La rondine is made possible by a generous gift from the Arthur F. and Alice E. Adams Foundation and the Adams Supporting Foundation.
FLORIDA GRAND OPERA GRATELY
RECOGNIZES THE FOLLOWING DONORS WHO HAVE
PROVIDED SUPPORT OF ITS EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Florida Department of State
Mr. George L. Lindemann
Mrs. Ann Bussee
SaludArte
Susan Isenberg

Additional support from
Funding Arts Network in Miami and
Funding Arts Broward in Fort Lauderdale.

J.P. Morgan
Florida Grand Opera is pleased to present the magical world of opera to people of all ages in South Florida. We are delighted to invite you to join us for the Opera’s 2011-12 season, which will begin with our first-ever production of a zarzuela, Federico Moreno Torroba’s *Luísa Fernanda*. The season will also include Florida Grand Opera’s first-ever production of Puccini’s *La rondine* and productions of Verdi’s *Rigoletto* and Gounod’s *Roméo et Juliette*.

As part of our Student Dress Rehearsal program, we have developed comprehensive study guides to be used in the classroom, at home, for academic learning, and for personal enjoyment. Each guide is filled with background information on the history of the opera, a synopsis and musical examples from our 2011-12 season.

Florida Grand Opera believes that music is vital and essential to a well-rounded education and a life that is culturally fulfilling. We hope that the Dress Rehearsals and these guides develop and support the teaching skills of musicians and teachers so that students’ music learning is deepened.

I look forward to seeing you at the Opera!

Robert M. Heuer  
General Director and CEO  
Florida Grand Opera
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ATTENDING AN OPERA

WHAT WILL YOU SEE IN AN OPERA?
Opera combines colorful sets and costumes, dynamic staging, passionate stories, and poetic words with beautiful music. Richard Wagner referred to it as Gesamtkunstwerk, or a “total art work.” You might watch dancing, sword fighting, characters dressing in disguises, the tenor wooing the soprano, or unfurling schemes against another character. Operas can be romantic, comedic, tragic, dramatic, or all of the above. Primarily, opera is entertaining!

WHAT WILL YOU HEAR IN AN OPERA?
Operas are sung in many different languages, the most common of which are Italian, French, German, and English. Luisa Fernanda, however, is sung in Spanish. Florida Grand Opera provides supertitles (translations of the text projected on a screen above the stage) in English. Singers are accompanied by the orchestra which can consist of string instruments like violins, violas, cellos, and double basses, woodwinds like flutes, clarinets, oboes, and bassoons, and brass instruments like trumpets, french horns, trombones, and tubas.

OPERA ETIQUETTE:
- Attending an opera is an exciting occasion! You should dress comfortably, but presentably. Many audience members use an opera as an opportunity to dress in formal attire.
- Arrive early. Audience members who arrive after the start of the performance are prevented from entering until there is a change of scene.
- It is customary to show your appreciation at various times in the performance with applause. The audience will applaud at the beginning of each act as the conductor enters the orchestra pit, at the ends of particularly well sung arias or choruses, at the close of each scene or act, and during the final curtain call as the performers bow.
- If you want to show your admiration even more, you can call out “Bravo!” for a male singer, “Brava!” for a female singer, or “Braviiii!” for an ensemble. If you enjoyed the entire production, stand and clap during the curtain call to join in a standing ovation.
- Audience members are expected to turn off all cell phones and refrain from using cameras with or without flash during the performance.
- While concessions are sold in the lobby before the performance and during intermissions, no food or drink is allowed inside of the theatre.
- Be respectful of the musicians and your fellow audience members and do not talk during the performance.

Most importantly, enjoy the opera!
Florida Grand Opera stands as one of the oldest performing arts organizations in Florida and in the nation. Florida Grand Opera is one of the resident companies of The Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County where it presents its Miami performances in the Sanford and Dolores Ziff Ballet Opera House. Fort Lauderdale performances are given at the Broward Center for the Performing Arts. Florida Grand Opera was formed in June 1994 by the merger of Greater Miami Opera, founded in 1941, and The Opera Guild Inc. of Fort Lauderdale, founded in 1945.

