

TOLEDO OPERA ON WHEELS



**Audience
Guide**

Music by

**André Ernest Modeste
Grétry**

Based on the fairytale by

**Jeanne-Marie Leprince de
Beaumont**

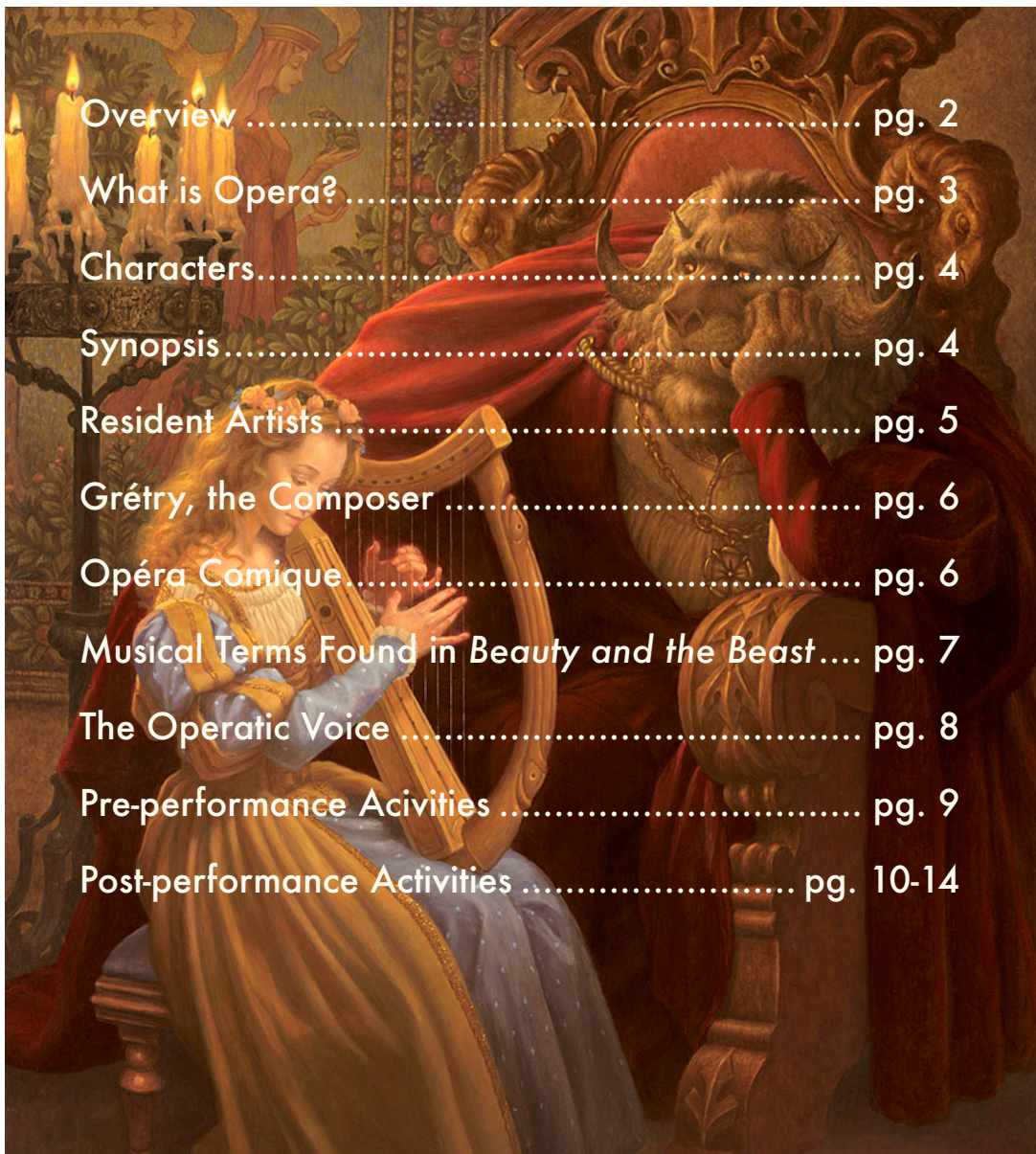
Directed by

James M. Norman

Created by

Joshua Borths

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OVERVIEW

Beauty and the Beast is a beautiful 45 minute retelling of the classic story by Jeanne-Marie Leprince de Beaumont using music from the operas of the French composer André Ernest Modeste Grétry. Through the characters of Belle and the Spirit of the Rose, young audiences learn about meaning of gratitude, the ability to change our lives for the better, and the power of forgiveness.

