

HIDING IN CLOSETS, JUMPING OUT WINDOWS, MISTAKEN IDENTITIES, long-lost children—Mozart’s profound comedy *Le Nozze di Figaro* has it all and more. Focusing on a single chaotic day in Count Almaviva’s Sevillian manor, the work is widely regarded as the pinnacle of the opera buffa genre and an audience favorite for its instantly recognizable melodies, virtuosic ensemble writing, motley cast of characters, and biting social critique. Indeed, whereas the play upon which Lorenzo Da Ponte based his libretto, Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais’s *La Folle Journée, ou Le Mariage de Figaro* (*The Mad Day, or the Marriage of Figaro*), caused a scandal upon its premiere, Mozart’s opera continues to entertain audiences nearly 250 years after its premiere, thanks to its timelessly thorough exploration of pure human emotion—pain, deception, love and infatuation, vengeance, forgiveness, and remorse.

The Met’s production by Richard Eyre, which opened the company’s 2014–15 season, updates the 18th-century setting to a manor house in 1930s Seville. With sets evoking the Moorish design influence glimpsed throughout southern Spain—for example, through carved wood paneling and lantern lights that illuminate the stage just enough to hide and to spy—and rotating on the stage’s turntable, the audience can follow the farcical action from room to room without missing a beat.

This guide approaches *Le Nozze di Figaro* as a classic, lighthearted situational comedy that explores fundamental human drives and desires—for love, revenge, dignity, and connection. The following pages provide musical analyses of some of the opera’s most exciting moments as well as crucial contextual information about the work’s creation and reception. Along the way, students will gain insights enabling them to confront the chaos and complexity of the opera’s plot by relishing the elegance, wit, and pure joy of Mozart’s musical genius.

THE WORK

An opera in four acts, sung in Italian

Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Libretto by Lorenzo Da Ponte

Based on *La Folle Journée, ou Le Mariage de Figaro* by Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais

First performed May 1, 1786, at the Burgtheater, Vienna, Austria

PRODUCTION

Richard Eyre Production

Rob Howell Set and Costume Designer

Paule Constable Lighting Designer

Sara Erde Choreographer

PERFORMANCE

The Met: Live in HD

April 26, 2025

Encore April 30, 2025

Federica Lombardi Countess Almaviva

Olga Kulchynska Susanna

Marianne Crebassa Cherubino

Elizabeth Bishop Marcellina

Joshua Hopkins Count Almaviva

Michael Sumuel Figaro

Maurizio Muraro Dr. Bartolo

Joana Mallwitz Conductor

Production a gift of Mercedes T. Bass and Jerry and Jane del Missier

Le Nozze di Figaro Educator Guide
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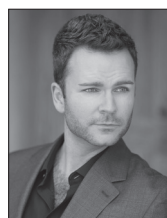
LOMBARDI



KULCHYNSKA



CREBASSA



HOPKINS



SUMUEL

The Metropolitan Opera Educator Guides offer a creative, interdisciplinary introduction to opera. Designed to complement existing classroom curricula in music, the humanities, STEM fields, and the arts, these guides will help young viewers confidently engage with opera regardless of their prior experience with the art form.

On the following pages, you'll find an array of materials designed to encourage critical thinking, deepen background knowledge, and empower students to engage with the opera. These materials can be used in classrooms and/or via remote-learning platforms, and they can be mixed and matched to suit your students' individual academic needs.

Above all, this guide is intended to help students explore *Le Nozze di Figaro* through their own experiences and ideas. The diverse perspectives that your students bring to opera make the art form infinitely richer, and we hope that they will experience opera as a space where their confidence can grow and their curiosity can flourish.

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To access this guide online, including any audio selections and handouts, visit metopera.org/figaroguide. All Met Opera on Demand (MOoD) clips referenced in this guide come from the performance on October 18, 2014.

WHO'S WHO IN *LE NOZZE DI FIGARO*

| CHARACTER | PRONUNCIATION | VOICE TYPE | THE LOWDOWN |
|--|------------------|---------------|---|
| Figaro A servant to the Count | FEE-ga-ro | bass | Good-humored if occasionally quick to anger, Figaro hopes to thwart the Count's efforts to seduce Susanna. Amid his schemes, however, Figaro also falls prey to—and returns—his fiancée's playful trickery. |
| Susanna A servant to the Countess | soo-ZAHN-na | soprano | Susanna is somebody to everybody: Figaro's betrothed, the Countess's ally, Cherubino's confidante, Marcellina's nemesis, and the Count's target. She is resourceful, intelligent, and lively. |
| Count Almaviva Lord of the manor | ahl-mah-VEE-vah | baritone | Arrogant and elegant, Count Almaviva will stop at nothing to get what he wants, though his stubbornness is more a weakness than a strength. Despite his exacting attitude, he is yet capable of moral clarity and even remorse. |
| Countess Almaviva Wife of the Count | ahl-mah-VEE-vah | soprano | Unlike her maidservant, the Countess is often melancholic and serious—caught in a loveless marriage. Despite her elevated class status, she joins Susanna and Figaro's efforts to entrap the Count. |
| Cherubino A page to the Count | keh-roo-BEE-no | mezzo-soprano | An adolescent rascal, Cherubino can hardly contain his deep desire for the Countess—or for any other woman in his orbit. When he gets conscripted into the Count's military regiment, the others in the manor find better use for him as a pawn in their schemes. |
| Dr. Bartolo A lawyer | BAR-toh-loh | bass | A doctor and lawyer in service to the Count, Dr. Bartolo aids Marcellina in her efforts to force Figaro to fulfill a contractual obligation and marry her. |
| Marcellina Dr. Bartolo's housekeeper | mar-chel-LEE-nah | soprano | Intelligent and lively, Marcellina hopes to marry Figaro—and spars with Susanna in the process—before making a life-changing discovery about her past. |

Synopsis



ACT I: *A manor house near Seville, the 1930s.* In a storeroom that they have been allocated, Figaro and Susanna, servants to the Count and Countess, are preparing for their wedding. Figaro is furious when he learns from his bride that the Count has tried to seduce her. He's determined to have revenge on his lord. Dr. Bartolo appears with his former housekeeper, Marcellina, who is equally determined to marry Figaro. She has a contract: Figaro must marry her or repay the money he borrowed from her. When Marcellina runs into Susanna, the two rivals exchange insults. Susanna returns to her room, and the Count's young page Cherubino rushes in. Finding Susanna alone, he speaks of his love for all the women in the house, particularly the Countess. When the Count appears, again trying to seduce Susanna, Cherubino hides. The Count then conceals himself when Basilio, the music teacher, approaches. Basilio tells Susanna that everyone knows Cherubino has a crush on the Countess. Outraged, the Count steps forward, but he becomes even more enraged when he discovers Cherubino and realizes that the boy has overheard his attempts to seduce Susanna. He chases Cherubino into the great hall, encountering Figaro, who has assembled the entire household to sing the praises of their lord. Put on the spot, the Count is forced to bless the marriage of Figaro and Susanna. To spite them and to silence Cherubino, he orders the boy to join the army without delay. Figaro sarcastically sends Cherubino off into battle.

ACT II: In her bedroom, the Countess mourns the loss of love in her life. Encouraged by Figaro and Susanna, she agrees to set a trap for her husband: They will send Cherubino, disguised as Susanna, to a rendezvous with the Count that night. At the same time, Figaro will send the Count an anonymous note suggesting that the Countess is having an assignation with another man. Cherubino arrives, and the two women lock the door before dressing him in women's clothes. When Susanna steps into an adjoining room, the Count knocks and is annoyed to find the door locked. Cherubino hides himself in a closet, and the Countess lets her husband in. When there's a sudden noise from behind the door, the Count is skeptical of his wife's story that Susanna is in there. Taking his wife with him, he leaves to get tools to force the door. Meanwhile, Susanna, who has reentered the room unseen and observed everything, helps Cherubino escape through the window before taking his place in the closet. When the Count and Countess return, both are astonished when Susanna emerges. Figaro arrives to begin the wedding festivities, but the Count questions him about the note he received. Figaro successfully eludes questioning until the gardener, Antonio, bursts in, complaining that someone has jumped from the window. Figaro improvises quickly, feigning a limp and pretending that it was he who jumped. As soon as Antonio leaves, Bartolo, Marcellina, and Basilio appear, putting their case to the Count and holding the contract that obliges Figaro to marry Marcellina. Delighted, the Count declares that Figaro must honor his agreement and that his wedding to Susanna will be postponed.