The Greater Miami Opera was founded by Dr. Arturo di Filippi, a voice teacher at the University of Miami. The first production, held at Miami Senior High School in 1942, was a single performance of Leoncavallo's Pagliacci, performed in English, with Dr. di Filippi singing the role of Canio. In 1945, Dr. di Filippi appeared in a production of Il trovatore at Ft. Lauderdale Central High School, representing the first production of the The Opera Guild, Inc. Florida Grand Opera has a rich history of presenting internationally acclaimed artists such as Robert Merrill, Dorothy Kirsten, Richard Tucker, Renata Tebaldi, Roberta Peters, Franco Corelli, Renata Scotto, Montserrat Caballe, Jon Vickers, Sherrill Milnes, Nicolai Gedda, Birgit Nilsson, Anna Moffo, Plácido Domingo, Beverly Sills, Joan Sutherland, Evelyn Lear, James Morris, Thomas Stewart, Diana Soviero, Justino Diaz, Simon Estes, Elizabeth Futral, Helen Donath, Deborah Voigt, and Fernando de la Mora. Luciano Pavarotti made his American debut in 1965 with the company’s production of Lucia di Lammermoor.

In April, 2007, Florida Grand Opera presented the critically acclaimed world premiere of David Carlson’s Anna Karenina with libretto by Colin Graham. Anna Karenina was commissioned as a co-production by Florida Grand Opera, Michigan Opera Theatre, and Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. In May 1997, the Company presented the world premiere of Balseros, an opera by Robert Ashley with libretto by world renowned Cuban writer María Irene Fornés. Balseros was commissioned as a co-production by Florida Grand Opera, Miami-Dade Community College and the South Florida Composers Alliance. Another world premiere was Robert Ward’s Minutes Till Midnight in 1982. American premieres include Gioachino Rossini’s Bianca e Falliero and the final revised version of Alberto Franchetti’s Cristoforo Colombo.

At the core of Florida Grand Opera’s mission is a commitment to training emerging opera professionals and educating young people about opera while embracing the diverse cultural heritage of the South Florida community. Each year, established education programs, including the Dress Rehearsal Program and the company’s education festivals expose thousands of children and students to opera’s many facets. Florida Grand Opera’s renowned artist training program, the Young Artist Studio, nurtures gifted young singers and provides them with the skills and experiences necessary to move beyond their training at universities and music conservatories into successful careers in the professional opera world.

Florida Grand Opera will present four main-stage productions for the 2011-2012 season: Federico Moreno Torroba’s Luisa Fernanda, Puccini’s La rondine, Verdi’s Rigoletto, and Gounod’s Roméo et Juliette. Luisa Fernanda is the Florida Grand Opera’s first production of a zarzuela, a Spanish lyric-drama that is based in the operatic tradition, but also incorporates popular song and dance.
**ACTIVITY ALERT!**

**INVEST IN THE FLORIDA GRAND OPERA!**

Many adults have trouble understanding charts and graphs, which are used in daily life. Study the information and then see if you can answer the questions below.

We want you to join our family of donors. In fact, we need you, as only 50% of our costs are met through ticket sales. Your contribution is critical to our success!

**DONOR BENEFITS**

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How many benefits would you receive if you donated $10,000? What is your gift level?

List the benefits of someone who is at the Golden Circle level.

Which giving level is the first to receive their name in the opera program book?

At which giving levels would you get a private backstage tour for you and your guests?

What do you get for joining?

Some benefits are listed below. Plus you will benefit by being a part of our success – knowing when the curtain goes up that you have made it possible. Your gift, at whatever level, is greatly appreciated.

**Benefits of Giving**

1. Inside Peek behind-the-scenes production updates.
3. Invitation to Family Day education program.
4. One pass to one final dress rehearsal.
5. All ticketing fees waived.
6. Photograph in the season program book alongside donor listing.
7. Invitation for two to backstage tour.
8. Special meeting with FGO General Director.
9. Additional opportunities to engage with FGO artists and fellow opera-goers following performances.
10. Specially tailored benefits designed to enhance the opera-going experience.
11. Opportunity to meet artists upon their arrival.
13. Special introduction to guest artist by FGO General Director.
15. Exclusive backstage tour with introductions to designer/director team.
WHERE DID OPERA COME FROM? WHAT PROMPTED COMPOSERS TO CREATE IT?

Poets, musicians, architects, artists, philosophers, mathematicians, and many other thinkers had become obsessed with a recreation of the Greek culture during the Italian Renaissance. In the 1500’s, a certain group of composers from the Camerata Fiorentina, or Florentine Academy, began to focus on the reproduction of Greek Drama. The Camerata believed that several factors were extremely important in recreating these dramas: the sung text must be understood, the music should reflect the cadences of speech rather than dance, and most importantly, the music should explore and enhance the emotions being expressed.

