Bastien and Bastienne
WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART



SOCIAL STUDIES: Historical Settings for Opera/Becoming the Librettist

Students will

- Read for information and answer questions
- Create a personal timeline
- Research an event, civilization, landmark, or literary work as a source for a setting
- Write a brief setting and story as the basis for an opera

Copies for Each Student: "Our Composer, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart", "What is a Librettist", Mozart Timeline, Activity Worksheet

Copies for the Teacher: "Our Composer, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart", "What is a Librettist", Mozart Timeline, Activity Worksheet, Answer Key

Getting Ready

Prepare internet access for possible research for guided practice or group work.

Gather pens, pencils and additional writing paper as needed for your students.

Introduction

Explain to your students that a commissioned work is a piece of visual or performing art created at the request and expense of someone else. Begin the lesson by explaining to your students that "Mozart was 12 years old when he received a commission for the opera, *Bastien and Bastienne*. He had to work with the librettists, Friedrich Wilhelm Weiskern and J. A. Schachtner, to create music for the story".

Have your students read "Our Composer, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart" and "What is a Librettist". Give each student a copy of "The World during Mozart's Life" and the Social Studies Activity Worksheet, or display it on a screen. Give an overview of the assignment, and point out the information your students are expected to research and write about. To align with Texas TEKS, you may provide and tailor research topics for planning the opera (Part II of assignment) according to grade level:

3rd Grade: Contributions to the cultural heritage of communities, including literary works.

Guided/Independent Practice

Choose which part of the assignment you would like your class to complete for your respective grade. Depending on your grade level, the ability of your students, and time constraints, you may choose to have students work as a whole class, in small groups, with a partner, or individually. Read the directions on the Activity Worksheet(s) and have the students answer the questions. Either Part I or Part II can be done in class or as an outside assignment. Have students share their answers for each part of the Worksheet. Students may present their information as a class, in small groups, or individually.

Evaluation

Were the students able to complete Part I and Part II of the assignment?
Have students present their ideas to the class for discussion and evaluation. The teacher may want to guide the discussion.

For Further Study

Students may want to do additional research on librettists or civilizations and landmarks in which to stage a drama or other related topics online or in their school library. Their findings can be shared with the class at the beginning of a later lesson.

If time allows

If time allows, have students create their own timeline using pictures and other visual arts materials.

TEKS

Social Studies

3rd Grade

113.14. b. 3 A,B History
The student understands the concepts of time and chronology. The student is expected to: (A) use vocabulary related to chronology, including past, present, and future times; (B) create and interpret timelines.

113.14. b. 15 A Culture
The student understands the importance of writers and artists to the cultural heritage of communities. The student is expected to: (A) identify various individual writers and artists such as Kadir Nelson, Tomie dePaola, and Phillis Wheatley and their stories, poems, statues, and paintings and other examples of cultural heritage from various communities.

113.14. b. 17 A Social studies skills
The student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and use information acquired from a variety of valid sources, including electronic technology. The student is expected to: (A) research information, including historical and current events, and geographic data, about the community and world, using a variety of valid print, oral, visual, and Internet resources

Language Arts

3rd Grade

110.15. b. 16 A Reading/Media Literacy
Students use comprehension skills to analyze how words, images, graphics, and sounds work together in various forms to impact meaning. Students will continue to apply earlier standards with greater depth in increasingly more complex texts. Students are expected to: (A) understand how communication changes when moving from one genre of media to another

110.14. b. 18 A Writing/Literary Texts

Students write literary texts to express their ideas and feelings about real or imagined people, events, and ideas. Students are expected to: (A) write imaginative stories that build the plot to a climax and contain details about the characters and setting.

Correlates: Language Arts, Music

Gardner's Intelligences: Verbal-Linguistic, Logical/Mathematical

Bloom's Taxonomy: Remember, Understand, Apply, Analyze, Create

Sources:

Warrack, John and West, Ewan, The Oxford Dictionary of Opera, Oxford University Press, 1992.
Freeman, John W., Stories of the Great Operas, W. W. Norton & Company, 1984.
Goulding, Phil G., Ticket to the Opera, Fawcett Columbine, 1996.
www.oxfordmusiconline.com
"Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart." Encyclopedia of World Biography. 2004. *Encyclopedia.com.* (March 10, 2014). http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G2-3404704620.html
MICHAEL KENNEDY and JOYCE BOURNE. "Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus." The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Music. 1996. *Encyclopedia.com.* (March 10, 2014). http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1O76-MozartWolfgangAmadeus.html
Sadie, Stanley, ed. *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera.* Vol. 1, *A-d.* New York: Grove, 1992.