ACT III: Later that day in the great hall, Susanna leads on the Count with promises of a rendezvous that night. He is overjoyed but then overhears Susanna conspiring with Figaro. In a rage, he declares that he will have revenge. The Countess, alone, recalls her past happiness. Marcellina, accompanied by a lawyer, Don Curzio, demands that Figaro pay his debt or marry her at once. Figaro replies that he can't marry without the consent of his parents for whom he's been searching for years, having been abducted as a baby. When he reveals a birthmark on his arm, Marcellina realizes that he is her long-lost son, fathered by Bartolo. Arriving to see Figaro and Marcellina embracing, Susanna thinks her fiancé has betrayed her, but she is pacified when she learns the truth. The Countess is determined to go through with the conspiracy against her husband, and she and Susanna compose a letter to him confirming the meeting with Susanna that evening in the garden. Cherubino, now dressed as a girl, appears with his sweetheart, Barbarina, the daughter of Antonio. Antonio, who has found Cherubino's cap, also arrives and reveals the young man. The Count is furious to discover that Cherubino has disobeyed him and is still in the house. Barbarina punctures his anger, explaining that the Count, when he attempted to seduce her, promised her anything she desired. Now, she wants to marry Cherubino, and the Count reluctantly agrees.

The household assembles for Figaro and Susanna's wedding. While dancing with the Count, Susanna hands him the note, sealed with a pin, confirming their tryst that evening.

ACT IV: At night in the garden, Barbarina despairs that she has lost the pin the Count has asked her to take back to Susanna as a sign that he's received her letter. When Figaro and Marcellina appear, Barbarina tells them about the planned rendezvous between the Count and Susanna. Thinking that his bride is unfaithful, Figaro curses all women. He hides when Susanna and the Countess arrive, dressed in each other's clothes. Alone, Susanna sings of love. She knows that Figaro is listening and enjoys making him think that she's about to betray him with the Count. She then conceals herself—just in time to see Cherubino try to seduce the disguised Countess. When the Count arrives looking for Susanna, he chases the boy away. Figaro, by now realizing what is going on, joins in the joke and declares his passion for Susanna in her Countess disguise. The Count returns to discover Figaro with his wife, or so he thinks, and explodes with rage. At that moment, the real Countess steps forward and reveals her identity. Ashamed, the Count asks her pardon. Ultimately, she forgives him, and the entire household celebrates the day's happy ending.



The Play *La Folle Journée, ou Le Mariage de Figaro* by Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais

Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais did not intend to complete a second play about Count Almaviva and the peasants under his reign. In his preface to *Le Barbier de Seville* (1773), the first play in his Figaro trilogy and the prequel to *La Folle Journée, ou Le Mariage de Figaro*, Beaumarchais freely imagined what might have occurred if the comedy continued into a sixth act, with Dr. Bartolo and Marcellina discovering—upon the revelation of Figaro’s spatula-shaped birthmark—that the titular barber is indeed their long-lost son kidnapped by “gypsies” as a child. According to the playwright himself, the French nobleman Prince de Conti was so taken by this suggestion that he urged Beaumarchais to continue Figaro’s story in another play. Thus, *Le Mariage de Figaro* was born.

But it was a notoriously difficult pregnancy. In 1782, Beaumarchais presented a manuscript of the play to King Louis XVI, who refused to let it be performed publicly. Soon thereafter, the intrepid playwright went about organizing a series of private readings of the play throughout Paris. In response to the work’s popularity, Louis XVI conceded to a private performance at the palace of Versailles in the summer of 1783. Three hours before curtain, however, the show was canceled. A few months later, the king did ultimately allow another private performance at the country house of another French nobleman, the Comte de Vaudreuil.

Not satisfied with this result, the ever-enterprising Beaumarchais set up a series of semi-public meetings with official censors, defending the play and incorporating their suggestions into a revised version. Finally, the play had its premiere at the Comédie-Française in Paris in 1784. The work caused such an uproar that three audience members were crushed to death by the crowd of 5,000 spectators, many of whom arrived at 8AM and entered the auditorium at noon for an evening performance. Public stagings of the play were subsequently banned in Vienna—where Mozart’s opera ultimately premiered—by the direction of Emperor Joseph II.

Lorenzo Da Ponte significantly condensed Beaumarchais’s five-act comedy to create the libretto for *Le Nozze di Figaro*, going so far as to refer to his work as an “extract.” He reduced the cast from 16 to 11 characters, two of which were doubled in the premiere staging (representing four characters total). Due to the controversy surrounding the play, Da Ponte trimmed much of the overtly political content, including several pointed philosophical speeches by Figaro and a heated exchange between him and the Count in Act III. Elsewhere, the librettist removed an entire trial scene where Marcellina’s contract obliging Figaro to marry her is adjudicated (with the verdict in her favor).

Le Mariage de Figaro does, however, include several musical scenes. In Act IV, the leadup to the wedding has a fandango (a type of Spanish dance) and a duet; the play concludes with a popular vaudeville song; and Cherubino’s performance for the Countess, immortalized by Mozart as the aria “*Voi che sapete*,” occurs in Act II of the play.

FUN FACT

One of the most famous arias in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, “*Non più andrai*,” is sung by Figaro at the end of Act I as Cherubino is sent off to military service. The aria also holds a special place in cinematic history. In the film *Amadeus* (1984), which fictionalizes the rivalry between Mozart and Italian composer Antonio Salieri, the upstart composer sits at the piano to play a march by Salieri while members of the Viennese court look on. Bored by the repetitiveness of the piece (“The rest is just the same, isn’t it?”), Mozart begins to improvise—ultimately landing on the main melodic refrain from Figaro’s aria.

The Creation of *Le Nozze di Figaro*

1732 Pierre-Auguste Caron de Beaumarchais is born in Paris.

1749 Lorenza Da Ponte is born in Vittorio Veneto, Italy, in the foothills north of Venice.

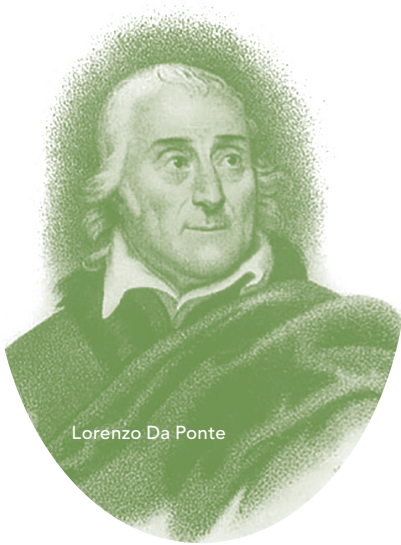
1756 Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart is born in Salzburg, Austria, on January 27. He is one of two surviving children of Leopold Mozart, a composer in the service of the Prince-Archbishop of Salzburg.

1759 Wolfgang’s astonishing musical abilities are clear from a young age. He begins playing harpsichord at age three. At four, he composes a harpsichord concerto that is declared “unplayably difficult” by his father’s musician friends—until the child sits down at the harpsichord and plays it. And at six, he begins to teach himself violin.

1762 A prodigal composer and keyboardist at seven years old, Mozart performs for the Empress Maria Theresa in Vienna. Over the next 11 years, the Mozart family tours throughout Europe, performing for members of the royalty and nobility.

1767 Mozart completes his first full-length dramatic work, *Apollo et Hyacinthus*, based on a Latin text drawn from Ovid. It is first performed in Salzburg on May 13.

1775 Beaumarchais’s play *Le Barbier de Séville*, the first in his Figaro trilogy, has its first performance at the Comédie-Française in Paris. The premiere is a flop, but Beaumarchais’s revised version receives great acclaim.



Lorenzo Da Ponte

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

1781 Mozart relocates to Vienna, seeking to make his living as an independent composer and performer in the culturally rich Habsburg capital, rather than solely under contract to a wealthy patron or the church.

This same year, the poet and former priest Lorenzo Da Ponte moves to Vienna, having been banished from Venice because of his liberal politics and illicit involvement with several married women. In Vienna, he attracts the notice of Emperor Joseph II, who appoints Da Ponte as the poet to the court theater. His libretti for Mozart, Antonio Salieri, and Vicente Martín y Soler stand as landmark achievements of Italian opera buffa in Vienna.

1783 Beaumarchais organizes private readings of the second play in his Figaro trilogy, *La Folle Journée, ou Le Mariage de Figaro*, throughout Paris. In response, Louis XVI—who had previously forbidden public presentation of the play—schedules a performance at the palace of Versailles, but it gets canceled three hours before curtain.

1784 After Beaumarchais conducts semi-public meetings with official censors and further revises the play, *Le Mariage de Figaro* premieres at the Comédie-Française in Paris. The work causes such an uproar that three audience members are crushed to death by the crowd of 5,000 spectators, many of whom arrived at 8AM and entered the auditorium at noon for an evening performance.

1786 *Le Nozze di Figaro*, the first of Mozart's collaborations with Da Ponte, premieres on May 1 in Vienna. Following a very successful run of performances in Prague, Pasquale Bondini, the Italian impresario of the city's National Theater, commissions Mozart to compose a new opera, which will become *Don Giovanni*, Mozart and Da Ponte's second collaboration.

1791 Mozart falls ill on November 22 and dies on December 5, likely from rheumatic fever. He leaves his wife with enormous debts and is buried in an unmarked grave in the St. Marx Cemetery, located outside Vienna's city walls.



1805 Lorenzo Da Ponte immigrates to America, where he founds the department of Italian literature at Columbia University (1825) and builds the first theater in the United States dedicated entirely to opera (1833).