The Camerata developed Western music’s earliest operas, the most well-known being Monteverdi’s L’Orfeo. Following L’Orfeo’s success, the art form spread rapidly amongst composers, artists, and poets. The Baroque form consisted of sung recitatives by soloists which would move the plot or story line, arias in which the soloist would explore an emotion, and choruses where the rest of the characters commented on the action. Composers began to create duets, trios, and other ensemble numbers with multiple soloists, allowing for more character interaction and more dynamic plot lines. As the Classical period began, the chorus of an opera became more integral to the story, rather than merely providing commentary. Arias began to express multiple emotions and more complex ideas and main characters took on more human attributes. All of these developments are present in the works of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

Until the late 1700’s, operas fit into very specific classifications: opera seria, the noble and “serious” genre, and opera buffa, the comic and low brow genre. Mozart revolutionized opera as he began to blend these genres in his later works. In The Marriage of Figaro, buffa, or comic, servant characters like Figaro were portrayed alongside seria noblemen like Count Almaviva. Furthermore, the buffa characters often displayed more admirable qualities than the nobles. Mozart’s Don Giovanni is classified as a dramma giocoso, or comic drama. It features lighthearted moments and comic scenes such as Giovanni’s servant displaying the catalogue of his master’s conquests to a jilted lover, but ends quite dramatically with the womanizer being dragged to Hell for his terrible debauchery.

Florida Grand Opera’s production of Don Giovanni

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

FGO’s production of Don Giovanni

Florida Grand Opera’s production of Don Giovanni
Giuseppe Verdi composed operas during the Romantic period as harmonic language became more varied and effective. Due to the concurrent developments in literary style, plots explored a greater depth of emotion and action, and provided commentary on current events with more frequency. As more regions chaffed under the oppressive rule of foreign empires, composers sought to express nationalistic themes with their art. Verdi endured many struggles with government and church censors over his operas, because of their political overtones.

As opera developed even further, national styles diversified and developed their own canons. Verdi, Mozart, and Rossini, among others, are considered by scholars to be members of the Italian School of operatic composition. Italian School composers created highly melodic music which displays the singers to the best of their abilities. The orchestra accompaniment is usually secondary to the vocal line, and as such, these operas are termed “Singer’s Opera.” Conversely, the German School of Opera, which crystallized itself through the works of Carl Maria von Weber, Beethoven, and Wagner, emphasizes the power of the music as a whole instead of displays by the vocalist. Weber’s opera Der Freischütz (The Marksman) is considered the first important German Romantic opera, and is particularly well known for its unearthly Wolf’s Glen scene. Weber’s opera Euryanthe followed Der Freischütz and was through-composed, blurring the distinctions between recitative and aria. This melding of recitative and aria was enhanced and expanded by Richard Wagner, who wrote in flowing and endless melodies. Wagner’s operas like Tristan und Isolde, Parsifal, and The Ring Cycle best exemplify the German focus on the effectiveness of the orchestra, vocalists, and poetry as a total production to create the drama. The French School, founded by Lully and developed by composers such as Meyerbeer, Bizet, Gounod, and Massenet, is a balancing point between the Italian and German ideologies. Instrumental support for the vocal line was more complex and rich, while the vocal line was less florid. The voice was always well displayed while still doing its part to evoke and progress the dramatic plot.
Names like *South Pacific*, *Oklahoma!*!, *Phantom of the Opera*, *Wicked*, and *Rent* are often more familiar to us than the vast majority of the operatic repertory. These musical dramas are heavily integrated into pop culture and are usually synonymous with Broadway and New York City. Have you ever wondered what inspired the creation of this unique art form full of drama, music, and dance? Though the modern musical’s inspiration comes from a variety of sources, the opera, more specifically *opera buffa*, lies at its heart.

*Opéra buffa*, or ‘comic opera,’ was a response to *opéra seria*, or ‘serious opera,’ during the 18th century. During this time, audiences wanted a plot that they could relate to and have fun watching. In response to this demand, composers began creating works that incorporated domestic characters in funny situations. The music was lighthearted and characters relatable, leaving audiences happy and upbeat by the end of the performance. Some of the most well-known *opera buffa* are *The Marriage of Figaro* by Mozart and *The Barber of Seville* by Rossini.

In the late 19th century, British and American composers sought to create new comedic works that mixed many genres of music, dance, and drama. These composers drew musical ideas from the *opera buffa* idiom, but also included dance numbers and parody elements that were typical of *burlesque* shows. “Musical comedies” such as Cohan’s *Little Johnny Jones* (1904) and Kern’s *Nobody Home* (1915) typified this genre. As in *opera buffa*, ordinary, average characters were emphasized and brought to life. The plots were simple and easy to understand. Unlike opera, however, dancing and acting played a major role in these productions in order to bring the variety show to life.