WHAT IS OPERA?

Before the performance, ask your students for their ideas about what an opera is. Write **WHAT IS AN OPERA** on the board and list the students' answers. After your students see the performance, ask the same question to see if their answers change.

The word **opera** is the plural form of the Latin word **opus** (which translates quite literally as **work**). Today we use the word **opera** to refer to a theatrically based musical art form in which the drama is sung (without microphones!), rather than spoken, and is accompanied by a full symphony orchestra.

Opera was born out of the belief that drama can be better expressed by music and text than by text alone. One of the unique things about opera is how it combines so many different art forms (music, drama, and visual arts) to create an artistic spectacle. Of course, the use of many art forms means that there are many people involved in the creation and production of an opera. These may include:

Composer: Writes the music

Librettist: Chooses a story, writes or adapts the words

Conductor: Leads the musicians and singers

Director: Blocks or stages the entire production

Principal Singers: Have the leading and supporting roles

Chorus: Sings as a group

Supernumeraries: Act but do not sing

Repetiteur: Accompanies singers during rehearsal, plays the whole orchestral score on piano

Costume Designer: Designs the costumes for each character

Wardrobe/Costume Staff: Fit, clean, and repair costumes; help singers put costumes on

Wig Staff: Make and fit wigs to the principal singers, chorus, and supernumeraries

Make-up Staff: Apply make-up for principal singers, assist chorus with make-up

Set Designer: Designs the scenery for each scene

Lighting Designer: Designs lighting effects

Prop Builders: Build/buy all the set pieces that are not structural

Stage Manager: "Calls the show" – cues scenery changes, lighting, and singers so that everything happens at the right time.

Stagehands: Move scenery; run lighting & sound cues

Front of House Staff: Work in the performance venue: seating patrons, operating coat check

Artistic Director: Chooses which shows to produce and which artists to hire

Administrative Staff: Find funding; sell tickets; hire artists; take care of the business side of opera.

Audience: Enjoys and appreciates opera from a seat in the hall!

Critic: Writes a critique of performance for newspaper, radio, or TV

CHARACTERS AND SYNOPSIS

Characters

Beast, Tenor

Belle, mezzo-soprano

Marcel, baritone

Spirit/Adèle, soprano

Synopsis

Setting: A fairytale kingdom in France

Time: the mid-eighteenth century

Scenes

Forest

Marcel's House

Beast's Castle

Belle's Room

The opera opens with Adèle, her sister Belle, and their father Marcel celebrating that their lives are about to change now that his merchant ship filled with treasures and jewels has arrived in port. Unfortunately, Marcel receives a letter informing him that his boat was destroyed in a storm, all his riches were lost at sea, and all his bills are due! He leaves to recover the wreckage and to revive their fortunes. But, on his way to the port, Marcel becomes lost. He finds a beautiful castle, ruled by horrid Beast who holds him captive, telling Marcel that he will never leave!

After not hearing from her father for many days, Belle goes in search of him, only to find him in the dungeon of the Beast's castle. Belle negotiates a trade: she will exchange her freedom for her father's. Marcel is allowed to leave, and Belle is held prisoner. She is comforted by the Spirit of a magical Rose who explains that both she and the Beast are cursed and cannot leave the castle unless someone helps them. Belle promises to find a way to save them all and free them from the curse.



Belle spends several months with the Beast in his castle, and through conversation with him and by listening to each other, they both realize how little they initially understood about the other. Since the one thing they both need and desire is to love and be loved in return, how will this story end? Does Belle's family's love of gold and riches make them more beastly than the actual Beast? What other situations challenge Belle's perception of her family, her duty, and whom she truly loves?