First Dibs

The premise of the central conflict in Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro* is frequently alluded to but never explained outright. Shrouded by intentional vagueness, euphemism, and innuendo, the motivation for the Count's attempted seduction of Susanna is largely left to the audience to decipher. His prerogative is the so-called "droit de seigneur," French for "right of the lord." In common parlance, this phrase refers to the feudal lord's right or privilege to have sexual relations with any of his women vassals, especially on the night of her wedding. The practice has thus also been called "jus primae noctis," Latin for "right of the first night."

The opera's dramatic and narrative action is sparked when the Count, who has recently abolished or relinquished the privilege on his lands, intends to reclaim it. Susanna reveals as much in the first scene of the opera, when she tells Figaro that the Count has been pursuing her, aided by the music teacher Don Basilio:

SUSANNA E tu credevi
che fosse la mia dote
merto del tuo bel muso?

Did you suppose then
my lord gave me a dowry
just to reward your pretty face?

FIGARO Me n'ero lusingato.

I had flattered myself so.

SUSANNA Ei la destina
Per ottener da me certe mezz'ore ...
che il diritto feudale ...

He uses it
to obtain from me certain half hours ...
for the feudal right ...

FIGARO Come? Ne' feudi suoi
Non l'ha il Conte abolito?

Privilege? Has not my lord himself
abolished it in his fiefs?

SUSANNA Ebben; ora è pentito,
e par che tenti
riscattarlo da me.

Well; now he regrets it,
and it seems he is trying
to redeem it from me.

Here, "the feudal right" is the *droit de seigneur*. All ensuing hijinks result from this initial reversal, the Count's intention to "redeem" the feudal right he has previously abolished. The relinquishment of his privilege does not, however, merely concern Susanna. The entire manor, and all its women, have essentially been liberated from the threat of the Count's sexual advances. (And the men of the manor are no longer in danger of having their marriages violated by their lord.) Toward the end of Act I, a chorus of peasants arrives and sings the Count's praises:

Giovani liete,
fiori spargete
davanti al nobile
nostro signor.
Il suo gran core
vi serba intatto
d'un più bel fiore
l'almo candor.

Come lads and lasses,
flowers humbly strewing,
and praise with thankful hearts
our gracious lord.
Fairer than all is
that flower of virtue,
which to our land of love
he has restored.

The feminine perspective on this question is further explored first in a duet sung by two peasant women and then by the entire chorus at the end of Act III, when Figaro and Susanna finally have their marriage blessed by the Count. From the audience's perspective, these choruses are shot through with irony, as the Count has no intention to honor his "gracious" decision to restore virtue to his subjects.

Amanti costanti,
seguaci d'onor,
cantate, lodate
sì saggio signor.

Faithful and
honorable girls,
sing praises
to our wise lord.

A un dritto cedendo,
che oltraggia, che offende,
ei caste vi rende
ai vostri amator.

By renouncing a right
which outraged and offended,
he leaves you pure
for your lovers.

Although the *droit de seigneur* forms the basis of the opera's plot, there is little evidence that any such formal law existed. The first appearance of the French phrase dates to 1762—about two decades before Beaumarchais would write the play ultimately adapted into *Le Nozze di Figaro*—when Voltaire used it in his five-act comedy *Le Droit du Seigneur ou l'Écueil du Sage*. The writer and philosopher had previously referred to the practice in his *Dictionnaire Philosophique* (1764), and it is also mentioned in Montesquieu's *De l'Esprit des Lois* (*The Spirit of Law*) (1748).

In feudal Europe, it seems that the custom was more likely exercised as a tax or fee to be paid by the vassal in exchange for the right to be waived. In medieval England, this payment was called the "merchet." In late medieval Spain, the practice was outlawed by Ferdinand II of Aragon in the *Sentencia Arbitral de Guadalupe* in 1486, which set limits on the obligations of serfs to their lords.

Though the *droit de seigneur* seems not to have been codified in law, it is easy enough to understand how nobles were able to wield power over those who not only worked for them but were also dependent upon—and often indebted to—them. In that sense, the privilege the Count hopes to reclaim is all the more pernicious for its customary continuation outside the formal real of the law. What Beaumarchais, and Da Ponte and Mozart after him, hoped to unveil was not a legal problem but a moral one: the unchecked power of the lord of the manor to do whatever, with whomever, he pleases.



Shall We Dance?

“*Se vuol ballare*” (Track 1), Figaro’s Act I aria, arguably sets the whole opera in motion. In the preceding scene, he and Susanna are happily planning their wedding when she reveals that the Count may have ulterior motives for putting the newlywed couple’s bedroom so close to his own—namely, easy access to Susanna, whom he hopes to seduce. Figaro is understandably perturbed by this revelation and sets out to seek vengeance against the Count.

One of the few true soliloquy arias in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, “*Se vuol ballare*” takes the form of a cavatina in 3/4 meter, or waltz time—fitting for an aria whose title challenges the Count to a dance. The opening of the song is melodically simple, consisting largely of stepwise motion, and the orchestral accompaniment almost uniformly follows a quarter-note rhythm to solidify its dancelike quality. Immediately after the first statement of the primary theme, however, the violins enter with trilled sixteenth notes that lend an air of mischief. These gestures return as Figaro considers how precisely he should get back at the Count, repeating aloud to himself, “I know ... I know ... I know.” Here Mozart inserts a not-so-subtle musical joke. As Figaro cautions himself to act “carefully,” or “*piano*” in Italian, the strings suddenly soften from *forte* (loud) to *piano* (soft).

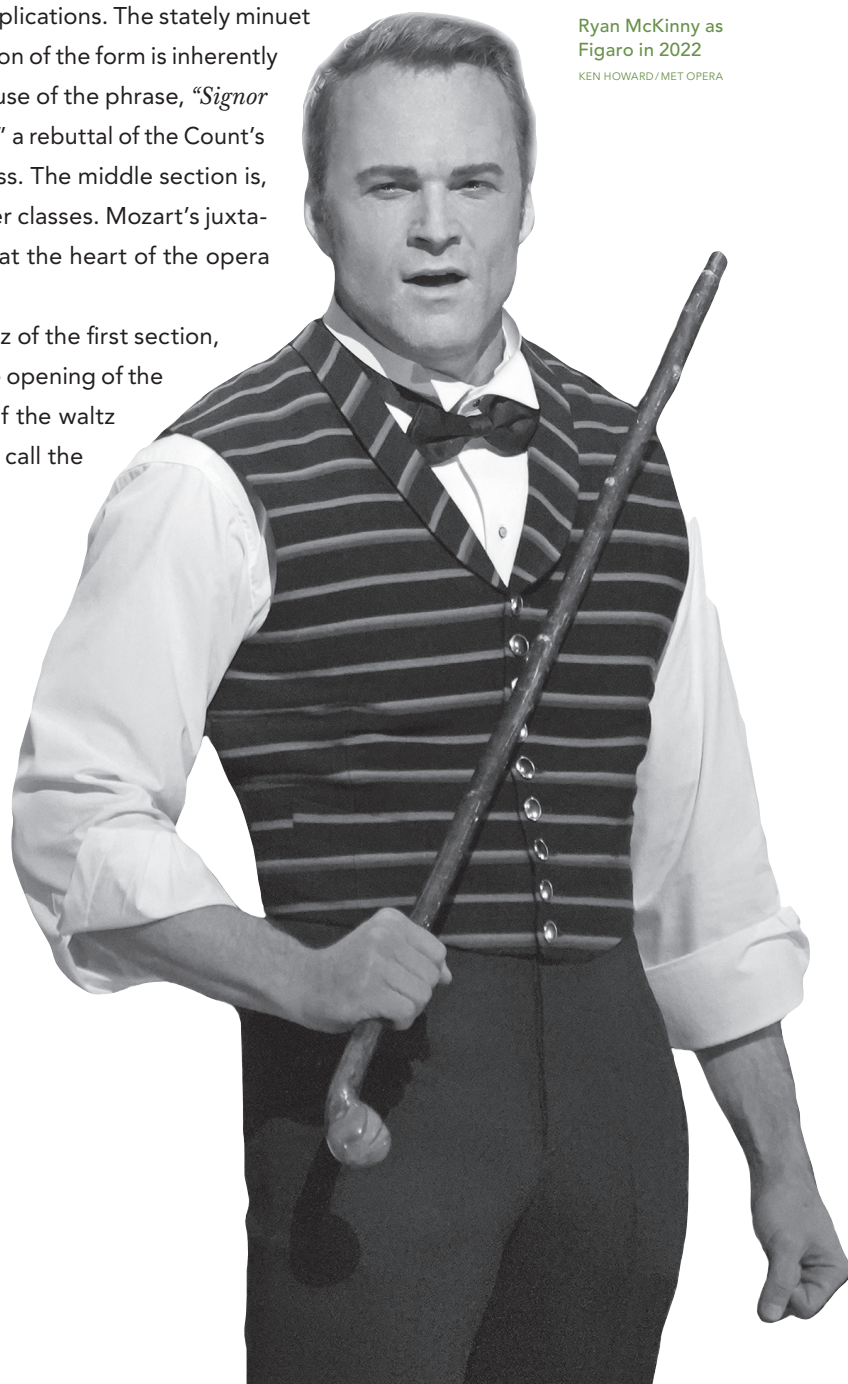


The second section of the aria quickens and changes to 2/4 meter, introducing a sense of frenzy as Figaro announces his intention to “make defense an art, and upset [the Count’s] schemes.” Just as the servant aims to throw a wrench in his lord’s plan, so, too, does Mozart disrupt the stately waltz with a frantic metrical change. This passage, marked *presto* (very quickly), also features rapid dynamic shifts and exceedingly wordy lines with consecutive multisyllabic words (“*L’arte schermendo, l’arte adoprando, di qua pungendo, di là scherzando*”)—all of which suggest the havoc Figaro hopes to wreak upon his foe.