In 1927, Oscar Hammerstein II and Jerome Kern delivered a musical dealing with prejudice, and tragic, undying love: *Showboat*. This musical was revolutionary for a number of reasons. *Showboat* was clearly distinguishable from the “musical comedy” (like *opera buffa*) and established itself as a “musical play” (like *opéra seria*). All of the elements were subservient to the play; the story was cohesive and the integrated songs that contributed to the action by establishing moods, unveiling characters, or advancing the plot. *Showboat* dealt with heavy emotions and was like nothing that had come before it. It paved the way for musicals by allowing them to deal with new subject matter. A few years later, *Strike Up the Band* (1930) included social commentary on war, capitalism, and American politics.

Since the 70’s, composers have taken the modern musical in many different directions. Because the music from a “musical” is no longer popular music, composers have often brought “pop” music back to the stage. Andrew Lloyd Weber has done so numerous times in *Jesus Christ Superstar* (1971), *Cats* (1982), and *Phantom of the Opera* (1986) by incorporating rock beats and electric instruments in the orchestra. Some composers, such as Jonathan Larson, have even created entire musicals (*Rent* (1994)) using rock band instrumentation. There is no longer a “typical” sound for a musical, as the repertory is as diverse as the composers who have created it. New musicals explore all facets of the human experience, social injustice, and worldly problems, as well as science fiction and fantasy. Though there is dancing, over-the-top acting, and rock and roll music in our modern musical, the themes of love, loss, and longing are not unlike its operatic ancestor.

Many call the Broadway musical “American Opera.” The musical, though primarily drawing from operatic arts, was created through a conglomeration of many different elements, much like our American culture. Opera made use of drama, music, costumes, and art to

**ACTIVITY ALERT!**

Search the internet to find out how an operatic voice is different from a musical theater voice!
play. Songs are used to create drama, move the story forward, and hopefully teach us something about our own lives. The orchestra is used in both art forms to support the singers and add depth to their words. And though the acting and dancing used to be quite different between and an opera and a musical, current trends on Broadway and in opera houses are showing that they are learning from each other’s successes. And though they are learning and growing from each other today, we must not forget the musical’s roots. Without opera, the modern musical would never have come to be.

ACTIVITY ALERT!

Draw a line connecting the following operas to their musical adaptations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPERAS</th>
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<td>Romeo et Juliette</td>
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<td>Ein Tag im Paradies</td>
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<td>Wie einst im Mai</td>
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<td>La figlia del regimento</td>
<td>West Side Story</td>
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**THE OPERATIC ...**

**OPERA SINGERS ARE CLASSIFIED IN TWO DIFFERENT WAYS.**

First, they are identified as soprano, mezzo-soprano, tenor, etc., based upon their singing range. Secondly, they are categorized based on characteristics of their sound. Type of voice is often referred to with the German word *Fach* (plural *Fächer*), which means “subject” or “specialty.” A singer’s *Fach* determines what roles they are most likely to perform.

Women’s voices are grouped (from high to low) into soprano and mezzo-soprano ranges. Men’s voices are grouped into tenor, baritone, and bass by range. Common additional descriptive words include coloratura, lyric, and dramatic.

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<td>This soprano has a voice with the lightest weight and enough agility to handle coloratura passages (vocal runs of many fast notes). She will not typically sing above a high C. A soubrette is also referred to in German as a “Character Soprano.” Her roles are frequently the maid or comic relief of the opera.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Coloratura Soprano:</strong></td>
<td>A coloratura soprano is marked with great agility and a much higher range than a soubrette. Depending on the weight of her voice, the soprano may be additionally described as a lyric coloratura with medium weight and depth, or a dramatic coloratura with the fullest sound and a brassy, ringing quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lyric Soprano:</strong></td>
<td>Lyric sopranos are typified by an ability to sing legato (in a smooth and connected line) with a pure and beautiful sound. Many of a lyric soprano’s roles are the love interests of their opera, so a soprano of this voice type must encompass the innocence and vulnerability written into their music. Lyric sopranos may also grow into a classification known as <em>spinto</em>, which in Italian means “pushed.” This sound is larger than a standard lyric soprano and can cut across a larger orchestra.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dramatic Soprano:</strong></td>
<td>A dramatic soprano has a full and rich sound with power that can carry across the largest opera orchestras. Their tone is often darker than other sopranos. Dramatic sopranos are also marked with great stamina and endurance.</td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mezzo-Soprano Fächer</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coloratura, Lyric, and dramatic mezzo-soprano</strong> have similar vocal characteristics to their soprano counterparts, but spend more of their time singing in a lower tessitura or range of their voice. Mezzo-soprano voices are typically more mellow and rich in their sound than soprano voices.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contralto:</strong></td>
<td>The contralto <em>Fach</em> features a significantly lower range and a very dark, rich tone. A contralto is one of the rarer female voice types due to its range and color.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soprano range</th>
<th>Mezzo-Soprano range</th>
<th>Contralto range</th>
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</table>
### Tenor Fächer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenor</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comic Tenor:</strong></td>
<td>The comic tenor sings roles that require acting rather than exquisitely beautiful singing. His arias may be written in a patter or speech-like style and do not feature the demands of a full lyric melody.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lyric Tenor:</strong></td>
<td>Similar to the other lyric voices, a lyric tenor must sing with beauty and command both flexibility of coloratura passages and musical phrasing of a legato line.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Heldentenor:</strong></td>
<td>Meaning “heroic tenor” in German, a Heldentenor features a richer and more robust sound than the lyric tenor. In his middle range, a heldentenor may sound very similar to a baritone in color and weight.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Baritone Fächer

