" in Italian. Used as a courtesy title for the conductor (male or female).

**MARK:** to sing, but not at full voice. A full-length opera is very hard on a singer's voice, so most performers mark during rehearsals. During the dress rehearsal singers try to sing at full voice for part, if not all, of the rehearsal.

**MEZZO-SOPRANO:** the middle singing range for a female voice.

**MOTIF OR LEITMOTIF:** a recurring musical theme used to identify an emotion, person, place, or object.

**OPERA:** a dramatic presentation which is set to music. Almost all of it is sung, and the orchestra is an equal partner with the singers. Like a play, an opera is acted on stage with costumes, scenery, makeup, etc. Opera is the plural form of the Latin word *opus*, which means "work."

**OPERA BUFFA:** an opera about ordinary people, usually, but not always comic. First developed in the 18th century.

**OPERA SERIA:** a serious opera. The usual characters are gods and goddesses, or ancient heroes.

**OPERA-COMIQUE:** (*singspiel*) a form of opera which contains spoken dialogue.

**OPERETTA:** lighthearted opera with spoken dialogue, such as a musical.

**ORCHESTRA:** an ensemble, led by a conductor, that is comprised of string, woodwind, brass and percussion instruments.

**ORCHESTRA PIT:** sunken area in front of the stage where the orchestra sits.

**OVERTURE:** an orchestral introduction to the opera played before the curtain rises. Usually longer than a prelude and can be played as a separate piece.

**PITCH:** how high or low a note sounds.

**PRELUDE:** a short introduction that leads into an act without pause.

**PRIMA DONNA:** literally *first lady* in Italian. The leading woman in an opera. Because of the way some of them behaved in the past, it often refers to someone who is acting in a superior and demanding fashion. The term for a leading man is *primo uomo*.

**PRINCIPAL:** a major singing role, or the singer who performs such a role.

**PRODUCTION:** the combination of sets, costumes, props, and lights, etc.

**PROPS:** objects carried or used on stage by the performers.

**PROSCENIUM:** the front opening of the stage which frames the action.

**QUARTET:** four singers or the music that is written for four singers.

**RAKED STAGE:** a stage that slants downwards towards the audience.

**RECITATIVE:** lines of dialogue that are sung, usually with no recognizable melody. It is used to advance the plot.

**REHEARSAL:** a working session in which the singers prepare for public performance.

**SCORE:** the written music of an opera or other musical work.

**SERENADE:** a piece of music honouring someone or something, an extension of the traditional performance of a lover beneath the window of his mistress.

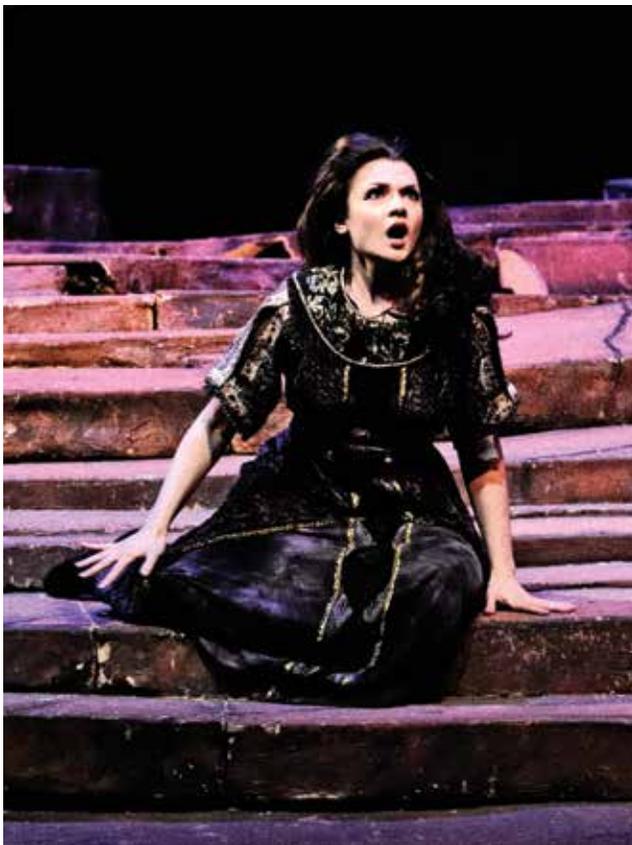
**SITZPROBE:** the rehearsal held on to the main stage for the first time. The entire opera is sung through without any costumes or blocking.