This switch from 3/4 to 2/4 meter also bears social implications. The stately minuet or waltz is the dance of the Count, and Figaro’s usurpation of the form is inherently ironic. This reversal is further exacerbated by Figaro’s use of the phrase, “*Signor contino*,” using the diminutive form to mean “little count,” a rebuttal of the Count’s superiority and Figaro’s sense of his own powerlessness. The middle section is, conversely, a contredanse, a form associated with lower classes. Mozart’s juxtaposition of meter thus encapsulates the class conflict at the heart of the opera (and Figaro’s schemes).

The aria concludes with a return to the delicate waltz of the first section, but this time it takes on a different aspect. Whereas the opening of the aria has a playful sense of daring, the recapitulation of the waltz sounds more defiant. When Figaro remarks again, “I’ll call the tune,” he says it not as a threat but as a guarantee.

Ryan McKinny as
Figaro in 2022
KEN HOWARD/MET OPERA



Teenage Dream

Cherubino's Act II aria, "*Voi che sapete*" (Track 6), contains one of Mozart's most memorable—and singable—melodies. It is also an example par excellence of diegetic music, as well as a witty instance of dramatic irony. The scene takes place at the top of Act II, just after the Countess has lamented her loveless marriage to the Count in her own aria, "*Porgi, amor*." The Countess summons Cherubino to her room, where she, Susanna, and Figaro have just agreed on a plan to disguise the young pageboy in Susanna's clothing to ensnare the Count. Once he arrives, the Countess urges him to sing the "little song" he composed and offered to Susanna in exchange for a blue ribbon worn by the Countess.

Cherubino's aria is thus one of several examples of diegetic music in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, whereby music is performed within the narrative world of the opera. When he sings "*Voi che sapete*," the character Cherubino is literally singing to the Countess and Susanna, who accompanies him on guitar (as mimicked by soft pizzicato arpeggios in the strings). Mozart's score and the action of the scene thus merge in a single musical gesture.

A fidgety, impish adolescent who confesses deep romantic love for the Countess—and pure physical infatuation for every other woman he lays eyes on—Cherubino



expresses two contrasting emotions in this aria. The song's tone, on the one hand, is philosophical, reflective, and sentimental, all aspects conveyed by its elegant and almost restrained primary theme. On the other hand, the performer is a mere teenager of low status who has been compelled to perform a love song in front of the very person to whom it is dedicated. This circumstance endows the aria with a persistent sense of nervousness, often evoked through staccato lines in the oboe and flute punctuating the end of vocal phrases.

Mozart's score also brilliantly conveys Da Ponte's text setting. Structured in conventional A–B–A form, the aria's extended second section—twice the length of the first and third sections, respectively—illustrates Cherubino's emotional confusion through multiple and unexpected modulations. Whereas the A section sits squarely in the key of B-flat major, the B section moves to F minor and then, using C major as a pivot chord, A-flat major. It is over this harmonic movement that Cherubino sings, "I have a feeling full of desire, which now is pleasure, now is torment."

In the next line, "I freeze, then I feel my spirit all ablaze" (*"Gelo e poi sento l'anima avvampar"*), Mozart musically freezes the orchestral accompaniment in the new key of A-flat major as the woodwinds hold tied whole notes across multiple measures. At the conclusion of the B section, Cherubino's emotional torment ("I sigh without meaning to. I tremble but don't know why") is further enacted through repeated, sputtering sixteenth-note groupings—a clear contrast to the simple, stately vocal lines found elsewhere throughout the aria. The trills in the flute and oboe at the song's conclusion evoke the quickened heartbeat of a teenage boy hopelessly in love with an older woman.

"Voi che sapete" is, finally, a brilliant musical example of dramatic irony in an opera rife with surprises, conspiracies, and reversals. When Cherubino sings to the Countess, the audience already knows he is in love with her—but she is none the wiser (though she may have an inkling). At the same time, the audience has been privy to the Countess's complaint about a life devoid of love in *"Porgi, amor."* Cherubino, however, has little knowledge of her romantic distress. This aria, then, brings together two characters who seem not yet to know just how much they share, nor what might ensue when they ultimately realize it.

FUN FACT

One of the scenes cut from Beaumarchais's play in its adaptation by librettist Lorenzo Da Ponte is a trial where an esteemed judge deliberates on Marcellina's claim to Figaro's hand in marriage. When composer Gustav Mahler conducted *Le Nozze di Figaro* at the Vienna State Opera in 1906, he added it back in, scoring the scene in imitation of Mozart.

MATERIALS

Handout

COMMON CORE**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6–11-12.1**

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.C

Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.D

Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

Philosophical Chairs

Philosophical Chairs is an activity designed to foster critical thinking, active inquiry, and respectful dialogue among students. To play, participants agree or disagree with a series of statements, but the game doesn't end there. The most crucial element is what happens next: Participants discuss their point of view and can switch sides if their opinions change during the discussions.

Each topic statement is deliberately open ended yet ties into several of the themes present in *Le Nozze di Figaro*—including love and infidelity, class conflict, gendered social norms, and the perversions of authority. Offer students a brief overview of the opera's plot, setting, and context, and remind them how to build a safe space for productive conversation. Some of the topics might be confusing or hard—that's okay! As you and your students explore and learn about *Le Nozze di Figaro*, you can return to these statements: What do they have to do with the opera's story? How might these questions help us explore the opera's story, history, and themes?

A NOTE TO FACILITATORS: Between statements, provide some clarity as to why that statement was chosen. Explain to students where and how each theme shows up in the opera, or invite students to offer their own explanations.

STEP 1. INQUIRE

Distribute the included handout with guidelines and statements, making sure to review the rules of engagement as a group. Next, invite students to read one of the statements—out loud as a class, to themselves, or in small groups. As they read, they should ask themselves:

- Do I understand the statement?
 - If not, what questions might clarify it for me?
- What immediately comes to mind when I read the statement?
 - What is my initial reaction: Do I agree or disagree?
- What led me to that decision?
 - What opinions do I hold about this statement?
 - What life experiences may have led me to think this way?

STEP 2. RESPOND

Read the statements again out loud and ask students to commit to one side. They can agree or disagree, but there is no middle ground. (Many will not be completely comfortable committing to one side over the other—that’s part of the game. It will help foster conversation and debate.)

STEP 3. DISCUSS

Start a conversation! Use the following questions to guide discussion:

- Does anyone feel very strongly either way? Why or why not?
- Does anyone feel conflicted? Why or why not?
- Give voice to what you thought about in the first step:
 - What led me to make my decision?
 - What opinions do I hold with regard to this statement?
 - What life experience may have led me to think this way?
- What might you have not considered that others are now bringing up in the discussion?
- Did any new questions arise during the discussion?

As the conversation continues, students are free to change their minds or develop more nuanced perspectives.

Repeat steps 1 through 3 for each statement.

CRITICAL INQUIRY

Although he is framed throughout the opera as the villain or antagonist, the Count is also portrayed as capable of guilt, remorse, and the desire for redemption. At the end of *Le Nozze di Figaro*, all is well and forgiven. Does this happy ending seem like a fitting conclusion to the preceding events? Does it soften some of the social commentary and political critique found in the opera? Does it alter how you understand the opera in retrospect?

Figaro's Feelings

CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

Music theory and ear training, English/ language arts, social-emotional learning, public speaking

MATERIALS

- Handouts
- Audio tracks
- Synopsis
- "Who's Who in *Le Nozze di Figaro*"
- Illustrated synopsis (optional)
- MOoD clips (optional)

COMMON CORE

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.7

Compare and contrast the experience of reading a story, drama, or poem to listening to or viewing an audio, video, or live version of the text, including contrasting what they "see" and "hear" when reading the text to what they perceive when they listen or watch.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.6.1.c

Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.

CORE ARTS

MU:Re7.2.6.a

Describe how the elements of music and expressive qualities relate to the structure of the pieces.

TH:Re7.1.6.a

Describe and record personal reactions to artistic choices in a drama/theatre work.