Lyric baritones and dramatic bass-baritones feature the same characteristics of lyric and dramatic voices. A lyric baritone has a sweeter, mellow sound, while a dramatic bass-baritone has more comfort and strength in his lower range as well as enough power to sing over a large orchestra.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Baritone</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cavalier Baritone:</strong></td>
<td>The cavalier baritone has a brassy quality to his voice and is capable of singing both lyric and dramatic passages. This voice is very similar to the Verdi Baritone, discussed more in-depth in the next section, but the Verdi Baritone usually sings a much higher tessitura than the cavalier baritone.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Bass Fächer

Basses are also classified as lyric or dramatic, as well as comic, based upon weight and beauty of the voice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bass</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Basso Profundo:</strong></td>
<td>This bass voice is marked by an extreme low range. The basso profundo (Italian for “Profound” or “Low Bass”) has an enormously resonant and full-bodied sound.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Tenor range  
Baritone range  
Bass range
### THE OPERATIC VOICE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fach</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Opera</th>
<th>Composer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Soubrette Soprano</td>
<td>Susanna</td>
<td>Le Nozze di Figaro</td>
<td>Mozart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coloratura Soprano</td>
<td>Gilda</td>
<td>Rigoletto</td>
<td>Verdi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dramatic Coloratura Soprano</td>
<td>Queen of the Night</td>
<td>Die Zauberflöte</td>
<td>Mozart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyric Soprano</td>
<td>Mimi</td>
<td>La Boheme</td>
<td>Puccini</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spinto Lyric Soprano</td>
<td>Butterfly</td>
<td>Madama Butterfly</td>
<td>Puccini</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coloratura Mezzo-Soprano</td>
<td>Rosina</td>
<td>Il Barbieri di Siviglia</td>
<td>Rossini</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyric Mezzo-Soprano</td>
<td>Carmen</td>
<td>Carmen</td>
<td>Bizet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contralto</td>
<td>Erda</td>
<td>The Ring Cycle</td>
<td>Wagner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comic Tenor</td>
<td>Monastatos</td>
<td>Die Zauberflöte</td>
<td>Mozart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyric Tenor</td>
<td>Don Ottavio</td>
<td>Don Giovanni</td>
<td>Mozart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heldentenor</td>
<td>Parsifal</td>
<td>Parsifal</td>
<td>Wagner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyric Baritone</td>
<td>Papageno</td>
<td>Die Zauberflöte</td>
<td>Mozart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cavalier Baritone</td>
<td>Don Giovanni</td>
<td>Don Giovanni</td>
<td>Mozart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyric Bass-Baritone</td>
<td>Don Pizarro</td>
<td>Fidelio</td>
<td>Beethoven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dramatic Bass-Baritone</td>
<td>Scarpia</td>
<td>Tosca</td>
<td>Puccini</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyric Bass</td>
<td>Don Basilio</td>
<td>Il Barbieri di Siviglia</td>
<td>Rossini</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basso Profundo</td>
<td>Sparafucile</td>
<td>Rigoletto</td>
<td>Verdi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ACTIVITY ALERT!**
Think about some of your favorite superheroes or TV characters. What voice types would they be and why?
La Rondine is flooded with comprimario roles. Comprimari account for eleven of the sixteen characters featured in the opera! They include: Périchaud, Gobin, Crébillon, Rabonnier, Yvette, Bianca, Suzy, Georgette, Gabriella, a Butler, and a Voice. So what is a comprimario?

