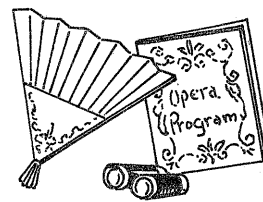




An opera is a play in which the actors and actresses sing instead of speak to each other. As a play, an opera takes place in a theater, is divided into scenes and acts, features scenery and costumes, and usually has plenty of dramatic action. It is the singing that makes an opera a very special kind of play.



The singing in an opera has three basic forms. The "aria" is a solo, usually sung by one of the leading characters. It expresses the character's feelings and personality. When two or more characters sing together, the result is called an "ensemble." An ensemble may be a duet, trio, quartet, sextet, and so forth, depending on the number of singers. Finally, the third form of singing is the "recitative." Unlike the aria and the ensemble, recitative does not sound like a song. It is a form of talking on different pitch levels. The main purpose of the recitative is to keep the story moving by telling the audience something important about the characters or the plot.

There are hundreds of famous operas, many of them performed year after year by the world's great opera companies. Most of the best-loved operas are sung in Italian, German, Russian, and French, but there are some in English. The words in an opera are called the "libretto," and operas with English librettos include *Porgy and Bess* by George Gershwin and (a Christmas favorite) *Amahl and the Night Visitors* by Gian-Carlo Menotti.

**Directions:** Fill in the missing word or words to complete each sentence below. Then complete the sentence in bold by placing each numbered letter on the blank with the same number.

1. An  $\frac{\quad}{1} \text{ — } \frac{\quad}{2} \text{ —}$  is an operatic solo.
2. An  $\text{ — } \frac{\quad}{3} \frac{\quad}{4} \text{ — } \frac{\quad}{5} \text{ — } \text{ — } \text{ —}$  results when two or more characters sing together.
3. An ensemble for four singers is a  $\text{ — } \frac{\quad}{6} \text{ — } \text{ — } \frac{\quad}{7} \text{ — } \text{ —}$ .
4.  $\frac{\quad}{8} \text{ — } \frac{\quad}{9} \text{ — } \text{ — } \text{ — } \text{ — } \text{ — } \text{ — } \frac{\quad}{10}$  is talking on different pitch levels.
5.  $\text{ — } \frac{\quad}{11} \text{ — } \frac{\quad}{12} \frac{\quad}{13}$  *and Bess* is a famous opera with an English libretto.

**Operas are exciting because of the dramatic  $\frac{\quad}{1} \frac{\quad}{9} \frac{\quad}{7} \frac{\quad}{2} \frac{\quad}{11} \frac{\quad}{3}$ , the  $\frac{\quad}{4} \frac{\quad}{9} \frac{\quad}{10} \frac{\quad}{3} \frac{\quad}{10} \frac{\quad}{8} \frac{\quad}{13}$ , the  $\frac{\quad}{9} \frac{\quad}{11} \frac{\quad}{4} \frac{\quad}{7} \frac{\quad}{6} \frac{\quad}{5} \frac{\quad}{10} \frac{\quad}{4}$ , and, especially, the  $\frac{\quad}{4} \frac{\quad}{2} \frac{\quad}{3} \frac{\quad}{12} \frac{\quad}{2} \frac{\quad}{3} \frac{\quad}{12}$ .**