TH:Re8.1.5.c

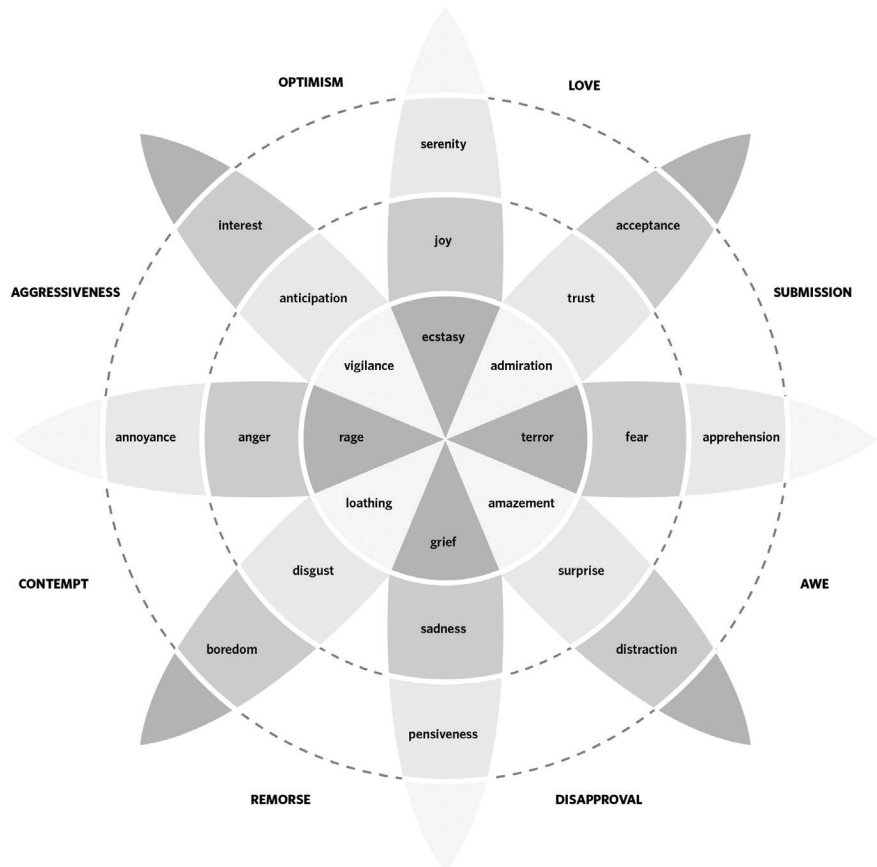
Investigate the effects of emotions on posture, gesture, breathing, and vocal intonation in a drama/theatre work.

It's the day of Figaro's marriage to Susanna! A whirlwind of mistaken identities, disguises, and general pandemonium only heightens the excitement of the event. This chaos leads to an explosion of emotions from all involved: jealousy, rage, joy, fear, shame, longing, happiness, greed—the full gamut of feelings is on display as the characters in the opera's Seville manor prepare for the upcoming wedding (or try to stop it from happening in the first place).

In this activity, students will explore *Le Nozze di Figaro* by examining several key arias from the work in tandem with psychologist Robert Plutchik's "Wheel of Emotions" to decipher how each character is feeling—and how Mozart's score and Da Ponte's libretto further convey that sentiment. Students will also be able to draw connections between Mozart's depiction of the characters in the opera and their own emotional experiences.

STEP 1. REVIEW

At first glance, the popular and well-known music from *Le Nozze di Figaro* is elegant and moving, abounding in simple, singable melodies. Spend a little more time with





A scene from Act II
KEN HOWARD / MET OPERA

the opera, however, and you'll discover that Mozart's score is as emotionally complex as it is lovely. Each character in *Le Nozze di Figaro* has a distinct guiding motive, which can often be deduced from the vocal and instrumental lines. Every character has something to gain and something to hide: Susanna tries to avoid the Count's advances as her wedding night approaches; the randy adolescent Cherubino confesses his love for the Countess; Marcellina searches for her lost child while trying to force Figaro to marry her (big mistake!); and the Countess works alongside Figaro and Susanna to catch her unfaithful husband in the act—just to name a few.

Since the opera's plot can be quite complicated, review the synopsis and the "Who's Who in *Le Nozze di Figaro*" breakdown included with this guide before delving into the activity. For younger students, the illustrated synopsis (metopera.org/figaro-illustrated) might be a better and more succinct overview of the story. You can either have students read and review the synopsis in pairs or small groups or read it aloud as a class. Write down key plot points and conflicts on the board or a piece of chart paper, if necessary.

Before moving on, remind students that in an opera, characters' emotions can be suggested in several ways: through the text; through the singing, or vocal line; or through the instrumental accompaniment, or orchestral line. Sometimes, all three happen at once! And they might not even convey the same thing: By using instrumental underscoring as a view into the hearts of his characters, Mozart intentionally gives the audience a window into their true feelings—even if the characters are unaware of those feelings themselves. (The composer even uses specific instruments to communicate certain emotional characteristics. The bassoon, for example, can represent a character telling a joke or a character having a joke played on them.)

FUN FACT

For the premiere of *Le Nozze di Figaro* in Vienna in 1786, the role of Barbarina was sung by Austrian soprano Anna Gottlieb, who had turned 12 years old just two days prior. Five years later, Gottlieb went on to create the role of Pamina in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*.

STEP 2. EXPLORE

Next, introduce Robert Plutchik's "Wheel of Emotions" as a key to understanding the depth of meaning each Figaro character experiences. This model provides a simple way to make sense of feelings. It comprises eight primary emotions: joy, trust, fear, surprise, sadness, disgust, anger, and anticipation. Radiating toward the outer edges are less intense variants of these core emotions while the core contains the most intense form. When you feel annoyance, for example, it's a milder form of rage, whereas ecstasy is the severe version of joy. The wheel also presents the bipolarity of the eight primary emotions: joy versus sadness, anger versus fear, trust versus disgust, and surprise versus anticipation.

Distribute the handout included with this guide and prompt students to consider the following questions:

- Which two emotions mix to make love? What about aggressiveness?
- Which emotions on the wheel do you think are positive? Which are negative?
- Can you think of a time your emotions intensified? What happened?
- Do you agree with Plutchik's organization of the "Wheel of Emotions?" Why or why not?

STEP 3. LISTEN

Next, harness this knowledge of Plutchik's "Wheel of Emotions" to examine key dramatic moments in *Le Nozze di Figaro*. You can divide the class into small groups or pairs or ask students to work individually. Each student, pair, or group should select an aria from the list below.

Figaro, Act I: "*Se vuol ballare*" (Track 1 or MOoD clip 7)

Cherubino, Act I: "*Non so più*" (Track 2 or MOoD clip 11)

Countess, Act II: "*Porgi, amor*" (Track 3 or MOoD clip 16)

Count, Act III: "*Hai già vinta la causa*" (Track 4 or MOoD clip 31)

Barbarina, Act IV: "*L'ho perduta*" (Track 5 or MOoD clip 41)

Distribute the "Text and Translations" handout included with this guide. Have students listen to their chosen aria while reading along with the text. Ask them to focus on the words the character is singing, as well as the vocal line of the aria. Then, they should select one core feeling from Plutchik's "Wheel of Emotions" that best expresses the emotion conveyed by the text and vocal line.

Next, students will listen to the aria again. This time, they should focus on the instrumental line. Consider:

- What do you hear?
- What kinds of instruments are present?
- How would you describe the instrumental line?

Have them select one or two nonprimary feelings (that is, further away from the center) from the “Wheel of Emotions” to represent the instrumental line. Remind students that the emotion(s) they select for the instrumental line might be entirely different from the emotion they selected for the vocal line.

Now, students should listen to their aria for a third and final time, focusing on the piece as a whole. Ask them to focus on the interplay between the voice and the orchestra.

- Are they expressing the same emotions or mood?
- Does the orchestra ever overpower or steal the show from the voice? How does that affect the emotional content of the piece?

Taking both the vocal and instrumental lines into consideration, students should select one more emotion from the wheel to summarize the emotional content of the aria.

STEP 4. SHARE

To conclude the activity, have students share their responses with the class. If you had multiple students or groups work on the same aria, have them share with each other and then present the similarities and differences between their respective “Wheels of Emotions” to the broader group. Before students share their reflections with the class, it might be helpful to listen to each aria together at least once while having students follow along with the included texts and translations. That way, when students see the opera, they will already know at least one aria in each act!

If there are disagreements as to where any aria—or aspect of an aria, like the text or vocal line—belongs on the “Wheel of Emotions,” put it up to a vote! Have students make teams and set up a formal debate where each side must provide evidence for why their placement is correct.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

It's Complicated

In *Le Nozze di Figaro*, the members of the Count's manor prepare for the wedding of servants Figaro and Susanna. A whirlwind of hijinks adds a level of chaos to the eventful day.

Many of the ensuing complications arise due to a lack of clear communication. Ask students to think about a complicated conversation they need to have with someone in their life. Prompt students to reflect on the tips listed below:

- > Choose the right time and place to talk. Try to find someplace quiet where you can focus on the conversation at hand.
- > Be aware of your body. Take deep breaths during the conversation, and work to keep your body relaxed as you listen.
- > Write things down. Make a list in advance of the topics you would like to cover in your conversation and take notes on what the others have to say.
- > Choose empathy! Work to assume the best intentions from the other person involved. If the conversation doesn't go as planned, be easy on yourself and others. Take a break and try again.

CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

Music, theater, English/language arts, visual arts and design

MATERIALS

Handouts

MOoD clips

Construction paper

Synopsis

"Who's Who in *Le Nozze di Figaro*"

Illustrated synopsis (optional)

Colored markers, pens, or pencils (optional)

COMMON CORE**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.3**

Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.5

Analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting, or plot.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.6.5

Include multimedia components (e.g., graphics, images, music, sound) and visual displays in presentations to clarify information.

CORE ARTS**VA:Cr2.3.7.a**

Apply visual organizational strategies to design and produce a work of art, design, or media that clearly communicates information or ideas.

TH:Re9.1.5.c

Recognize how a character's circumstances impact an audience's perspective in a drama/theatre work.

TH:Re7.1.6.a

Describe and record personal reactions to artistic choices in a drama/theatre work.

Piece of Cake

On the one hand, the plot of *Le Nozze di Figaro* is exceedingly simple: Two servants plan their wedding and, four hours later, they get married. On the other hand, each scene is filled with such hijinks and trickery that it can be immensely difficult to keep track of what is happening when (and why). And while the opera is one of the best situational comedies ever composed, it can also be complex and multilayered, so understanding the intricacies of each scene is crucial to discovering the humor in it all.

In this activity, students will work together to identify the layers of comedy and conflict in select scenes from *Le Nozze di Figaro*. Then, they will use their analysis to build multitiered "cakes" representing the dramatic structure of each scene. When all is said and done, they will have prepared a dessert banquet befitting Susanna and Figaro's wedding.

STEP 1. REVIEW

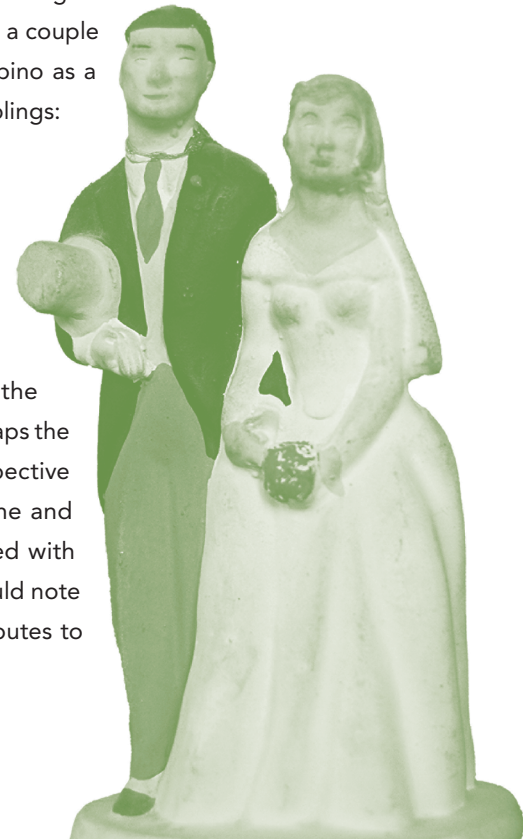
Since the plot of the opera is so complex, begin by distributing the synopsis included with this guide. Younger students might find it more helpful to read through the illustrated synopsis (metopera.org/figaro-illustrated). As students work through either synopsis, ask them to complete the "Character Organizer" handout included with this guide. This worksheet will help them grasp the identity of each character, their goals, and their conflicts. If they need some additional support, you can also distribute the "Who's Who in *Le Nozze di Figaro*" chart included with this guide.

This part of the activity can also be done in pairs or groups, with each assigned to a particular character in the opera. Another way to organize this exercise is to give each group of students a couple from the characters listed below, with Cherubino as a wildcard that can be added to any of the couplings:

- Figaro and Susanna
- Count and Countess Almaviva
- Dr. Bartolo and Marcellina
- Cherubino

STEP 2. WATCH

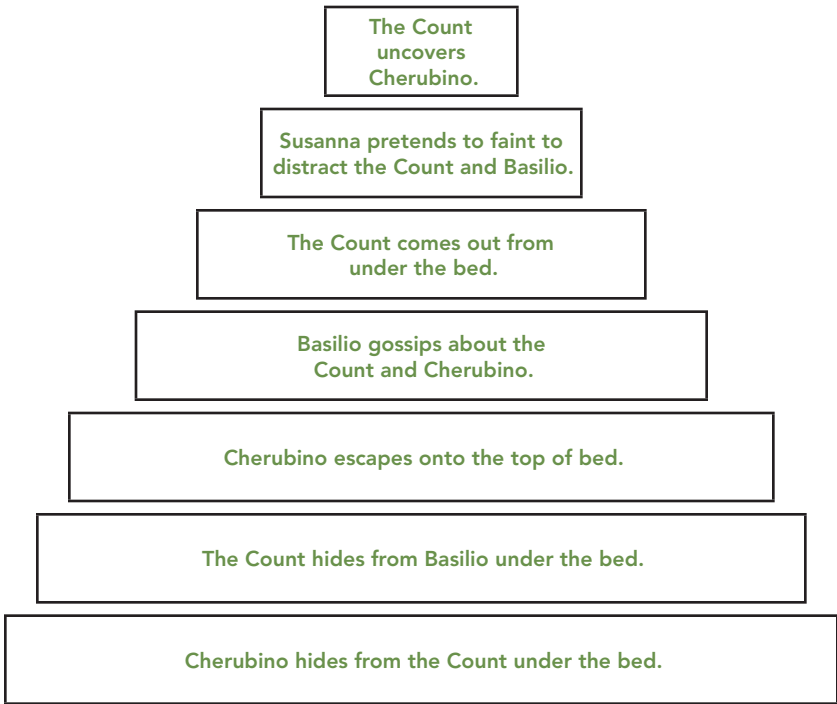
Now students should be ready to dive into the opera. Divide the class into small groups (perhaps the same groups as the previous step). In their respective groups, students will study an assigned scene and complete the "Scene Tiers" handout included with this guide. As the scene progresses, they should note how each "tier" of situational comedy contributes to the dramatic structure of the scene.



As a warmup, you can have the whole class do Act I, Scenes 6–7 (MOoD clips 12–14) together. As you watch the scene, ask students to call out what is happening. Each detail will be represented by one tier of wedding cake. So, for this scene, your tiers might look something like this:

1. Cherubino hides from the Count under the bed.
2. The Count hides from Basilio under the bed.
3. Cherubino escapes onto the top of bed.
4. Don Basilio gossips about the Count and Cherubino.
5. The Count comes out from under the bed.
6. Susanna pretends to faint to distract the Count and Basilio.
7. The Count uncovers Cherubino.

In this scene, then, there are at least seven moments that generate comedic effects. Using chart paper or the board, you can represent the scene as a seven-tiered “cake”:



With your students, it may help to identify which aspects of this scene make it funny. Some rely on physical comedy: Both the Count and Cherubino are trying to hide under the bed. Others rely on irony: Basilio is gossiping about the Count and Cherubino without knowing that both are in the room. Others rely on surprise: The Count unexpectedly emerges from under the bed and later uncovers Cherubino’s hiding place.

CRITICAL INQUIRY

The Met’s production of *Le Nozze di Figaro*, directed by Richard Eyre, updates the setting of the opera from the 18th century to the 1930s. In so doing, it might remind you of another modern examination of class conflict in a country estate: *Downton Abbey*. What other films, TV shows, or books focus on people of different social classes living and working together in the same space? Are these works typically dramatic or comedic, or both? How is *Le Nozze di Figaro* similar to or different from these other examples?

If you watch carefully, several other comedic moments stand out: Susanna holding the door closed with her foot, Basilio attempting to seduce Susanna, Susanna pretending to faint, and the Count shushing Cherubino. These bits can be added to the “cake” as decorations!

STEP 3. ANALYZE

With the class divided into groups or pairs, assign each to watch one of the following sequences from *Le Nozze di Figaro*:

- Act II, Scenes 2–5 (MOoD clips 20–23)
- Act II, Scenes 6–10 (MOoD clips 24–26)
- Act III, Scene 5 (MOoD clips 35–36)
- Act IV, Scenes 9–12 (MOoD clips 43, 45)
- Act IV, Scenes 13–14 (MOoD clips 46–47)

As students watch their assigned scene(s), they should complete the “Scene Tiers” handout included with this guide. They should consider not just the events in each scene but also the context clues, character traits, and directorial choices that make the scene work.

STEP 4. DESIGN

Once they have thoroughly reviewed their scene and enumerated its “tiers” of situational comedy, it’s time to make their cake. Using colored construction paper, ask students to cut out one piece for each tier of wedding cake. (The bigger the better!) They can use a different color for each tier, if they would like. Make sure that the tiers are even height and that each higher tier is narrower than the one below it.