A comprimario role is a supporting role in an opera. The term is derived from the Italian “con primario,” or “with the primary” (smaller roles performed alongside larger, lead roles). The term is also sometimes used interchangeably with character singer. The comprimario singer has the ability to give equal weight to both singing and performing.

So, does singing a comprimario role mean compromise? After all, by definition, comprimari are secondary characters to the leading singers. Must you compromise your career, your image, or your vocal technique to sing comprimario roles? Are they simply stepping-stones to larger roles or might they be the ultimate goal? Is the tenor cast as Gobin really dying to play Prunier? Is the soprano cast as Yvette just not good enough to be Magda?

The supporting characters may be all of those things, but comprimario roles MUST be fully developed characters. They must take into account the artistic possibilities inherent in the comprimario role. A mezzo-soprano cast as Mercédès in Carmen may spend the run of the show wishing she had been singing the role of Carmen and never realize the missed opportunity to truly portray a character and explore a psyche. While it is true that comprimario roles are secondary to the leads, they have much less time on stage to make a lasting impression. Comprimarios often deliver important news, host extravagant parties, are in the lead singer’s entourage, or provide comic relief. The lead roles then react to the character singers and the information they bring or situations they create. Comprimario roles are essential to the opera both dramatically and vocally.

So cast aside the notion of comprimario roles as being vocally bad or simply too short to be a lead singer. No matter the role, the goals of the singer are still the same: to be complete artists – vocally, dramatically, physically, and emotionally.
**THE CHARACTERS ...**

**Magda** (soprano), Rambaldo’s jaded mistress whose faith in love is restored after hearing Prunier’s ballad.

**Lisette** (soprano), Magda’s perky, playful maid and Prunier’s long-time girlfriend who fails in her short foray as a singer.

**Ruggero Lastouc** (tenor), a young, naïve man from Montauban who becomes infatuated with “Paulette.”

**Prunier** (tenor), Lisette’s contradictory, complex, and controlling long-time boyfriend whose ballad renews Magda’s image of romantic love.

**Rambaldo Fernandez** (baritone), a wealthy Parisian banker and Magda’s sugar daddy.

**ACT I**

*After an opening flourish in the orchestra, marked allegro brillante, a more languid motif makes the first of its many appearances as the curtain opens in Act I. This is a three-note motif, repeated twice in sequence. It is characteristically Puccini-esque, with a syncopated feel due to the rest on the downbeat. After four measures the rhythm repeats sequentially for four more measures. Conveying a restless longing, it will come to represent the burgeoning love between Magda and Ruggero.*

Very early in the opera, Prunier sits down at the piano and accompanies himself to the opera’s most famous aria, “Che il bel sogno” ("What a beautiful dream"), about a girl named Doretta who refused a king’s bribe for her favors, believing that gold does not bring happiness. It is very rare for an opera to have a piano on-stage played by one of the characters (In reality, the person who plays Prunier fakes the piano accompaniment while it is played by a pianist in the orchestra). A series of lush arpeggiated chords provides the piano introduction.

Magda’s elegant salon in Paris, the 1920s. Magda is pouring coffee and Lisette is serving it to the various groups of guests. Prunier details the latest rage in Paris – falling in love! Lisette joins in teasing the ridiculous claims of Prunier. Prunier complains to Madga of her maid’s impertinence, but says the unusual is the norm in her house. Meanwhile, Yvette, Suzy, and Bianca swoon and act out parodies of sentimental love. At Magda’s request, Prunier continues stating that no one is safe, not even Doretta. They are all intrigued and wonder who Doretta could be. She is Prunier’s newest heroine in a song he has started, but cannot finish. Magda sits at the piano and helps him finish the song. She makes up a second verse that tells how the girl falls in love with a student who kisses her passionately and surrenders entirely.

Soon, a sweet melody emerges describing Doretta’s dream. The orchestra takes over this melody as Prunier continues in parlando (almost spoken) style. It is a simply melody, made unique and memorable by a “Scotch
“Scotch snap” in measures #2 and #4. A “Scotch snap” is a reverse dotted rhythm, where the short note comes at the beginning of the beat. The pulsating off-the-beat chordal accompaniment adds another rhythm that propels the sustained melody forward.

**ACT II**
Bullier’s nightclub. Bullier’s is alive with a crowd of artists, students, and young women. Geogette and Gabriella, two young ladies, search the crowd for rich men. Ruggero sits alone at a table. Magda appears at the top of the grand staircase, hesitating before descending. Several young men approach her, but she says she already has a date and joins Ruggero. He doesn’t recognize her, but says she is not like the other aggressive girls there, but more like the modest young ladies of his hometown, Montauban. She introduces herself as Paulette. When she teases him about his probable love affairs, he replies that should he ever love a woman, it would be forever.