**SOPRANO:** the highest range of the female singing voice.

**SOUBRETTE:** pert young female character with a light soprano voice.

**SPINTO:** a lyric voice that has the power and incisiveness for dramatic climaxes.

**STAGE AREAS:** refers to the various sections of the stage as seen by those on stage.



Andriana Chuchman (Pamina), *The Magic Flute*, Manitoba Opera, April 2011. Photo: R.Tinker

**STAGE DIRECTOR:** the person in charge of the action on stage. He or she shows the singers, chorus and cast where and when to move and helps them create their characters. The stage director develops a concept for how the entire performance should look and feel. He or she works closely with the stage managers, lighting designer, set designers, costume designer, and wig and makeup artists to bring his or her vision into reality.

**STAGE MANAGER:** the person who coordinates and manages elements of the performance.

**SUPERNUMERARIES:** appear on stage in costume in non-singing and usually, non-speaking roles.

**SURTITLES:** the English translations of the opera's language, in this production Italian, that are projected above the stage during a performance to help the audience follow the story, much like subtitles in a foreign film.

**SYNOPSIS:** a short summary of the story of the opera.

**TABLEAU:** occurs at the end of a scene or act, when all cast members on stage freeze in position and remain that way until the curtain closes. It looks as though that moment has been captured in a photograph.

**TEMPO:** speed of the music.

**TENOR:** the highest natural adult male voice.

**TRILL:** very quick alternation between two adjacent notes. See coloratura.

**TRIO:** an ensemble of three singers or the music that is written for three singers.

**TROUSER ROLE:** the role of an adolescent boy or young man, written for and sung by a woman, often a mezzo-soprano. Also known as a pants role.

**VERISMO:** describes a realistic style of opera that started in Italy at the end of the 19th century.

# Audience Etiquette

*The following will help you (and those around you) enjoy the experience of a night at the opera:*

- Dress to be comfortable. Many people enjoy dressing up in formal attire, but this is optional and people attend the opera wearing all varieties of clothing.
- Arrive on time. Latecomers disturb the singers and others in the audience. Latecomers will only be seated at suitable breaks - often not until intermission.
- Find your seat with the help of your teacher and remember to thank them.
- Remove your hat. This is customary and is respectful to the artists and to people sitting behind you.
- Turn off, tune in. Switch off all electronic devices including cell phones, smart phones, iPods, pagers, and digital watch alarms.
- Leave your camera at home and do not use the camera function on your phone during a performance. This can be very disturbing to the artists and audience members.
- Find the “EXIT” signs. Look for the illuminated signs over the doors. You always want to know where the nearest emergency exit is in a theatre.
- If you think you might need a breath mint or cough drop, unwrap it before the performance.
- Settle in and get comfortable before the performance begins. Read your program. This tells you what performance you’re about to see, who created it, and who’s performing in it. You might like to read a synopsis of the opera before it begins.
- Clap as the lights are dimmed and the conductor appears and bows to the audience. Watch as the conductor then turns to the orchestra and takes up his or her baton to signal the beginning of the opera.
- Listen to the prelude or overture before the curtain rises. It is part of the performance and an opportunity to identify common musical themes that may reoccur during the opera.
- Save all conversations, eating, drinking, and chewing gum, for the intermission. Talking and eating can be disruptive to other audience members and distracts from your ability to be absorbed by the show. The audience is critical to the success of the show – without you, there can be no performance.
- Sit still. Only whisper when it is absolutely necessary, as a whisper is heard all over the theatre, and NEVER stand during the performance, except in the case of an emergency.
- Read the English translations projected above the stage.
- Feel free to laugh when something is funny – this is a performance and you are expected to respond!
- Listen for subtleties in the music. The tempo, volume and complexity of the music and singing often depict the “feeling” or “sense” of the action or character.
- Notice repeated words or phrases; they are usually significant.
- Applaud (or shout Bravo!) at the end of an aria or chorus piece to show your enjoyment of it. The end of a piece can be identified by a pause in the music.
- Finally, have fun and enjoy the show!

# Manitoba Opera

Manitoba Opera was founded in 1969 by a group of individuals dedicated to presenting the great works of opera to Manitoban audiences. Manitoba Opera is the province's only full-time professional opera company. The company attracts internationally renowned artists, highlights the best local talent, and is supported by the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra under the direction of internationally renowned conductors. Manitoba Opera celebrated its 35th Season in 2007/08 by presenting the world premiere of an opera commissioned by the company, *Transit of Venus*.

## Chorus

The Manitoba Opera Chorus, under the direction of Chorus Master Tadeusz Biernacki, is hailed for their excellent singing and acting abilities. The chorus boasts a core of skilled singers who give generously of their time and talents. Some are voice majors at university, a few are singing teachers, but most work in jobs that aren't music related.



*Carmen*, Manitoba Opera, April 2010. Photo: R.Tinker

## Staff

Tadeusz Biernacki

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Michael Blais

*Director of Administration*

Valorie Block

*Event & Sponsorship Manager*

Larry Desrochers

*General Director & CEO*

Livia Dymond

*Education & Outreach Coordinator*

Sheldon Johnson

*Director of Production*

Natasha MacDonald-Sawh

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# Student Activities

## Activity #1: Using the Five C's, Have your Students Analyze the Opera as Drama

**CHARACTERS:** Are they interesting? Believable? Are their actions, words, thoughts consistent?

**CONFLICT:** What conflicts are established? How are they resolved?

**CLIMAX:** To what climax does the conflict lead?

**CONCLUSION:** How well does the conclusion work? Is it consistent? Satisfying? Believable?

**CONTEXT:** What are the historical, physical, and emotional settings? Sets and costumes?

- Give students the synopsis to read and have them re-tell the story after they have read it.
- Ask comprehensive questions.
- Present and discuss the composer and librettist.
- Listen to excerpts from the opera. Watch a DVD of the opera (DVD and CD are available for loan from Manitoba Opera). Have students identify and recognize recurring themes.
- Discuss the historical background, emphasizing the visual and performing arts and history-social science frameworks. Discuss the results of certain events. Whom did they affect? How? Why? Did any changes occur as a result?
- Review the glossary of terms.
- Have the students watch for references to themes in the opera in their everyday lives. The internet, radio, TV, magazines, and movies often refer back to classics.

## Activity #2: Create a Poster, Set, Costume, Press Release, or Ad

- Choose a time and place to set your production.
- Have the students design a poster for *Don Pasquale* Student Night at the Opera, including such details as the date, the time, and the people involved.
- Have them draw a set for a production of the opera.
- They might also sketch a costume, wig, and makeup for a character in *Don Pasquale*.
- Have the students write a press release about *Don Pasquale* Student Night at the Opera, including the date, the time, the people involved, and why it would be exciting or fun to attend.
- Have the students create an ad for the opera. Include whatever you feel is the biggest “selling point” of the opera - what makes it exciting? Why should people come to see it?

### Activity #3: A Review

#### *Step 1 – Think-Group-Share*

Individually, students will write, in point form, the answers to the following questions:

1. What did you like about the opera? What did you dislike?
2. What did you think about the sets, props, and costumes?
3. If you were the stage director, would you have done something differently? Why?
4. What were you expecting? Did it live up to your expectations?
5. What did you think of the singers' portrayal of their characters?

Break the students into groups to discuss their feelings and reactions to the production. Have the students write on poster papers their answers or important points of their discussion. Encourage the students to go beyond the questions posed.

#### *Step 2 – Class Discussion*

Have the whole class examine the poster papers and discuss the different ideas from each group.

#### *Step 3 – Outlining your review*

Go over the essential aspects of a review including: a clearly stated purpose, a coherent comparison/contrast organizational pattern, a summary paragraph capturing the interest of the reader, precise nouns, revision for consistency of ideas. You might give your students a few samples of reviews for fine arts events – or ask them to bring in some reviews they find themselves. Have the students fill out the review outline, then complete a rough draft.

1. Purpose (why are you writing this and who is your audience?)
2. Plot Synopsis (including who sang what role, etc.)
3. Paragraph 1 (compare and contrast things you liked or didn't like)
4. Paragraph 2 (compare and contrast things you liked or didn't like)
5. Paragraph 3 (compare and contrast things you liked or didn't like)
6. Summary/Closing Paragraph

#### *Step 4 - Peer Conferencing*

Students will exchange reviews to critique and edit. Encourage the students to focus on effective coordination of ideas in sentences and the correct use of grammar and punctuation.

#### *Step 5 - Creating the final draft*

Have students make the appropriate adjustments to their reviews. You could also have the students type the pieces and organize them into a newspaper.

### **Activity #4: Have your students act out the story**

Have students consider the characters and the role they play in the story. Choose one of the following:

DON PASQUALE | NORINA | ERNESTO | DR. MALATESTA

If you were going to play this character, you would have to discover, create, and imagine background, personality, and physical qualities. Some clues are provided in the story and the music and some you need to make up yourself.

*Pretend you are that character and answer the following questions:*

1. What motivates you? How does this affect your actions? What obstacles stand in your way?
2. What steps in the opera do you take to achieve your objectives? What are the results?
3. What obstacles are beyond your control (laws, social status, others' actions)?
4. What are your (character's) greatest strengths? Greatest weaknesses?
5. What is your relationship to the other characters?
6. How is the character's personality expressed through the music of the opera?
7. Can you think of a modern-day character who has similar characteristics and traits?
8. If this character were alive today, how would s/he be more or less successful?
9. What different steps would s/he take to achieve an objective?

### **Activity #5: Write a Biography**

Have students research and write a biography of the composer, librettist or one of the characters.

### **Activity #6: Create a Journal or Blog from the Point of View of a Character**

Have the students choose a point of conflict, and write a journal or blog of those events from a character's point of view. How does Norina feel about Don Pasquale not approving of her and Ernesto's relationship? What does Don Pasquale think about the behaviour of this new "wife"? etc.

### **Activity #7: Write a Letter from One Character to Another**

Have the students choose a moment in the story and have one character write a letter to another, giving them advice for the future.

**Activity #8: Cast *Don Pasquale***

Have the students cast modern-day singers or actors as the performers in *Don Pasquale*. Who did you choose? What are their costumes like? What did you base your decisions on?

**Activity #9: Tweet About *Don Pasquale***

Have the students tweet about *Don Pasquale* Student Night by writing out a twitter in 140 characters. Have students read their tweet aloud to the class. Try to be clever, funny, or start a conversation.

**Activity #10: Myths of the Old West**

Have students research some of the myths about the American Old West which appear in popular culture. How do these myths differ from the reality of the Old West? What are some films or books which feature some of these myths?

Have the students present to the rest of the class any surprising discoveries that may changed their perception of life during the Old West.

**Activity #11: *Don Pasquale* Mood Board**

Often before artists and designers create their work, they make a mood board to set the tone for the piece. This is usually a poster-sized piece of paper covered in images and words, usually torn from the pages of magazines and newspapers, that together communicates the complex mood of the piece in a way that words can't. It's the same as making a collage, except a mood board is for the purpose of communicating a focused concept.

Have your students go through a stack of old magazines and newspapers to create a mood board for *Don Pasquale*. They can create one each or work together on a large one for the class. Consider elements like colours, textures, phrases, faces, patterns, and images that represent the opera.

## Activity #12: Opera Comprehension Tests

### *The Opera*

1. \_\_\_\_\_ A theatrical production incorporating both vocal and instrumental music, drama, and sometimes dance.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ The lowest male vocal range.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ An instrumental introduction to an opera.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ The area where the orchestra is seated.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Considered the first opera.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ A song for solo voice in an opera.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ The highest female vocal range.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ A song for two voices.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ The lowest female vocal range.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ The Italian word meaning "little book."
11. \_\_\_\_\_ The middle male vocal range.
12. \_\_\_\_\_ He/she is in charge of all the action on the stage.

*Don Pasquale*

1. What year was the opera *Don Pasquale* written? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Who is the composer? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Who is the librettist? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What is the setting of Manitoba Opera's production of *Don Pasquale*? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What is the traditional setting of *Don Pasquale*? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What are the names of the four principal characters?  
 \_\_\_\_\_
7. What is the style of singing that Donizetti uses in this opera that emphasizes tone, phrasing, coloratura passages, and technique? \_\_\_\_\_
8. The role of Don Pasquale is sung by a \_\_\_\_\_ (name the singing voice).
9. In what language is the opera sung? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Who will sing the role of Don Pasquale in Manitoba Opera's production of *Don Pasquale*?  
 \_\_\_\_\_
11. What is the Italian term for comic opera? \_\_\_\_\_
12. What is the name of the traditional Italian comedy that inspired the characters of *Don Pasquale*?  
 \_\_\_\_\_

## Answer Key

### Activity #12

#### The Opera

1. Opera
2. Bass
3. Overture
4. Orchestra pit or “the pit”
5. *Daphne*
6. Aria
7. Soprano
8. Duet
9. Contralto
10. Libretto
11. Baritone
12. Stage director

#### *Don Pasquale*

1. 1842
2. Gaetano Donizetti
3. Giovanni Ruffini and Gaetano Donizetti
4. American Old West
5. Rome, Italy
6. Don Pasquale, Ernesto, Dr. Malatesta, Norina
7. bel canto
8. bass
9. Italian
10. Peter Strummer
11. opera buffa
12. commedia dell’arte

Manitoba Opera would be pleased to receive a copy of any work related to this opera produced by your students. Please forward to:

Education Coordinator, Manitoba Opera, 1060 - 555 Main St., Winnipeg, MB R3B 1C3

or

ldymond@manitobaopera.mb.ca

# Winnipeg Public Library

## Resources

### Books

The New Grove Masters of Italian Operas:  
Rossini, Donizetti, Bellini, Verdi, Puccini  
[by Philip Gossett et al.]  
New York: Norton, c1983.  
Call No.: 782.1092 NEW

Bravo! Brava! A Night at the Opera:  
behind the scenes with composers, cast,  
and crew [by Anne Siberell]  
New York: Oxford University Press, c2001.  
Call No.: J 782.1 SIB

Usborne Learn to Play Opera Tunes: Over  
25 simple pieces for piano [by Caroline  
Hooper]  
London: Usborne, 1996.  
Call No.: J 786.2 HOO

Sing Me A Story [by Jane Rosenberg;  
introduction by Luciano Pavarotti]  
New York: Thames and Hudson, 1989.  
Call No.: J 782.1 ROS

The Bel Canto Arias of Rossini, Donizetti,  
and Bellini [by Charles Osborne]  
Portland, Or. : Amadeus Press, 1994.  
Call No.: 782.10945 OSB

Wild West [by Stuart Murray]  
London; New York: DK Pub., in  
association with the Smithsonian  
Institute, 2005.  
Call No.: J 978.02 MUR 2005

The Wild West [by Tim Wood]  
Jordan Hill, Oxford, Great Britain:  
Heinemann, 1996.  
Call No.: J 978.02 WOO

### Scores

Don Pasquale: a comedy in 3 acts / music  
by Gaetano Donizetti; libretto by Giovanni  
Ruffini ; English translation by Phyllis Mead  
Ricordi, 1994  
Call No.: SCORE 782.1 DON

### Sound Recordings

The World's Very Best Opera for Kids!  
The Childrens Group, p2003  
Call No.: CD JUV WORLDS

The Pavarotti Edition. Donizetti. / [sung by]  
Luciano Pavarotti  
Decca, p2001  
Call No.: CD OPERA DONIZETTI OPE

Donizetti Portraits  
Nightengale Classics, [2012], p1996  
Call No.: CD OPERA DONIZETTI DON

Bel Canto [sung by] Elina Garanca  
[United States] : Deutsche Grammophon,  
p2009  
Call No.: CD OPERA GARANCA BEL



Illustration of a scene from *Don Pasquale*,  
Artist: Granger, 1852

## Works Cited

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Don Pasquale (study guide). San Diego Opera, 17 Jun 2013. <<http://www.sdopera.com/Operapaedia/DonPasquale>>

Don Pasquale (educator guide), The Metropolitan Opera. 17 Jun 2013. <<http://www.metoperafamily.org/metopera/about/education/educatorguides/content.aspx?customid=13406>>

"Gaetano Donizetti." Canadian Opera Company. 15 July 2013. <<http://www.coc.ca/PerformancesAndTickets/1213Season/LuciaDiLammermoor/Biographies.aspx>>

"Giovanni Ruffini." Wikipedia. 18 Jun 2013. <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giovanni\\_Ruffini](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giovanni_Ruffini)>

"Gaetano Donizetti." Classical Net. 18 Jun 2013. <<http://www.classical.net/music/comp.lst/donizetti.php>>

"Don Pasquale - the perfect ending to an operatic genre." Washing National Opera Notebook. 3 July 2013. <[http://blogs.kennedy-center.org/sites/wnoblog/\\_layouts/tag.aspx?ID=Don%20Pasqualeu](http://blogs.kennedy-center.org/sites/wnoblog/_layouts/tag.aspx?ID=Don%20Pasqualeu)>

"Giovanni Ruffini." Wikipedia. 5 July 2013. <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giovanni\\_Ruffini](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giovanni_Ruffini)>

"Bel Canto: Audiences Love It, but What Is It?" The New York Times. 28 November 2008. <<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/30/arts/music/30tomm.html?pagewanted=all&r=0>>

"Operatic Styles - Bel Canto Opera." Suite101. com. 15 July 2013. <<http://suite101.com/article/operatic-styles---bel-canto-opera-a212169>>

"Commedia dell'Arte." The Metropolitan Museum of Art. 5 July 2013. <[http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/comm/hd\\_comm.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/comm/hd_comm.htm)>

"American Frontier." Wikipedia. 12 August 2013. <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American\\_frontier](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_frontier)>

"A Beginner's Guide to Spaghetti Westerns." Flavorwire. 12 August 2013. <<http://flavorwire.com/383336/a-beginners-guide-to-spaghetti-westerns>>

Ticket to the Opera [by Phil G. Goulding]. New York: Fawcett Books, 1996

The St. James Opera Encyclopedia [edited by John Guinn and Les Stone]. Detroit: Visible Ink Press, 1997

The New Grove Dictionary of Opera [edited by Stanley Bashford]. New York: McMillan Reference Limited, 1997

## Works Cited (General)

*This study guide was compiled accumulatively and includes information from the following sources accessed at various unknown dates since 2000:*

ClassicalMusic.about.com  
BehindTheNames.com  
Bellevue University  
The Billboard Illustrated Encyclopedia of Opera  
The Canadian Opera Company  
Encyclopedia of Manitoba  
Encyclopedia of the Opera by David Ewen  
Fort Worth Opera Study Guide  
GradeSaver.com  
La Scena  
Lyric Opera of Kansas City  
Manitoba Archives  
Metropolitan Opera  
musicwithease.com  
Music.MSN.com  
New York City Opera  
Opera America Learning Centre  
operabuffa.com; Opera Columbus Study Guide  
Opera News  
Operas Every Child Should Know  
Opera Lyra Ottawa Study Guide  
Opera Today  
Orchestra London Study Guide  
Pacific Opera  
San Diego Opera Study Guide  
San Francisco Opera Guild Study Guide  
schubincave.com  
A Season of Opera  
Skeletons from the Opera Closet  
timelines.com  
Tulsa Opera Study Guide  
University of Chicago Press  
University of Manitoba  
University of Texas  
University of Waterloo  
Rimrock Study Guide  
Virginia Opera Study Guide  
Winnipeg Free Press  
Wikipedia  
The World's Great Operas