When each group has cut out all their tiers, they can fasten them together to create a paper wedding cake. They should also write the descriptions from their worksheet on each tier and decorate as they see fit using colored markers or pens, pipe cleaners, acrylic gems, or any other available craft materials.

STEP 5. DISPLAY

It’s time for a banquet! The groups can display their wedding cakes around the classroom to celebrate the wedding of Susanna and Figaro. The class can also watch each assigned sequence together while individual groups explain the structure and design of their wedding cake. To add an extra element of fun, students can prepare or bring treats to add to the feast.

Philosophical Chairs

Active listening, critical thinking, and respectful dialogue (even when we disagree about something) are learned skills. Everyone can learn them, and no one can perfect them without practice. Philosophical Chairs is designed to help us develop these skills while also learning about the opera.

You might find these statements challenging—and you might find it challenging to talk with someone who has a different answer from your own. That's okay! Take your time with each statement, embrace uncertainty, and know that changing your mind when you learn new information is a sign of strength, not weakness. Before you begin your discussion, take some time to review the rules of engagement:

Be sure you understand the statement. If something is unclear, ask!

Face each other. Body language helps show that you're listening carefully and respectfully.

Only one speaker at a time. Everyone will get their turn to speak.

Think before you speak. Be sure that what you're going to say is what you really mean.

Summarize the previous person's comments before adding your own.

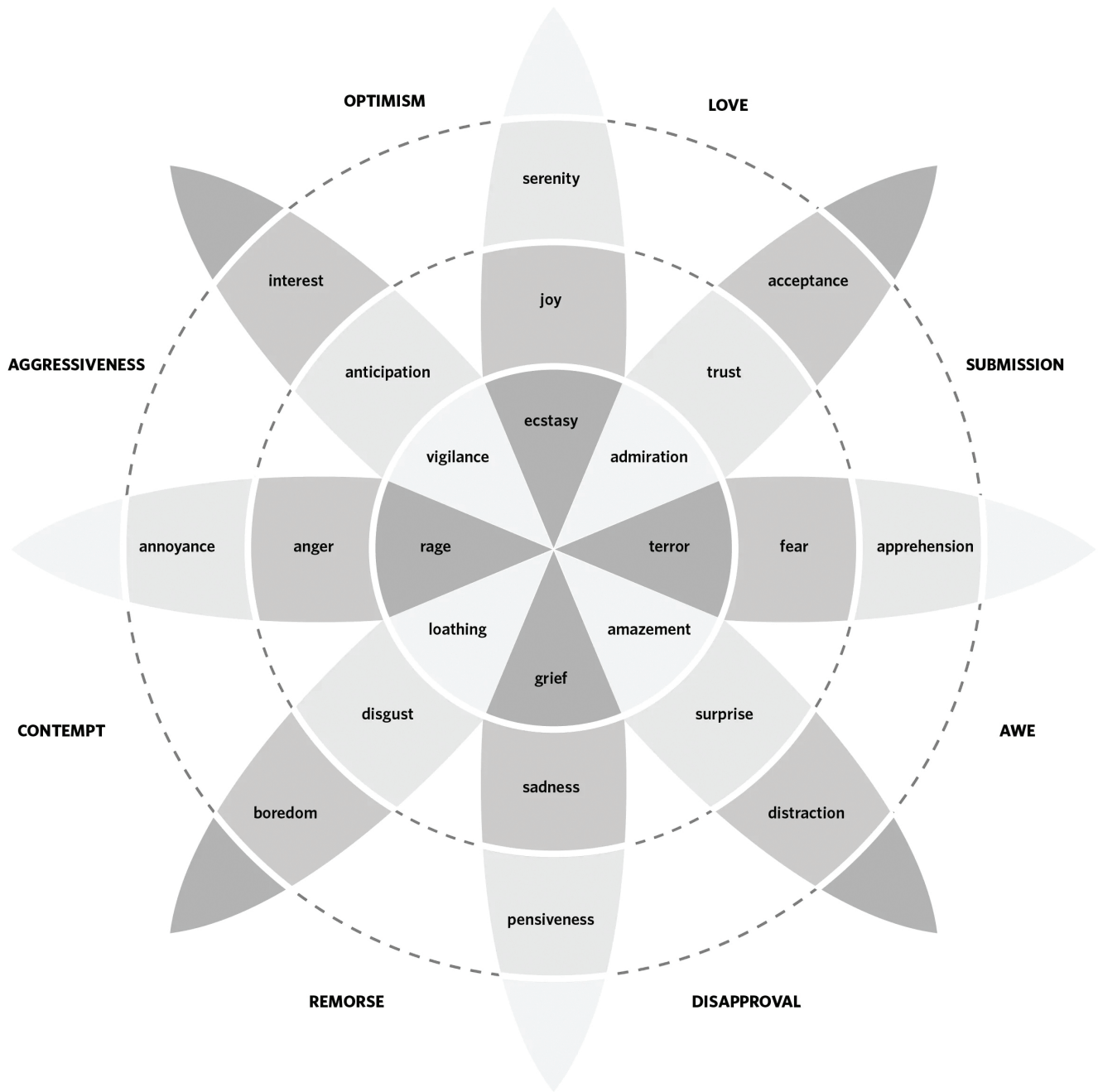
Address ideas, not the person. Challenging ideas or statements is good only if we respect the individuality and inherent value of the person who expressed them.

Three before me. To make sure everyone's voice is heard, you may not make another comment until three others have shared their thoughts.

The Statements

- One's emotions cannot be tamed.
- Infidelity must be punished.
- Promises must be kept.
- Sticks and stones may break bones, but words don't hurt anyone.
- One's reputation is important to uphold.
- Everyone has an inner moral compass.
- Status quo must be maintained.
- Social status is arbitrary.
- Everyone is equal.
- Double standards no longer exist in society.
- One's sense of justice cannot be silenced.
- A parental blessing is required for marriage.
- Love lasts forever.
- Fabrication and deceit are ethical approaches to unveiling truth.
- No action is free of consequence.
- Pranks are harmless.
- Suspicions are always true.
- All must be forgiven.

Figaro's Feelings | Wheel of Emotions



Figaro's Feelings | Text and Translations

TRACK 1 (MOoD CLIP 7)

Figaro, Act I: "Se vuol ballare"

Se vuol ballare, signor contino,
il chitarrino le suonerò.

Se vuol venire nella mia scuola
la capriole le insegnerò.

Saprò... ma, piano:
Meglio ogni arcano,
dissimulando scoprir potrò!

L'arte schermendo, l'arte adoprando,
di qua pungendo, di là scherzando
tutte le macchine rovescerò.

Se vuol ballare, signor contino,
il chitarrino le suonerò.

You want to dance, my little count?
Well, I'll call the tune!

Come to my school,
and I'll teach you to dance.

I know how! But, carefully:
I'll uncover his plans
while concealing my own.

I'll make defense an art
and upset his schemes.
I'll upset all his schemes.

You want to dance, my little count?
Well, I'll call the tune!

TRACK 2 (MOoD CLIP 11)

Cherubino, Act I: "Non so più"

Non so più cosa son, cosa faccio,
or di foco, ora sono di ghiaccio
ogni donna cangiar di colore,
ogni donna mi fa palpitar.

Solo ai nomi d'amor, di diletto,
mi si turba, mi s'altera il petto
e a parlare mi sforza d'amore
un desio ch'io non posso spiegar!

Parlo d'amor vegliando,
parlo d'amor sognando:
All'acqua, all'ombra, ai monti,
ai fiori, all'erbe, ai fonti,
all'eco, all'aria, ai venti
che il suon de' vani accenti
portano via con sé.

E se non ho chi m'oda,
parlo d'amor con me.

I don't know who I am, what I'm doing.
First I'm burning, then turning to ice.
Every woman makes my temperature soar
and my heart pound.

The idea of love and pleasure
makes my heart skip a beat.
Even the mention of love fills me
with a desire I can't explain.

I talk about love,
whether awake or dreaming:
I talk to rivers and mountains,
to flowers and fountains,
to my echo, and to the wind,
and they carry away the sound
of my useless sighs.

And if, sometimes, there's no one to listen to me,
then I just talk about love to myself.

Figaro's Feelings | Text and Translations (CONTINUED)

TRACK 3 (MOoD CLIP 16)

Countess Almaviva, Act II: "Porgi, amor"

Porgi, amor, qualche ristoro
al mio duolo, a' miei sospir.
O mi rendi il mio tesoro,
o mi lascia almen morir.

Oh love, ease my pain.
Console me in my sorrow and end my sighs.
Give my beloved back to me,
or else let me die.

TRACK 4 (MOoD CLIP 31)

Count Almaviva, Act III: "Hai già vinta la causa"

Hai già vinta la causa! Cosa sento!
In qual laccio io cadea!
Perfidi! Io voglio di tal modo punirvi.
A piacer mio la sentenza sarà.

Ma s'ei pagasse
la vecchia pretendente?
Pagarla! In qual maniera?
E poi v'è Antonio
che a un incognito Figaro ricusa
si dare una nipote in matrimonio.