While they talk and dance, realizing they are falling in love, Prunier and Lisette arrive. She is startled by the sight of Magda, but Prunier, understanding the situation, convinces her that it is someone else with a chance resemblance. Magda admires Lisette’s outfit (really her own clothes) and sarcastically compliments her on her elegance. When the champagne arrives, Ruggero proposes a toast to love, which has brought them together.

Suddenly Rambaldo appears, and Prunier asks Lisette to keep Ruggero out of sight, but Rambaldo demands an explanation for her escapade from Magda. She replies that she has found true love and is going to leave him. Rambaldo bows ironically, expressing hope that she will not regret it. Dawn is breaking and a passing woman on the street sings to beware of believing in love. Ruggero returns and Magda leaves with him to start a new life.

**ACT III**
The garden of a hillside villa outside Nice. Magda and Ruggero have been living in a villa on the Riviera, but their money is running out. Ruggero says he has written to his mother for her consent to their marriage and paints an idyllic picture of his family’s home in the country. Magda is dismayed that her lover doesn’t know anything of her past. She is in a quandary – can she really be silent?

After she has left, Prunier and Lisette arrive, quarreling: he had tried to make her a singer but her debut in Nice was a disaster. Magda appears surprised to see guests and Prunier apologizes for interrupting her solitude. Magda tells Lisette she would be glad to take her into service once more. Prunier who can’t imagine Magda continuing her fantasy life, delivers a message from Rambaldo: he is ready to welcome her back on any terms.

They leave as Ruggero returns with a letter from his mother, who is delighted that her son has found a good and virtuous bride. Heartbroken, Magda confesses that she can be his mistress but never his wife. Her past cannot be forgotten and she cannot deceive him. He insists he loves her anyway, but she says she must leave, and asks him to remember the sacrifice she made for him. She speaks to him like a dear son and leaves the devastated Ruggero behind. Lisette appears from the summerhouse, and without a word assumes the situation. She takes Magda by the arm, wiping her tears with a handkerchief. Magda gives one last, tender glance back at Ruggero, who is sitting with his head in his hands, sobbing. She and Lisette leave together.
In the late 19th century, an incredible period of music history, Debussy composed in France, Mahler in Austria, and Elgar in England. At the same time, Puccini ruled Italy; his operas dominated the Italian stage from the first production of his *Manon Lescaut* in 1893 to his death thirty years later.

Giacomo Puccini was born in 1858 in Lucca, where his father (a pupil of Donizetti) was the fourth generation of Puccinis to have served the republic and the church as composers. Giacomo, five when his father died, studied with local teachers with a view of taking on family responsibilities. When he was 17 he saw Verdi’s *Aida* and decided to be an opera composer instead. Because of this choice, went to the Milan Conservatory to develop his compositional techniques. In 1883, he finished his studies and wrote his first opera on a tale of supernatural enchantment. It had some success when given in Milan in 1884, leading to a relationship with the publisher Giulio Ricordi that was to continue throughout Puccini’s life.

Life in the big city never really agreed with Puccini, but it greatly influenced his work. His bohemian existence as a poor student later found expression in *La bohème*. Though loosely associated with the verismo movement, which strove to create more natural and believable opera theater, Puccini did not hesitate to write period pieces or to exploit exotic locales. In *Tosca* he wrote an intense melodrama set in Rome during Napoleonic times. For *Madama Butterfly* he chose an American story set in Japan.

Having enjoyed consistent acceptance throughout his career, Puccini was completely unprepared for the total failure of *Madama Butterfly* when it was first presented in 1904. But, he had faith in the work and revised it until it was accepted. The complications with *Butterfly* undermined his confidence and temporarily prevented him from moving on to new projects. During a visit to New York he finally agreed to write *La Fanciulla del West*, a work based on David Belasco’s popular play *The Girl of the Golden West*. At this point, Puccini had developed a distinctive heroine – “little women” who suffer and die for their true, limitless love. Though reluctant to embrace “modernisms,” Puccini had a remarkable sense of theater. This theatrical knack is manifested in his command of color, motif (and especially its use for raising dramatic tension) and harmony.

World War I caused the next major break in Puccini’s creative life. Hostilities complicated his negotiations to write an operetta for Vienna, now in enemy territory. The operetta became instead a *commedia lirica*, *La Rondine*, eventually produced at Monte Carlo and welcomed coolly at the Met as “the afternoon of a genius.” Puccini never regained his youthful eminence and romantic spontaneity, but he continued to work seriously, broadening his horizons.