RESIDENT ARTISTS 2024-2025

Emily Cotten (Belle/Adèle), mezzo



Mezzo-soprano Emily Cotten graduated from Loyola University New Orleans with her masters in vocal performance in 2022. While at Loyola, she performed as La Ciesca (*Gianni Schicchi*), Mistress of the Novices (*Suor Angelica*), and Belinda (*Dido and Aeneas*). During the pandemic, she participated in Loyola's "Cura Personalis" project- premiering songs with words by librettist Jerre Dye and music by Dylan Trân. She received her Bachelor of Music at the University of Michigan, where she was an EXCEL grant recipient and performed in Bolcolm's *Dinner at Eight* and Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro*. She spent two summers as an Apprentice Artist with Opera in the Ozarks, where she performed roles such as Despina (*Così Fan Tutte*), Desiree Armfeldt (*A Little Night Music*), and Public Opinion (*Orfee aux Enfers*). Ms. Cotten is a member of the St. Thomas Bach Project, the May Festival Chorus, and has performed with Coro Volante. She is an avid believer that all people should have access to live music performance and music education and has worked

in an administrative capacity with the Boston Symphony Orchestra and the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra.

Brady DelVecchio (Beast), tenor



Tenor, Brady DelVecchio is known for his versatility on stage and screen. A native of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, his career has brought him international acclaim for his portrayals of engaging romantic leads. Mr. DelVecchio attended The Peabody Conservatory of Music at Johns Hopkins University and New York University's Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development. Since then, he has had the pleasure of portraying Le Prince Charmant (*Cendrillon*), Mercurio (*La Calisto*), Rektor, Komár, and Pasek (*The Cunning Little Vixen*), Don Ottavio (*Don Giovanni*), Tony (*West Side Story*), Nanki Poo (*The Mikado*) and Timothy Harper (*Strike Up the Band*). While performing traditional operatic, musical theater, and recital repertoire, he has had the privilege of premiering staged new works by Melissa Dunphy (*The Gonzales Cantata*) with the American Opera Theater, Richard Allan White (*Hester*) with the Center for Contemporary Opera and Felix Jarrar (*Fall of the House of Usher*). Mr. DelVecchio's upcoming work includes an

Untitled Colin Mochrie Film by Nicola Rose, and a recital series at First Presbyterian Church in Royal Oak, Michigan, where he serves as tenor soloist. Mr. DelVecchio is incredibly thankful and excited to be the tenor resident artist at Toledo Opera for their 2024-2025 season.

Robbie Raso (Marcel, Belle's Father), baritone



Baritone Robbie Raso is a graduate of the AJ Fletcher Opera Institute at University of North Carolina School of the Arts, the Eastman School of Music, and the Carnegie Mellon School of Music. Most recently, he performed the roles of Chèvreuse (*Maria di Rohan*) and Marcaniello (*Lo frate 'nnamurato*) at UNCSA. In the summer of 2023, Mr. Raso performed the roles of Enrico (*Lucia di Lammermoor*) and Dandini (*La Cenerentola*) with Mediterranean Opera Festival in Caltagirone, Sicily. Other performance highlights include Jack Absolute (*The Rivals*), Rodomonte (*Orlando Paladino*), and Zebul (*Jephtha*) at UNCSA; Johannes "Pa" Zegner (*Proving Up*), Rapunzel's Prince (*Into the Woods*), and Ophèmon (*L'amant anonyme*) at Eastman; and Count Almaviva (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), Count Robinson (*Il Matrimonio Segreto*), and Papageno (*The Magic Flute*) at Carnegie Mellon University. He also originated the role of Border Guard (*ID, Please*) at the Tête-à-Tête Opera Festival in London in 2017. In addition to singing, Mr. Raso is also

an instrumentalist, having studied trombone since middle school.

Sarah Rachel Bacani (Spirit/Adèle), soprano



Filipino-American soprano Sarah Rachel Bacani's 2023-2024 season included covering the role of Juliette (*Roméo et Juliette*) at Central City Opera, where she also performed the role in their Family Matinee production as a Bonfils-Stanton Foundation Artists Training Program Apprentice Artist. There, she also gave a recital as part of their "Lunch & A Song" series and reprised the role of Juliette for the Indiana University Opera & Ballet Theater's fall season. The 2022-2023 season saw Ms. Bacani's professional debut, also with Central City Opera, in the role of Mariola in Heggie's *Two Remain*. In the fall of 2022, she opened the IU Jacobs School of Music Opera Theater's Conrad Prebys Performance Season in the role of Donna Elvira (*Don Giovanni*). Other notable IU Opera Theater performances include Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*) in their centennial season and scenes as Leïla (*Les Pêcheurs de Perles*), Micaëla (*Carmen*), and Fiordiligi (*Così fan Tutte*). In the 2023-2024 competition season, Ms. Bacani competed as a semi-finalist for both the Shreveport

Opera Mary Jacobs Smith Singer of the Year Competition and the Florida Grand Opera Young Patronesses of the Opera National Voice Competition. She is also the 2023 second-place winner of the National Society of Arts and Letters Indiana Chapter Competition, having previously won the organization's Pock and Blumberg Merit Award. In concert, Ms. Bacani has performed the soprano solo in Britten's *Les Illuminations*, Mozart's *Requiem*, and Getty's *The White Election*. Hailing from Toms River, NJ, Ms. Bacani received her Performer Diploma and Master of Music in voice at Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, where she studied under the tutelage of Jane Dutton. She received her Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance from the Manhattan School of Music, where she studied with Cynthia Hoffmann.

Alessandro (Alex) Rotundo, pianist



Alessandro (Alex) Rotundo graduated from the Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University in 2022, earning a B.M. in composition and piano, under the tutelage of Kevin Puts and Shirley Yoo. He earned his M.M. in composition at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music in the Mason Bates studio, where he was also very active as a collaborative pianist. In addition, he received a regular High School Diploma in piano performance with honors from the National Guild of Piano Teachers of the American College of Musicians; completed the MTAC Certificate of Merit Advanced Level Exam with Honors, performing in MTAC Panel Audition State Panel Finals. He was also a violinist in California's Peninsula Youth Orchestra up until 2018, and played upright and electric bass in the Hillsdale High School Jazz Ensemble. His first orchestral work, composed when he was 10, was premiered in May 2010 by the intermediate division of the Peninsula Youth Orchestra. From 2014 to 2018, he studied composition with David Conte and violin performance with Monika Gruber and Joseph Maile at the Pre-College division of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music (SFCM). He has won numerous composition awards, including the Peabody Institute's Otto Ortmann Composition Prize and the Multicultural Sonic

Evolution Composition Competition.

ABOUT THE COMPOSER

André Ernest Modeste Grétry (1741 – 1813) was born in 1741 into a musical family in Liège (present day Belgium). His musical talent was discovered at an early age, and he subsequently studied with outstanding local musicians, Leclerc, Rennekin, and Moreau. But it was while attending performances by a local Italian opera company that he became aware of his true destiny to compose opera. After receiving patronage from the clergy of Liège Cathedral, Grétry moved to Rome in 1759, and over the next five years, he studied with Giovanni Casali, all the while attending as many operatic performances as he could.

In 1767, Grétry moved to Paris, the city where he would find his greatest success and where he would spend the remainder of his life. Over the next thirty years, he composed more than fifty works for the stage, most of which were successful, and many of which were outstanding hits! His most notable successes were *Zémire et Azor* (1771), and *Richard Coeur de Lion* “Richard the Lionheart” (1784). Music from these two operas is used in our version of *Beauty and the Beast*.

Though Grétry composed operas for the prestigious Académie Royale de Musique, most of his works were written for the Opéra Comique. One might think that this was a theatre devoted to the performance of comic or light opera. Rather, this company specialized in repertoire which combined musical numbers with spoken dialogue. This was the same company which, in the 19th century, premiered both Gounod’s *Faust* and Bizet’s *Carmen*.

A hallmark of Grétry’s compositional style was the intense effort he put into word setting. He firmly believed that the composer was the servant to the text. But it was his pleasing and memorable melodies that endeared him to the Parisian public.

Grétry was not dependent upon the patronage of the aristocracy, but rather earned his living as a professional musician, composing and producing operas as well as teaching composition. In this way, he was more like his musical successor, Beethoven, than his musical contemporaries Haydn and Mozart.

Grétry died on September 24, 1813, and in 1842, a large bronze statue of the composer was set up in Liege. This statue contained his heart, though his body is buried in Paris at the famous Père Lachaise Cemetery.



André Ernest
Modeste Grétry
(1741-1813)

Opéra Comique

Opéra comique is a genre of French opera that contains spoken dialogue interspersed with sung arias and ensembles. Associated with the Paris theatre of the same name which produces operas to this day, opéra comique is not necessarily comic or shallow in nature.

Other countries also have celebrated musical genres similar to opéra comique: in German-speaking countries it is called Singspiel, and in England Ballad Opera. This style of composition was the forerunner of the late 19th century Viennese operetta, the English Light opera, and even could be considered the cultural ancestor of the Broadway Musical.

MUSICAL TERMS FOUND IN BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

In classical music (especially in opera) it is customary to describe the tempo or speed of a piece by one of two words, usually in Italian. This is because many of the most influential composers of the 17th century were Italian, and tempo indications were first used extensively and codified during this century.

ALLEGRETTO an Italian word that means light, graceful, and moderately fast. It's not frantic but is more like a skip than a run. Have your students skip around the room in an allegretto fashion.

ALLEGRO an Italian term that means cheerful or lively and is used to indicate a piece should be performed at a relatively fast pace and in a bright and merry manner. Have your students run around the gymnasium with great spirit and big smiles on their faces!

ANDANTE an Italian word that signifies a flowing walking pace or tempo – not too fast or too slow, but just right! Have your students walk around the classroom with flowing hand gestures to show an andante tempo.

LARGHETTO a diminutive form of Largo which means slow, but not too slow! Have your students walk around the room in a heavy, slowing tempo.

LENTO an Italian term meaning slow. It is used to indicate that a piece of music should be performed almost as slow as possible, almost in slow motion. Have your students walk around the room as though they are underwater!

MAESTOSO an Italian word meaning stately, or to perform with a majestic attitude. Have your students walk around the room as though they are a king, queen, prince, or princess – head held high and shoulders back!



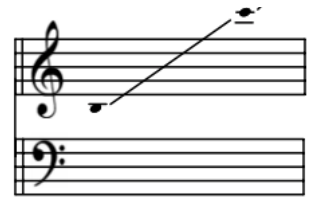
THE OPERATIC VOICE

Being an opera singer is hard work! Singers need to be physically strong and have superb technique in order to sustain long phrases (musical thoughts): this means they have excellent control of both the inhalation and exhalation of their breath. Likewise, their voices must maintain a resonance (using the cavities in the face to increase the audibility of the voice, even when singing quietly) in both the head (mouth, sinuses) and chest cavities. All this resonance is necessary to achieve the volume required to be heard above the orchestra that accompanies the singers. Opera singers do not usually use microphones, so they must project their voices throughout a whole theatre using only their muscles and technique! All voices are defined by both the actual voice “type” and the selection of repertoire for which the voice is ideally suited. The range, pitch, and tone of a singer’s voice will determine what kind of role they will play in the opera. Below are a list of the voice types (and ranges) commonly found in operas:

Female Voice Types

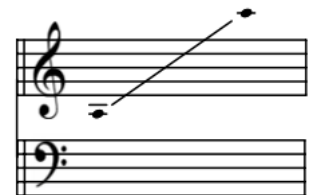
• Soprano (“sopra” = “over”)

The highest pitched female voice. Soprano voices vary by sound type: there are coloratura sopranos, who can sing very high notes and rapid passages with ease, dramatic sopranos, whose voices have great power, and lyric sopranos, whose voices have exceptional beauty and can sustain long passages. Composers often (but not always) write the female lead role in an opera for a soprano.



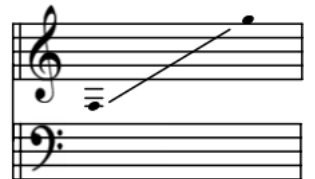
• Mezzo-Soprano (“mezzo” = “medium”)

Lower than the soprano and higher than contralto. Usually plays either the character of a young boy (this is called a trouser role) or a complex character with energy and awareness of life, or an evil character. Bizet’s *Carmen* is one of the most famous mezzo roles in opera, and is a rare lead role for a mezzo.



• Contralto (“contra” = “against” & “alto” = “high”)

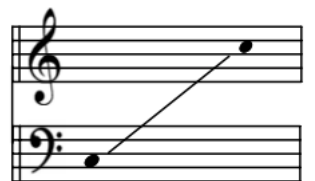
The lowest pitched female voice, these singers have a deep, well rounded sound. Contraltos more rare than sopranos or mezzos, and they are usually given the role of a maid, mother, or grandmother. Olga in Tchaikovsky’s *Eugene Onegin* is one such role.



Male Voice Types

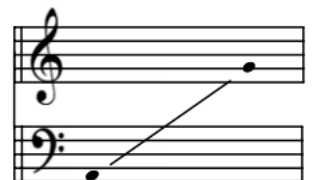
• Tenor (“tenere”= “to hold” - central notes of harmony)

The highest sounding male voice: often the leading role. Tenors, like sopranos, can have lyric or dramatic sound quality. Luciano Pavarotti was one of the world’s most famous lyric tenors. Tenors typically play characters that fall in love with sopranos, such as Alfredo in Verdi’s *La Traviata*.



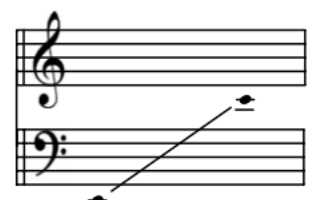
• Baritone (from the Greek term for “deep sounding”)

These voices are more mellow-sounding and slightly lower than tenors. The roles sung by baritones are usually father figures or counts and other nobles, and these are often important roles in the story (like *Rigoletto* in Verdi’s *Rigoletto*).



• Bass (“low”)

Basses are the lowest sounding human voices, and they often play roles of wise and older characters in opera, like kings, emperors, or gods. They can also play profoundly evil characters, like Satan in *Mephistopheles* or *Faust*. The basso profundo is the lowest voice in singing, and is commonly heard in Russian opera. One of the most recognizable bass roles in opera is Leporello in W.A. Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*.



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CLASS ACTIVITIES (PRE-PERFORMANCE)

Important Literary Terms

Conflict is any struggle that characters must overcome to achieve their goal. It can be a 'real world' obstacle or antagonist (external conflict) or some inner turmoil that our heroes must confront before getting what they want or need (internal conflict).

Types of Conflict:

1. Character vs. Character
2. Character vs. Society
3. Character vs. Nature
4. Character vs. Technology
5. Character vs. Supernatural
6. Character vs. Fate
7. Character vs. Self

From Reedsyblog

Theme is the message the play, or in this case the opera, wants to convey. Some people think that the theme is a moral or lesson, but that is not always the case. The theme is conveyed through the dialogue and the actions of the characters.

Themes of *Beauty and the Beast* included transformation, gratitude, forgiveness

Discussion Questions

What makes you happy?

Who makes you happy?

If you only had one wish, what would you wish for? Why?

What makes a person rich?

Other than wealth, can you think of other ways people can be rich?

CLASS ACTIVITIES (POST-PERFORMANCE)

Co-Curricular Studies

Science

Meteorology: Rogue Wave

Definition: Rogue waves (also known as freak waves, monster waves, episodic waves, killer waves, extreme waves, and abnormal waves) are unusually large and unpredictable surface waves that can be extremely dangerous to ships and isolated structures such as lighthouses. They are distinct from tsunamis, which are often almost unnoticeable in deep waters and are caused by the displacement of water due to other phenomena (such as earthquakes). A rogue wave at the shore is sometimes called a sneaker wave. In early literature, the freak storms that occur are often attributed to possible rogue waves.

Activity: Research the phenomenon of rogue waves. Consider their size, how they occur, and why they occur.

Vocational education

Adele wants to be a fashion designer. Do you think Adele has the traits or skills to be one? Investigate the skills needed to work in the fashion industry.

- Clothing (fashion) Designer
- Photographer
- Art Director
- Lighting Designer
- Stylist

Language Arts/Theatre Arts

A pantomime is a skit that tells a story through body movement without words. Sometimes music is used to help create the mood.

Activity: With your group, create a pantomime from Grerty's *Beauty and the Beast* or another book or story your class read recently. Be specific in your body language, facial expressions, gestures, and physical movements, so the audience (your classmates) can guess what your pantomime is about.

Extend the activity: Choose a piece of music to play under the pantomime to add to the mood or help convey the story.

Quiz/Recall

1. What is one of the messages sent in the letter to Marcel?
(His boat was destroyed at sea; his treasure is lost; his bills are still due)
2. What is Marcel told he can't take from the magic castle?
(The Rose)
3. Name one item given by the Spirit to Belle in the castle to help her during her stay?
(The Rose's friendship, books, music, magic mirror)
4. Who takes the magic mirror from the castle?
(Belle)

CLASS ACTIVITIES (POST-PERFORMANCE)

Class/Group/Individual Activities

Venn Diagram

Using the Venn Diagram (on page 13), compare the plot, characters, and themes of Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* to Grerty's version. How do they differ? What do they have in common?

The Gratitude Garden

Create a new rose garden (a coloring page can be found on page 12) for the Beast, Belle, and the Spirit of the Rose. With your rose, write a thank you note showing your gratitude for someone who did a good deed for you or another. Teachers, please send a picture of your classroom garden to Rachael Cammarn (rcammarn@toledoopera.org) to post on our Toledo Opera social media.

The Beast and Belle's New Library

Illustrate a book cover (coloring page is on page 14) for your favorite book or story. Put them all together to make a new library for Belle and the Beast.

Extended activity: Write a summary of the book or story and include it with your cover. Teachers, please send a picture of your library to Rachael Cammarn (rcammarn@toledoopera.org) to post on our Toledo Opera social media.

Post Show Discussion Questions:

- Would you stay with the Beast to save your parent/guardian/sibling?
- Why do you think Belle stays with the Beast?
- What other choices do you think Belle has?
- If you were Belle, what favorite book or story would you share with the Beast? Why?
- Does the use of the mirror by Belle and the Beast remind you of any communication you might use?

Character

- What are the magical qualities of the Spirit of the Rose?
- Do any other characters (literature, movies, TV, video games) have similar qualities to her? How?
- How does Belle confuse the Beast?
- (Extended question) Why does Belle's motivation confuse him?
- How has the Beast's personality changed since he met Belle?
- How are Marcel and Adele ruined?
- How is the Beast ruined?
- What emotions does the Beast feel now that Belle is gone?
- How does the Belle/Beast relationship change from their meeting to the conclusion of the opera?
- In the title of the opera, Belle is called beauty. What makes Belle beautiful?

Plot

- Describe the Beast's life before he became a beast.
- What has happened to Belle's family since she stayed with the beast?
- Why does Belle leave the Beast's castle?
- What do Marcel and Adele want to do with the magic mirror?
- What is the plan that Marcel and Adele devise?
- How can the Beast save himself?
- Advanced: What is the Beast's internal conflict?
- Advanced: What other forms of conflict are used in the opera?
- What character is Belle referring to when she says, "You are the monster?"

Themes

- What causes the characters to transform (change) in the opera?
- In what ways are the transformations negative? Positive?
- How does Belle embody the theme of gratitude?
- What characters do you perceive as not being grateful?
- What characters embody the theme of forgiveness? How?

CLASS ACTIVITIES (POST-PERFORMANCE)

Name: _____

The Gratitude Garden

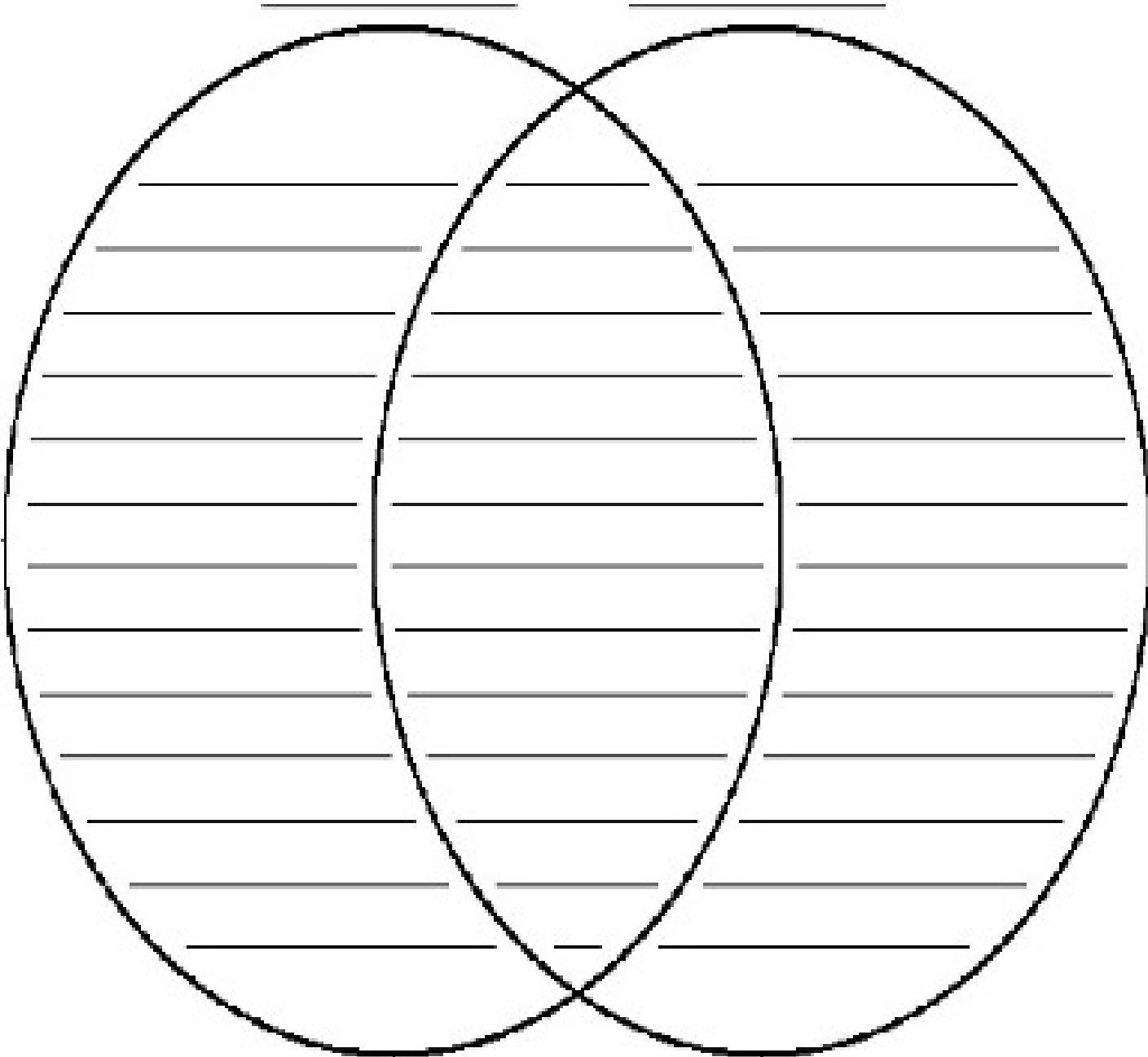


I am grateful for: _____

CLASS ACTIVITIES (POST-PERFORMANCE)

Name: _____

Venn Diagram - Disney and Grétry



CLASS ACTIVITIES (POST-PERFORMANCE)

Name: _____

The Beast and Belle's New Library

Create a cover for your favorite book or story to be placed in the Beast and Belle's new library.