Bastien and Bastienne

Our Composer, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was born in Austria, where most people speak German. Wolfgang is a German name that means 'wolf path' and his middle name, Amadeus (Am-uh-day-us), means 'God's love' in Latin. Mozart is most famous for writing music. He was a composer, and is still one of the greatest musicians of all time. He was famous as a child because he could play and write music from the age of 4. He grew up to write some of the most beautiful music ever heard.

Mozart was born on January 27, 1756, in the town of Salzburg, in Austria. He lived before there were cars, trains or planes. When Mozart travelled around Europe, he went in a coach pulled by horses or by boat. The internet, cell phones and CD players did not exist. When people wanted to hear music they had to play it themselves, or go hear it performed live because there were no recordings. Mozart's mother and father were both musicians, and they knew he was a musical prodigy.

Wolfgang could play the keyboard at the age of 3 and by the time he was 5, he was writing his own songs. His talent was apparent and he seemed to have music in his head. He could pick up a violin and play it, without even being shown how. Mozart's sister Maria Anna was a good musician too. Mozart called her Nannerl, and they were very good friends. They made up their own secret language, and told stories about a magic kingdom where they were king and queen. Leopold, Wolfgang's father, took his two children to Vienna (the capitol of Austria) where they played for the Emperor of Austria at his palace. Everyone was amazed at the musical phenomenon, and the Emperor called Mozart a 'little magician'.

In 1763 when Mozart was 7 years old, Leopold took the children on a tour of Europe. They went to France, and then took a ship to England. They stayed in London for a year where the children played for King George III. Wherever Mozart traveled he enthralled audiences, and he collaborated with many famous musicians and composers from whom he learned a great deal. His father took him to Italy, and there he saw opera for the first time. His father requested that he write his own opera, and at the young age of 12 he wrote *Bastien and Bastienne*. Mozart astonished everyone with his impressive talent. If he heard a song once, he could go home and write down all the notes from memory.

When he was older, Mozart gave piano lessons, but wasn't very responsible and seldom had money despite his lucrative compositions. In 1777 his mother went with him to Germany where he hoped to get a job as a musician in the royal court. Back then, monarchs had their own orchestras. In Germany, he fell in love with a singer, Aloysia Weber, but it was not meant to be. Aloysia married someone else, and Mozart later married her sister Constanze. Mozart was eccentric, and often bungled his relationships with his employers, so he continued in his nomadic lifestyle before he finally settled in Vienna. Mozart never stopped writing music. He wrote music for piano and violin, for orchestras and singers and chamber music for a quartet (4 players). He also wrote a substantial amount of church music.

Mozart could write music very quickly and once wrote an opera in 3 weeks. He also wrote 41 symphonies. He wrote parody operas, such as *Cosi fan tutte* (*All Women Are Like That*) and serious ones like *The Magic Flute*. He wrote solemn church music, and shorter, carefree pieces such as *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* (*A Little Night Music*). Mozart was working on a piece of funeral music, called a Requiem, in the summer of 1791, when he became ill. No one knows what was wrong with him, but he succumbed to the illness and died in December 1791. The great composer was so poor he was buried with other poor people in an unmarked 'paupers' grave'. Today Mozart's music is enjoyed all over the world. People still listen to it and it has had immense influence on the music world.

What is a Librettist?

The titles of many famous operas are normally introduced by the composer or person who wrote the music. However, opera is a product of teamwork between the composer and the librettist.

The librettist is the person responsible for the lyrics or words of an opera. It is his or her job to tell the story in a way that is both poetic and easy to sing and understand. Librettists are often poets or writers who use different sources such as famous plays, literature, historical events, current events, and their imagination as the basis for an opera. The librettist must work closely with the composer to ensure the lyrics work well with the music to create a masterpiece. The libretto (words for the opera) can be written by a single person or a team of writers. At the age of 12, Mozart worked with librettists, Wilhelm Weiskern and J. A. Schachtner, to create the opera, *Bastien and Bastienne*.

Although they each have slightly different responsibilities, the composer and librettist both have a common goal, and they ultimately share in the successes and failures of an opera. There have been successful composer-librettist partnerships with well-known librettists throughout the years. Mozart teamed with famous librettist, Lorenzo da Ponte, for his 3 famous operas *Don Giovanni*, *Cosi fan tutte*, and *The Marriage of Figaro*. Lorenzo da Ponte also worked with other composers and wrote libretti for over 20 operas.

Because there were no cell phones during Mozart's lifetime, composers and librettists often communicated through letters or by meeting one another to discuss the likes, dislikes, and progress of an opera. Now, in the 21st century, many composers and librettists communicate through email, over the phone, or in person. The methods for each composer-librettist partnership may be different, but the overall goal remains the same; to create a great opera.

Bastien and Bastienne
The World during Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's Life
3rd Grade

World Timeline

1750: Johann Sebastian Bach dies on July, 28th.

1751: Pennsylvania Hospital (oldest hospital in the US) is founded.

1753: First official Saint Patrick's Day.

1759: George F. Handel dies on April, 14th.

1765: The first paved roads appear in London.

1767: Joseph Priestly invents carbonated water (soda).

1770: Ludwig van Beethoven is born.

1775: American Revolution begins.

Alexander Cummins invents the flushing toilet.

1776: The Declaration of Independence is signed.

1781: William Herschel announces the discovery of the planet, Uranus.

1783: Joseph Michel Montgolfier and Jacques Etienne Montgolfier invent the hot-air balloon.

1787: United States Constitution is signed.

1791: First 10 Amendments to the United States Constitution become official.

Mozart Timeline

1750

1755

1756: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart is born on January, 27th.

1760

1762: Mozart plays for the Bavarian elector and Austrian Empress.

1763: Wolfgang and Nannerl (his sister) tour Europe as child prodigies.

1765

1765: Wolfgang composes his first symphony, *Symphony No. 1 K16 E♭*.

1768: Premier of his 1st opera, *Bastien and Bastienne*, in Vienna

1770

1771: His opera, *Mitridate, re di Ponto*, premiers in Milan.

1775

1777: Mozart begins traveling Europe with his mother.

1780

1781: Mozart moves to Vienna.

1782: Mozart marries Constanze Weber.

1784: Their son, Karl Thomas Mozart, is born.

1785

1787: Beethoven possibly meets Mozart.

1790

1791: Their son, Franz Xaver Wolfgang Mozart, is born.

Mozart dies on December 5th.

1795

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Social Studies Activity 3rd Grade

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart is known as a prodigy, or someone who is extremely talented at a very young age. He and his sister, Nannerl, began touring across Europe to perform for many important people when he was just 7 years old. Because of this, he led an interesting life. He met a lot of important people and accomplished a lot of things, including writing his first opera at the age of 12. Mozart lived from 1756 – 1791, a rather interesting time in United States and World History. History is being made every day, and in a lot of ways, we each lead interesting lives. Tell us about your life and the moments you are witnessing that will be a part of history.

Name_____ Date_____

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3rd Grade Social Studies: The World During Mozart's Life Part I

Draw a line to connect each event with the appropriate spot on the Mozart Timeline. Then, answer the following questions in complete sentences using the timeline.

1. Was Mozart born before or after William Herschel announced the discovery of the planet, Uranus?

2. Did the Bill of Rights become official before or after the U.S. Constitution was signed?

3. According to the timeline, what did Mozart do after composing *Bastien and Bastienne*?

4. Could Mozart and Beethoven have known about soda when they possibly met in 1787? Why or why not?

5. Did the Colonies sign the Declaration of Independence before or after the hot air balloon was invented?

Name_____ Date_____

Bastien and Bastienne

3rd Grade Social Studies: The World During Mozart's Life Part II

Answer the following questions. Then, use your answers to create your own timeline using a separate sheet of paper. Be sure to include any important dates, family trips, or special memories in your life.

1. When were you born?

2. Do you have any siblings? If so, list their names and birthdays.

3. When did you start attending your current school? Have you attended any other schools? List them.

4. Do you have any pets? What kind? When did you get your pet(s)?

5. Have you ever performed or said a speech in front of an audience? When did this take place?

6. What year was President Obama first elected?

7. Do you remember any special birthday parties or happy family moments/ trips? If so, list them.

8. What is your favorite memory?

Bonus: If you were to write an opera based on any of the events in your timeline or Mozart's timeline, what event would you choose? Why?

ANSWER KEY

Bastien and Bastienne
3rd Grade Social Studies:
The World During Mozart's Life Part I

Draw a line to connect each event with the appropriate spot on the Mozart Timeline. Then, answer the following questions in complete sentences using the timeline.

1. Was Mozart born before or after William Herschel announced the discovery of the planet, Uranus?

   Mozart was born before William Heschel announced the discovery of the planet, Uranus.

2. Did the Bill of Rights become official before or after the U.S. Constitution was signed?

   The Bill of Rights became official after the United States Constitution was signed.

3. According to the timeline, what did Mozart do after composing *Bastien and Bastienne*?

   Mozart premiered his opera, *Mitridate Re di Ponto* in Milan after composing *Bastien and Bastienne.*

4. Could Mozart and Beethoven have known about soda when they possibly met in 1787? Why or why not?

   Yes Mozart and Beethoven could have known about soda when they met in 1787 because soda was invented in 1767.

   No Mozart and Beethoven could not have known about soda when they met in 1787 because it would have taken a long time for soda to reach them. Word did not travel as fast in the 1700s.

5. Did the Colonies sign the Declaration of Independence before or after the hot air balloon was invented?

   The Colonies signed the Declaration of Independence before the hot air balloon was invented.