

Lesson B: Musical Theatre Forms

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LESSON B - Musical Theatre Forms

Duration	50 minutes
Grade Levels	9-12
Subjects	Drama, Literature, English, Music

Classroom Study Materials

1. Worksheets B1 and B2, (included in this lesson)
2. Links to the Internet are provided as reference material. See the following at the end of this lesson:
 - “*The Mikado*-References”
 - “*Carmen*-References”
 - “*Guys and Dolls*-References”
 - “Musical Stage Forms-References”
3. Computer Lab with access to the Internet

Goals and Objectives

1. Introduce students to three forms of musical theatre, Opera, Operetta and Modern Musicals (originally referred to as Musical Comedy).
2. Let students discover the differences in the music, libretto, performance and resources needed for these forms.
3. Allow students to participate in a group to explore how each of these forms relates to the popular music culture of today.

Lesson Description

1. Several days before the class meeting, give students Worksheet B1 – “Musical Theatre Forms” and Internet References for *The Mikado*, *Carmen*, *Guys and Dolls* and *Musical Forms*.
2. Students should research these three productions using the references which include YouTube links on the Internet.
3. Students should discuss in small groups what the overtures and opening numbers for *Carmen* (Prelude/Sur La Place), *The Mikado* (Overture/If You Want to Know Who We Are), and *Guys and Dolls* (Overture/Runyonland-Fugue for Tinhorns) suggest about the type of show that follows.
4. Conduct entire class discussion about how these three musical forms are perceived today and how each might relate to contemporary popular music culture.
5. After the class discussion give students Worksheet B2 – “Musical Theatre Resources” to fill out during class.

Assessment

1. Students should be able to research independently and fill out Worksheet B2.
2. Students should be able to discuss their findings with the class.

WORKSHEET B1: MUSICAL THEATRE FORMS

The purpose of this lesson is to distinguish between three forms of musical theatre: Opera, Operetta and Modern Musicals (originally referred to as Musical Comedy).

1. Using the references given in the *Carmen*, *Mikado* and *Guys and Dolls* reference sheets, familiarize yourself with the plots of these three musical compositions.
2. The overtures and opening number of any musical must establish the period and style of that production, and hint at the kind of story that will be told - whether it will be serious, funny, mysterious, or romantic. Look at the YouTube clips listed in the references for:
 - a. *Carmen*: Opening Chorus: "Prelude/Sur la Place"
 - b. *The Mikado*: Overture/"If You Want to Know Who We Are"
 - c. *Guys and Dolls*: "Runyonland Opening – Fugue for Tinhorns"

Note how each accomplishes this task. In a group discussion, talk about what each implies about the period and style of its show.

3. Usually each of these three forms will include a love duet between the leading man and woman. Look at the YouTube excerpts for:
 - a. *The Mikado*: "Were You Not to Ko-Ko Plighted"
 - b. *Guys and Dolls*: "I'll Know"

Note the differences in how these are treated. Are they really romantic or played for comic effect? What does one partner do while the other is singing?

4. *Carmen* is unusual in that the most important duet is near the end of the show. Compare the tone of the "Final Duet" with the solo arias "Flower Song" and "Habenera" or "Seguidilla." Is one more seductive? Does one indicate spurned love?
5. Look up the cast list and the orchestral requirements of each type of show and note the differences in the resources required for each. Do you think it would be possible for a high school drama group to present *Carmen*, *The Mikado*, or *Guys and Dolls* as a school production? Be ready to state why or why not.

References

The Mikado

YouTube Clips (From both professional and amateur productions)

Overture (Juneau Lyric Opera with rehearsal slides)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S_OmpmLVGg&feature=Playlist&p=CDC1CA24B006CB5E&playnext_from=PL&playnext=1&index=1

Overture (Audio with slides from High School Production)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KQ7ao_joics

If you Want to Know Who we Are

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IA1GgPrC0vk&feature=related>

A Wandering Minstrel & Our Great Mikado (non-traditional costumes)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EcNtTm5XEfY>

I Am So Proud (traditional version with Martyn Green)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gKLIWod7uiU&feature=player_embedded

I Am So Proud (with Eric Idle, Modern Costumes and a headless chorus!)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o957lzsqDec>

Lord High Executioner & I've Got a Little List (updated) & Comes a Train of Ladies:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A45xqLHccRo&feature=related>

Three Little Maids from School

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mXWkiZUPmDY>

Were You Not to Ko-Ko Plighted (several traditional and non-traditional interpolations)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MJO7tdK5aBI&feature=related>

or <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n28PTd0TLBI>

or <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jd8P3YfLmuM&feature=related>

Young Man Go To

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WBLhQrBkrY4>

Act I Finale (high school production in two parts)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GBmDIA60_44&feature=related

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C2fYrMoZj30&feature=related>

The Sun Whose Rays

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EcNtTm5XEfY>

Madrigal

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n4uZK80DwqM&feature=related>

Entrance & A More Humane Mikado

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G0xamGC458g>

The Criminal Cried

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yflwnehelT8&feature=related>

See How the Fates Their Gifts Allot

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=drtP0VU6WPU>

Here's a Howdy Do (+ dialog with Groucho Marx-audio)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IujYCLTeZWg>

The Flowers that Bloom in the Spring(plus dialog)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YNF3DHDRDGO>

Tit Willow (traditional with John Reed)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sou331FNeU4>

Finale Act II

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ahfRrWhl2d4>

Origins, Synopsis and History

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_mikado

Discography (list of Mikado recordings and videos):

<http://gasdisc.oakapplepress.com/mik.htm>

Libretto (Book)

ASCII File

<http://math.boisestate.edu/gas/mikado/libretto.txt>

1911 Edition with Illustrations

<http://www.archive.org/stream/mikadoortownofti00sulliala/page/6/mode/2up>

Music

Midi Files (Playable with Quicktime or any Midi Player)

<http://math.boisestate.edu/gas/mikado/webopera/index.html>

Audio Sample Files (short excerpts)

http://math.boisestate.edu/gas/mikado/html/mikado_real.html

Plot Summaries

Short summary

<http://math.boisestate.edu/gas/mikado/html/plotsum.html>

Summary with links to songs

<http://math.boisestate.edu/gas/mikado/html/summary.html>

Long Summary with Illustrations

http://math.boisestate.edu/gas/mikado/html/plot_summary.html

Costumes

1926 D'Oyly Carte production with many illustrations

<http://math.boisestate.edu/gas/carte/1926/index.html>

Book Excerpts

The Making of the Mikado

http://math.boisestate.edu/gas/mikado/html/make_mikado.html

The Japanese Opera

<http://math.boisestate.edu/gas/books/walbrook/chap10.html>

Gilbert and Sullivan History

Short history with emphasis on Mikado plus a discography

<http://www.classicalnotes.net/classics/mikado.html>

"Gilbert and Sullivan Opera, A History and Comment" (Online Book)

<http://math.boisestate.edu/gas/books/walbrook/index.html>

Guys & Dolls

Wikipedia Article (including synopsis and list of musical numbers)

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guys_and_Dolls

Song Lyrics

<http://www.allmusicals.com/g/guysanddolls.htm>

Script: (Movie version)

http://www.script-o-rama.com/movie_scripts/g/guys-and-dolls-script-transcript.html

Plot Summary and Character List with vocal ranges

<http://www.stageagent.com/Shows/View/711>

Guys and Dolls Study Guide: (excellent)

http://lessonopoly.org/svef/files/Guys_and_Dolls_Study_Guide.pdf

Character Descriptions

http://www.masonplayers.org/index.php?Itemid=79&id=58&option=com_content&task=view

YouTube Excerpts: (Both professional and amateur productions)

Excerpts from 1992 Broadway Revival

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gUZxKMvI7o0&feature=related>

and the 2009 production

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XtfycyIJ5Ro&feature=related>

Act I

Overture

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sSZBGaDc9QM>

"Runyonland", "Fugue for Tinhorns" and "Follow the Fold": (High School)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oDu6nKlflK8>

or http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p_wE3mz08gc&feature=related

"Fugue for Tinhorns" (Stubby Kaye as Nicely, Benny, Rusty-movie)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NxAX74gM8DY>

"The Oldest Established" (Nathan, Nicely, Benny, Guys-H.S.)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4mwBxdZyijo&feature=Playlist&p=4C85FC33FBF2B19C&playnext=1&playnextfrom=PL&index=50>

or <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d3rcJgOoTu8>

"I'll Know" (Sarah, Sky)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5A1HWEub0hg> (from movie)

or <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YQtvZUnRx3U> (U. Miami)

"A Bushel and a Peck" (Miss Adelaide-Vivian Blaine, Hot Box Girls-movie)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S2PJ9m-Ffk> (London Cast)

or <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fHd-69blfEk&feature=related> (foreign cast)

"Adelaide's Lament" (Miss Adelaide)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NCSI7rw4ERI>

"Guys and Dolls" (Nicely, Benny-H.S. production)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MyYgqejAAyY>

"If I Were a Bell" (Sarah)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aLooMzB_lgc (movie-Jean Simmons)

or http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5xo8f7_9dmc (High School)

"My Time of Day/I've Never Been in Love Before" (Sky, Sarah)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OzvRtHly9mc> (HighSchool)

or <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G4-7iHtuZ-o> (Peter Gallegher-record session)

Act II

"Take Back Your Mink" (Miss Adelaide, Hot Box Girls)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sGN6-1nzJRM> (Amateur show)

or <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zXmTAUI2h0Q> (High School)

"More I Cannot Wish You" (Arvide)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CfHtj6WnQj4> (High School?)

"Luck Be a Lady" (Sky, Guys)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xVlQXvrWC_A (Brando-movie)

or http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ukiyTrm_22M (Australia)

"Sue Me" (Miss Adelaide, Nathan)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v9sp3vGTm5k> (Sinatra-movie)

or <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J5lffGU2TJs> (Platt-B'way)

"Sit Down, You're Rockin' the Boat" (Stubby Kaye as Nicely, Company)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o7kzsZreG0o>

"Marry the Man Today" (Miss Adelaide, Sarah)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wzb0LPM0CDU> (concert version)

or <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z77V2XSJBkY> (Hollywood bowl)

"Guys and Dolls (Finale/Reprise)" (Company-movie)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wnvpxVFOApM>

There are many more clips from *Guys and Dolls* on YouTube

Carmen

(With thanks to LA Opera resource page)

<http://www.laopera.com/educom/pdf/carmen/Carmen Resource Page.pdf>

Background, History and Synopsis

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carmen_\(opera\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carmen_(opera))

Indiana University School Of Music online vocal score of *Carmen*

<http://www.dlib.indiana.edu/variations/scores/aaz2552/large/index.html>

Synopsis

<http://www.opera-opera.com.au/plotb.htm - bizecarm>

History of Carmen from Music With Ease site

<http://www.musicwithease.com/bizet-carmen-history.html>

W.W. Norton has chapter notes online, including a chapter intro and outline of opera and dramatic music in the Nineteenth Century. It also has an overview of Bizet's *Carmen*.

<http://www.wwnorton.com/college/music/hanning3/outlines/ch19.htm>

Articles on Operapedia web site

<http://www.sdopera.com/Operapedia/Carmen>

Opera America website

<http://operaamerica.org/Content/Audiences/Programs/Cornerstones/operalist.html - carmen>

Aria database website contains seven Aria translations from *Carmen*

<http://www.aria-database.com/cgi-bin/aria-search.pl?opera=Carmen>

Full Opera and English translation

<http://www.aria-database.com/translations/carmen.txt>

Georges Bizet

<http://www.essentialsofmusic.com/composer/bizet.html>

The Literary Encyclopedia article on Prosper Merimee, author who wrote the original tale of *Carmen*

<http://www.litencyc.com/php/speople.php?rec=true&UID=5015>

Website dedicated to Prosper Merimee and his works

<http://frenital.byu.edu/merimee/>

Link to downloadable original story of *Carmen* by Prosper Merimee

<http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/2465>

Seeing medicine through Opera Glasses article

<http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/picrender.fcgi?artid=1487810&blobtype=pdf>

Carmen lesson plan from San Diego Opera

http://www.sdopera.com/education/lesson_plans/06_Carmen_LP.pdf

YouTube Carmen Excerpts

Several preview excerpts

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gd0FNpiBDyA>

Prelude and Opening Chorus (Sur la Place)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EwAvG2egAvs>

Children's Chorus

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=efhDiPSKE5Y>

Habenera (Act I)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E2XyHfi50yE>

or

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=djsuP0uta7s>

Seguidilla

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x6S_8ko2smQ&feature=Playlist&p=EE04FCF6FC6AFE4F&playnext=1&playnext_from=PL&index=20

Orchestral Interlude and Toreador Song

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IXNjxZ11NQ>

Toreador Song

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jyy1Hvj2wQk&feature=Playlist&p=74AB048D7D80F7EE&playnext=1&playnext_from=PL&index=8

Chanson Boheme

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AMDl3jK2Yl4>

Flower Song

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tVY3vKQKsv4>

Quintet

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HiSpdkhCBPo>

Card aria (Act III):

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=flqbn5dIDt4&feature=Playlist&p=EE04FCF6FC6AFE4F&playnext=1&playnext_from=PL&index=21

Michaela's Aria (Act III)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=peh-fSo3FvM>

Duet and Final Chorus

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5FJzVEUka1A>

or

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LA09ol_N9HY&feature=related

There are more than 3000 others! Explore YouTube on your own!

Musical Stage Forms

Opera

Today's opera dates back to the Italian Renaissance, when a group of composers created a form which they thought resembled classical Greek music-drama. It has developed into a form emphasizing grand scale, pageantry thrilling spectacle, and soaring music testing the limits of professional singers. Italian composers such as Verdi, Rossini and Puccini standardized this form, with German composers like Wagner, Richard Strauss and Mozart making important contributions. There are also important French, Russian and Czechoslovakian operas; Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* may be the most important American opera. There are modern British and American composers such as Britten, Menotti, Glass and Adams working in this medium, and there is at least one "rock opera" (*Tommy*). Operas are often through-composed, with all dialog expressed through song, with orchestral accompaniment, although the thoughts of one character are often given in recitative, a half-sung monolog in speech rhythms with simple chorded accompaniment. Operatic choruses are trained singers, but seldom called upon to do much acting, and separate groups of dancers are usually employed to provide choreographic solos. Non-singing and dancing supernumeraries ("supers") are often recruited to make up the large casts needed in spectacular scenes and processions.

Operas are typically sung in the language in which they were composed, which means that opera singers must learn many languages. Supertitles projected above the stage are often used nowadays to provide translations into the language of the audience.

Operetta

The musical form known as operetta may have been kicked off by John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* in 1728, but is generally regarded as flowering with the works of Offenbach in France (such as his *Orpheus in the Underworld*) and Gilbert and Sullivan (*H.M.S. Pinafore* and *Pirates of Penzance* for example) in the latter part of the Nineteenth Century. Germans quickly adopted the form (as in *The Merry Widow* or *Der Fledermaus*) and composers such as Friml, Romberg, Kern and Sousa, trained by European teachers, brought operetta to America with such pieces as *The Desert Song*, and *ShowBoat* (often described as a musical, it meets many of the criteria for operetta). Although modern audiences seem to prefer Musical Comedies, many fairly recent shows like *Trouble in Tahiti*, *Candide*, *Les Miserables*, and *Sweeney Todd* are often classified as operettas.

Unlike operas, which often are based on tragic themes, most operettas have more amusing plots, and are often called "light operas." While still including stirring songs for the soloists and chorus, operettas usually contain some spoken dialog, which is used to advance the plot and provide an outlet for humor. Choruses in operettas are generally called upon for more movement and dancing than in grand opera, and typically there are few performers whose only function is to dance.

Musicals

Modern musicals grew out of patched-together performances in America after the Civil War like *The Black Crook*, and Vaudeville or Minstrel shows featuring comic skits and musical scenes interpolated into the show with little pretense of continuity or plot. Revues like Ziegfeld's *Follies* and the British import *Floradora* and the bawdy comedies of burlesque started dwindling in the early Twentieth Century, while the plot became more important as evidenced in extended musical comedies by Victor Herbert (*Babes in Toyland*), Jerome Kern (*Very Good Eddie*), and George M. Cohan (*Little Johnny Jones*) which became popular in the early 1900's. In the 1920's and 30's, well-plotted musical shows by composers such as Irving Berlin, Kern, Rodgers and Hart, Vincent Youmans, and Cole Porter blanketed Broadway Theatres, although it was often the custom for featured performers to interpolate songs or comic bits that had nothing to do with the plot.

This changed dramatically with *Oklahoma*, Rodgers and Hammerstein's 1943 blockbuster, in which each song or comic interlude was chosen to advance the plot, which contained some darker elements rarely present in previous musical shows. It even contained an extended ballet sequence reminiscent of grand opera describing the mixed feelings of the heroine. Soon other important musicals (they could hardly be called musical comedies any longer) such as Berlin's *Annie Get Your Gun* and Loesser's *Guys and Dolls* followed this formula, bringing what could be described as a "golden age" to Broadway theatres. In the following decades the plots often grew darker and more complex, producing such outstanding examples as Bernstein's *West Side Story*, Sondheim's *Follies* and Lloyd-Weber's *Phantom of the Opera*.

The backbone of the modern musical is a strong plot plus memorable solo songs. (One critic dismissed a show because it did not contain a single song the audience could hum while leaving the theatre!) Musical plots often focus on the story of the main male and female leads, though almost always there is a subplot concerning a secondary pair of characters to introduce variety. Often these "featured performers" carry the burden of much of the humor and dancing in the show. Musical choruses are expected to be proficient in both singing, acting and dancing and are often featured in "production numbers" requiring considerable dance skills. Lately Broadway musicals have turned to spectacular, often fantastic, mechanical stage effects in an effort to attract audiences, but there are still examples such as *The Producers* which depend on the old-fashioned concepts of plot, humor and hummable songs.