Coltivando l'orgoglio si questo mentecatto.
Tutto giova a un raggio.
Il colpo è fatto.

Vedrò mentre io sospiro,
felice un servo mio?
E un ben che invan desio,
ei posseder dovrà?
Vedrò per man d'amore
unita a un vile oggetto
chi in me destò un affetto
che per me poi non ha?

Ah no! Lasciarti in pace,
non vo' questo contento!
Tu non nascesti, audace!
Per dare a me tormento,
e forse ancor per ridere di mia infelicità.

Già la speranza sola
delle vendette mie
quest'anima consola,
e giubilar mi fa.

"We've won our case!"
I've been fooled again!
The traitors! They'll pay for this!
I'll decide their punishment!

But what if Figaro
already paid off Marcellina?
But with what?
Susanna's uncle, the gardener,
won't let her marry
a nobody like Figaro.

I'll flatter that drunken idiot.
And everything will go my way.
The die is cast!

Must I languish while my servant
wins his heart's desire?
While he possesses
the treasure I long for?
The woman I yearn for
will marry a nobody
while she arouses in me
a passion she doesn't return!

No! I won't let you
have that satisfaction.
That's not what you were born for, you lout!
To cause me torment,
to laugh at my despair.

Now my only hope
is the thought of revenge.
That's my only
comfort.

Figaro's Feelings | Text and Translations (CONTINUED)

TRACK 5 (MOoD CLIP 41)

Barbarina, Act IV: "L'ho perduta"

L'ho perduta ... me meschina! ...
Ah, chi sa dove sarà?
Non la trovo ... e mia cugina ...
e il padron, cosa dirà?

I lost it. How unlucky I am.
Oh, where can it be?
I can't find it anywhere. What will my cousin
Susanna say? And his lordship?

Piece of Cake | Character Organizer

Character name: _____

This character wants _____,

but _____.

So, this character decides to _____.

Character name: _____

This character wants _____,

but _____.

So, this character decides to _____.

Character name: _____

This character wants _____,

but _____.

So, this character decides to _____.

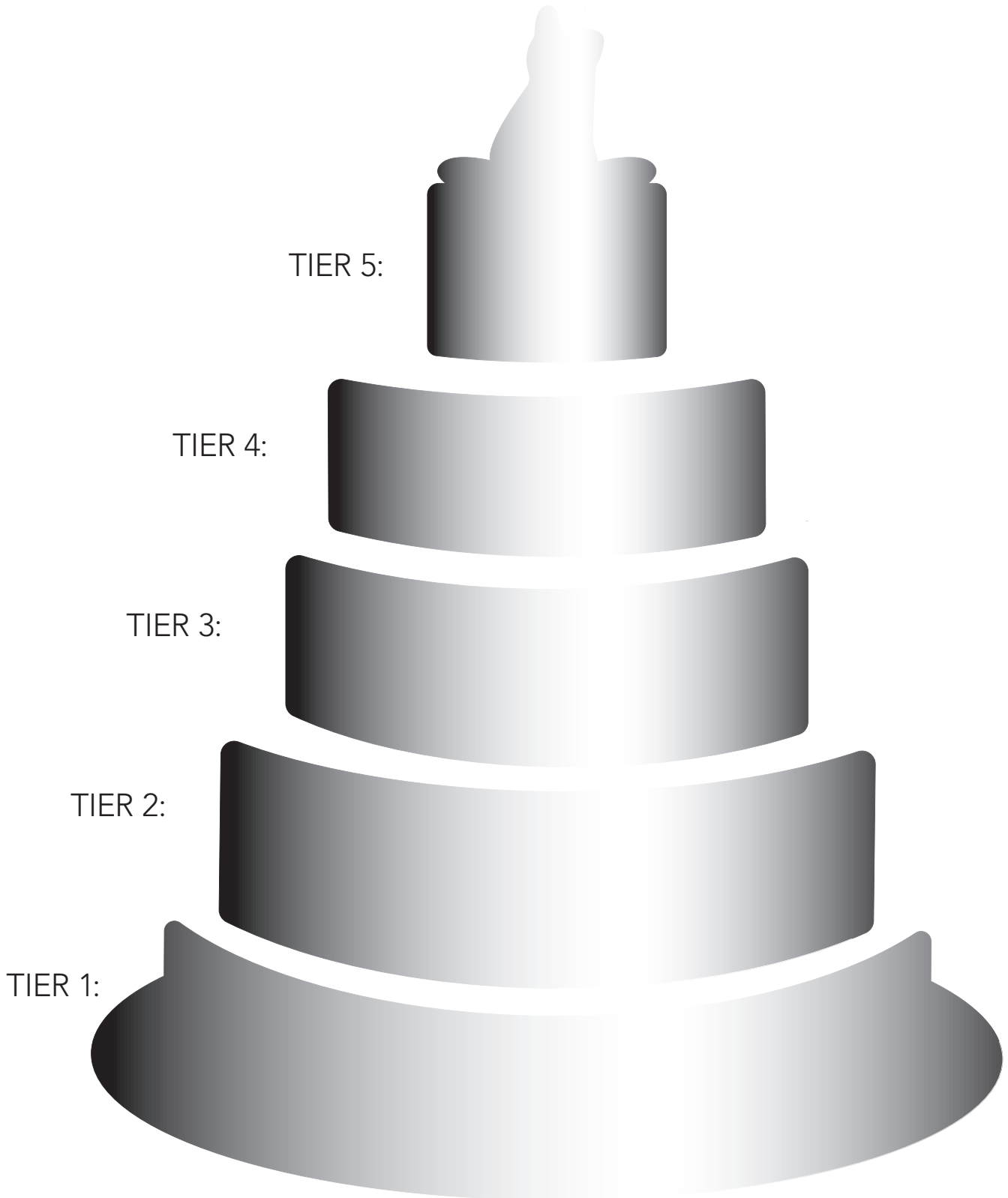
Character name: _____

This character wants _____,

but _____.

So, this character decides to _____.

Piece of Cake | Scene Tiers



Opera Review: *Le Nozze di Figaro*

Have you ever wanted to be a music and theater critic? Now's your chance!

As you watch *Le Nozze di Figaro*, use the space below to keep track of your thoughts and opinions. What did you like about the performance? What didn't you like? If you were in charge, what would you have done differently? Think carefully about the action, music, and stage design. Then, after the opera, share your opinions with your friends, classmates, and anyone else who wants to learn more about the opera and this performance at the Met!

| THE SHOW, SCENE BY SCENE | ACTION | MUSIC | SET DESIGN / STAGING |
|---|--------|-------|----------------------|
| Figaro and Susanna excitedly prepare for their wedding. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE: | ☆☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ |
| Dr. Bartolo appears with Marcellina. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE: | ☆☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ |
| Marcellina and Susanna exchange insults. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE: | ☆☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ |
| Cherubino intrudes on Susanna. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE: | ☆☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ |
| Count Almaviva attempts to seduce Susanna while Cherubino hides. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE: | ☆☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ |
| The Count chases Cherubino into the great hall. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE: | ☆☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ |
| The Count reluctantly blesses Figaro and Susanna's marriage. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE: | ☆☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ |
| Countess Almaviva laments a life devoid of love. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE: | ☆☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ |

| THE SHOW, SCENE BY SCENE | ACTION | MUSIC | SET DESIGN / STAGING |
|---|--------|-------|----------------------|
| The Countess and Susanna disguise Cherubino. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE: | ☆☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ |
| The Count enters the room and demands to know who is hiding. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE: | ☆☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ |
| Susanna helps Cherubino escape. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE: | ☆☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ |
| Figaro dodges the Count's prodding until the gardener Antonio arrives. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE: | ☆☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ |
| Bartolo, Marcellina, and Basilio appear with the contract obliging Figaro to marry Marcellina. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE: | ☆☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ |
| The Count reflects on the surprising events that have taken place. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE: | ☆☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ |
| Overhearing Susanna's plan, the Count swears vengeance. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE: | ☆☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ |
| The Countess recalls her past happiness. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE: | ☆☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ |
| Marcellina realizes that Figaro is her long-lost son. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE: | ☆☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ |
| The Countess and Susanna continue with their plan to trap the Count. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE: | ☆☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ |

| THE SHOW, SCENE BY SCENE | ACTION | MUSIC | SET DESIGN / STAGING |
|---|--------|-------|----------------------|
| Cherubino reappears dressed as a girl and is reprimanded by the Count. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE: | ☆☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ |
| The household prepares for Figaro and Susanna's wedding. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE: | ☆☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ |
| Barbarina searches for the pin the Count asked her to bring Susanna. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE: | ☆☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ |
| Figaro curses all women. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE: | ☆☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ |
| Figaro hides while Susanna and the Countess arrive. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE: | ☆☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ |
| Cherubino tries to seduce the disguised Countess. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE: | ☆☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ |
| Figaro decides to join in the joke. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE: | ☆☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ |
| The Count returns, furious to find Figaro with his wife. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE: | ☆☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ |
| The Count asks for the Countess's forgiveness. MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE: | ☆☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ |