

Young Audiences of Massachusetts

Educational Materials

Please forward to teachers

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE

Handel & Haydn Society Vocal Quartet: *Voices of the Stage*

Grade levels: 3-8

This program explores the variety of ways to tell a story through the musical forms of opera, oratorio, and musical theater. Musical selections spanning four centuries are performed to demonstrate this variety, with selections ranging from Bernstein, Sondheim and “Fats” Waller to Monteverdi and Gluck.

LEARNING GOALS:

1. To introduce the history of storytelling through Western musical styles.
2. To compare/contrast the musical styles of opera, oratorio and musical theatre.

PRE-ACTIVITY SUMMARY: *Identifying the Story*

Choose a song familiar to the students that tells a story. Ask students to identify the characters, plot, style and mood of the song. Ask students to create and write dialogue for the characters in the mood and style of the music. Invite students to share their writing with the class.

POST-ACTIVITY SUMMARY: *Setting the Story to Music*

Choose a story familiar to the students and then choose two or more pieces of music. Ask students to write the story out to one of the selections in the style of an opera, an oratorio or a musical theatre piece. Invite students to perform their stories for one another.

CURRICULUM LINKS:

English Language Arts, Music, Foreign Languages, History and Social Science, Theater

PRE-ACTIVITY: IDENTIFYING THE STORY

LEARNING GOAL:

To encourage students to identify the characters, plot, style and mood of the song.

MATERIALS/PREPARATION:

Familiar piece of music
Tape / CD player

TIME:

45 minutes - one hour

STEP 1: Play the chosen song several times for the students.

STEP 2: Continue to play piece and ask students to write notes on the characters, plot, style and mood of the song.

Characters

How many characters are involved?

How old are they?

How are they related to one another?

Plot

What is the main focus of the plot?

Where does it take place?

What is the historical year and time?

Style

What country does the music come from?

Is there just one or several rhythms?

Is the music classical, jazz, pop... ?

Mood

What kind of mood does the song set?

Is it upbeat or relaxing? Angry or sad?

How does it make you feel?

STEP 3: Ask students to write dialogue for the characters describing the plot of the song in the style of the music.

STEP 4: Ask volunteers to share their writing with the class.

EXTENSIONS:

1) If identifying all of the components of the song (characters, plot, style and mood) is too complex or time consuming, choose just one of the components to focus on for the exercise. Discuss the role this component plays in contributing to the overall effect of the story and music.

2) Identify a musical selection that has similar plots, characters, or themes of stories or literary passages used previously in class. Compare and contrast the two stories to one another.



ENCLOSURE: Handel & Haydn Society Vocal Quartet: *Voices of the Stage*
Grade levels: 3-8

Music for the program may be selected from the following options:

Musical Theatre

Leonard Bernstein/Stephen Sondheim: "Tonight" from *West Side Story*, (1957)

Frank Loesser: "Sit down, you're rockin' the boat" from *Guys and Dolls*, (1950)

Thomas "Fats" Waller: Title song from *Ain't Misbehavin'*, (1978)

Opera

Claudio Monteverdi: Recitative and "Ahi, caso acerbo" from *Orfeo ed Euridice*, (1607)

Christopher Gluck: Final chorus from *Orfeo ed Euridice*, (1762)

Raymond Fahrner: "Do-wop" Orfeo, (1996)

Pietro Mascagni: Introductory chorus from *Cavalleria rusticana*, (1890)

Benjamin Britten: Chorus of "Old Joe has gone fishing" from *Peter Grimes*, (1945)

Oratorio

George F. Handel: Chorus of "Jealousy" from *Hercules*, (1744)

West Side Story

Leonard Bernstein, Stephen Sondheim (1957)

West Side Story is based on William Shakespeare's play, *Romeo and Juliet*. When it premiered in 1957, the musical was shocking to many people because it portrayed violence, gangs and death on stage. In the musical there are two rival gangs, the "Jets" who are the white kids, and the "Sharks" who are the newly immigrated Puerto Rican kids. Despite all of the hatred surrounding them, Tony, a Polish-American boy, and Maria, a Puerto Rican immigrant, fall in love.

Orfeo ed Euridice

Claudio Monteverdi (1607)

Christopher Gluck (1762)

Many composers based their operas on the greek myth of Orpheus and Eurydice, two of the most acclaimed composers being Claudio Monteverdi and Christopher Gluck.

"Orpheus was born in the generation before the Trojan War. His father was the god Apollo, or more commonly, a Thracian river god, Oeagros. His mother was a Muse (a goddess that presides over an art such as poetry, music or dance). He was a singer and player of the lyre who could charm and soften the violence of nature. He was a prophet and religious teacher who knew the secrets of the world of the dead; a shaman and magician who had crossed over into that world and used his spells to bring the dead back to the world of the living. In particular, the story tells how he descended to the underworld in quest of his wife, Euridyce, who had died of a snakebite and how the beauty of his music persuaded the king and queen of the dead to release his beloved. In the best known version of this story he has a solemn injunction laid on him that he must not look back at his beloved until he has reached the world of the living; but the power of love is too strong for him, he turns, and Euridyce is lost." (Warden, viii-ix)

POST-ACTIVITY: SETTING THE STORY TO MUSIC

LEARNING GOAL:

To appreciate and actively demonstrate the different ways music can convey a story.

MATERIALS/PREPARATION:

Familiar story
Two or three dissimilar pieces of music
Tape/CD player

TIME: 45 minutes

STEP 1: Choose a familiar short story or an excerpt from a familiar story.

STEP 2: Choose two or three dissimilar pieces of music. Play them all for the students and ask them to choose the piece they think "fits" the story best.

STEP 3: Ask students to take the dialogue from the story and set it to the piece of music they have chosen making it sound like either an opera, an oratorio or a piece of musical theater.

Considerations

- What style will you choose?
- Who's telling the story?
- What mood would you like to convey?
- Speed/tempo
- Pitch: high or low
- Will you sing/speak the dialogue? Both?
- How did they convey the style in the program?

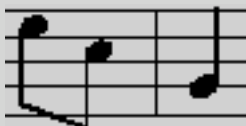
STEP 4: Ask volunteers to perform their stories for the class. Choose volunteers from all 2 or 3 of the different pieces of music to compare/contrast the differences.

EXTENSIONS:

1) Read the story to your students using the two or three pieces of music you've chosen. Follow the same guidelines listed above to stylize each story.

2) Brainstorm familiar stories that share similar plot, characters, themes, or settings with the musical examples listened to in class.

(Examples: Romeo and Juliet, Hercules, Hamlet, Trojan War, Beauty and the Beast, Aladin, Iliad and the Odyssey)



Handel & Haydn Society Vocal Quartet: *Voices of the Stage*

Grade levels: 3-8

RESOURCES:

Cross, Milton, and David Ewen. Encyclopedia of the Great Composers and Their Music. Vol. 1. New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1962.

Cross, Milton. Complete Stories of the Great Operas. New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1949.

Green, Stanley. The World of Musical Comedy. New York: Ziff-Davis Publishing Company, 1960.

Parker, Roger, Ed. The Oxford Illustrated History of Opera. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

VOCABULARY:

soprano, alto, tenor, bass, composer, play, musical, opera, oratorio, recitative, aria, chorus, solo, duet, trio, accompaniment, sacred, secular, style, genre, comedy, tragedy, improvisation

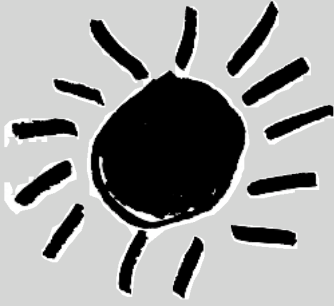
ABOUT THE PERFORMERS:

Founded in 1985, The **Handel and Haydn Society Vocal Quartet** is a professional vocal ensemble, with pianist, drawn from the **Handel and Haydn Society**. Under the direction of conductor Grant Llewellyn, **H and H's** musical versatility can also be heard in operas, concerts, and recitals throughout the United States, and on its own recordings. The talented and enthusiastic musicians who perform in the Vocal Quartet are selected for their ability to communicate with students on a dynamic and approachable level. **Susan Consoli, soprano**, is a graduate (vocal performance) of the University of Connecticut. She is a member of the Handel and Haydn Society chorus and a soloist in the Youth Concerts. She is a soloist with Old South Church and Temple Shalom of Newton, and is on the faculty of Andover Academy. **C. Heather Holland, mezzo-soprano**, holds a B.M. in french horn from the University of Missouri-Columbia, and an M.M. in Vocal Performance from N.E. Conservatory. Heather was a 2002 Tanglewood Music Center Fellow and is a member of the Handel and Haydn Society chorus and a soloist in the Youth Concerts. **Christian Figueroa, tenor**, holds vocal performance degrees from Syracuse University and N.E. Conservatory. He has also sung in the College Light Opera Company and Opera North Young Artist Program. He recently sang a month long run of "Che" in the Turtle Lane House production of *Evita* last February. **Nikolaus Nackley, baritone**, a graduate of N.E. Conservatory (vocal performance) will graduate this May with an M.M. in Vocal Pedagogy. He is a soloist at King's Chapel, Boston, and a member of the Handel and Haydn Society chorus. Nik has also sung with the Utah Festival Opera Company Young Artist Program and the Bay Area Summer Opera Theater Institute in San Francisco.

For more information on **Handel and Haydn**, please consult their web site: www.handelandhaydn.org.

ABOUT YOUNG AUDIENCES:

Young Audiences of Massachusetts (YA) is the oldest, largest and most utilized arts-in-education organization in the state and one of the largest in a national network of 33 chapters. For over 45 years, YA has distinguished itself as the vital link between Massachusetts schoolchildren (K-12) and more than 95 of the region's most accomplished actors, dancers, singers, musicians, and storytellers. Its 36 ensembles offer 57 interactive arts programs that represent a range of cultures, historical periods and artistic disciplines. YA is unique in its flexibility to offer interactive performances, tailor-made residencies, workshops, teacher-training, curriculum planning and multi-year projects. All programs include educational materials and satisfy local, state and/or federal arts education standards.



Young Audiences of Massachusetts

255 Elm Street, Suite 302, Somerville, MA 02144

(617) 629-YAMA (9262)

<http://www.yamass.org>

MASSACHUSETTS CURRICULUM FRAMEWORKS CONNECTIONS

Handel & Haydn Society Vocal Quartet: *Voices of the Stage*

<i>Language Arts 2</i>	...pose questions, listen to the ideas of others, and contribute their own information or ideas in group discussions.
<i>Language Arts 9</i>	...identify the basic facts and essential ideas in what they have read, heard, or viewed.
<i>History 1</i>	Chronology and Cause...understand the chronological order of historical events and recognize the complexity of historical cause and effect.
<i>History 2</i>	Historical Understanding...understand the meaning, implications, and import of historical events, while recognizing the contingency and unpredictability of history.
<i>Arts-Music 1</i>	Singing...sing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
<i>Arts-Music 4</i>	Improvisation and Composition...improvise, compose, and arrange music.
<i>Arts-Music 8</i>	Concepts of Style, Stylistic Influence, and Stylistic Change...demonstrate understanding of styles, influence, change.
<i>Arts-Music 10</i>	Interdisciplinary Connections...apply knowledge of the arts to the study of English language arts, foreign languages, health, history, and social science, mathematics, and science and technology/engineering.
<i>Arts-Theatre 1</i>	Acting...develop acting skills to portray characters who interact in improvised and scripted scenes.
<i>Arts-Theatre 3</i>	Directing...rehearse and stage dramatic works.