A chain-smoker, Puccini developed throat cancer and was taken to Brussels in 1924 for treatment by a specialist. Though the surgery was successful, Puccini’s heart failed, and he died shortly afterward. At the time of his death, he had nearly finished working on the most ambitious of his operas, *Turandot*, based on Schiller’s romantic adaptation of a fantasy by Carlo Gozzi, the 18th century Venetian satirist. In *Turandot*, Puccini wrote extensively for the chorus and provided an enlarged, enriched orchestral tapestry that showed an awareness of Stravinsky's *Petrouchka* and other contemporary scores.
Giuseppe Adami enjoyed an active career as a playwright, librettist, and journalist. After graduating with a law degree at the University of Padua he devoted himself to literature, first as a theatre critic of the Arena (Verona), and then as a playwright. His first stage work was the one-act comedy I fioi di Goldoni in Venetian dialect. Thereafter, he proved remarkably successful in a comic-sentimental vein with such plays as Una capanna e il tuo cuore (1913), Capelli bianchi (1915), Felicita Colombo (1935) and its sequel Nonna Felicita (1936).

In 1911, he made the acquaintance of Giulio Ricordi, head of the publishing firm associated with Pucinni, of whom he left a valuable memoir in his Giulio Ricordi e i suoi musicisti. It was Ricordi who first put him in touch with Puccini, who briefly considered setting his Spanish-derived libretto Anima allegra written with Luigi Motta. The libretto eventually set by Franco Vittadini, for whom Adami wrote a number of ballet scenarios.

His first collaboration with Puccini was on La rondine (1917), which he adapted as a full-length verse libretto from a German operetta text by Willner and Reichert. There followed Il tabarro (1918) and Turandot (1926), the last being written in partnership with Renato Simoni.

Adimi provided us with the first collection of Puccini’s letters to be published, Giacomo Puccini: epistolario (Milan, 1928) as well as one of the earliest biographies of the composer (Milan, 1935), based on personal recollections. From 1931 to 1934 he was music critic for La sera (Milan) and for the review La comedia. Adami stayed in contact with Ricordi throughout his life and was published by his firm throughout his career.
TOO MANY LIBRETTI!

AFTER THE COMPOSITION OF LA FANCIULLA DEL WEST, PUCCINI CONSIDERED AN INCREDIBLE AMOUNT OF LIBRETTI BEFORE FINALLY SETTLING ON LA RONDINE. Puccini was famous for being extremely critical and placed astronomical demands on his librettists.

- Hall Caine’s The Prodigal Son. A wide-ranging odyssey that begins and ends in Iceland. But Puccini found in it “no fluttering of the spirit behind the words, that something which evokes music, the divine art which begins, or ought to begin, where the words end.”
- Louise de la Ramée’s Two Little Wooden Shoes (I due zoccoletti). The traditional Puccinian heroine – deceived, not seduced, by a dissolute French painter. The collaborator he had in mind never came through, so there it rested.
- Roberto Bracco’s La piccola fonte. Puccini would have rather had Bracco write something fresh and new for him to compose.
- Gerhardt Hauptmann’s Hanneles Himmelfahrt. This work tells the story of a poor orphan girl who, mortally ill, is taken in by a kindly village family. During her last sleep she has a dream in which the people who have figured in her life are transformed into supernatural beings who lead her to the gates of Paradise. By the time Puccini got around to it, the rights had already been granted to the French composer, Camille Erlanger.
- Samurun. A wordless play drawn from The Arabian Nights that had been running at the London Coliseum under the direction of Max Reinhardt. He had it translated, but decided it did not interest him very much.
- R.D. Blackmore’s Lorna Doone. Like other works of Blackmore, it had a wild, moorland ambience with an undercurrent of violence. Nothing came of it.
- Joaquin and Serafin Alvarez Quintero’s Anima allegra. A young girl who comes to stay with a family of strait-laced, snobbish relatives, sorts out their problems, and presides over a gypsy wedding in the locality. Spain evoked the ghost of Bizet, but he met Adami through this possibility, so it was worth it. The composer, Franco Vittadini later set Adami’s libretto in 1921.
- Oscar Wilde’s never-completed play A Florentine Tragedy. Like father, like son, both Giulio and Tito Ricordi disapproved.
- Luigi Illica’s L’austrica. Unfortunately, another one of Illica’s libretti that landed on the scrap heap.
- D’Annunzio’s La crociata degli innocent. A tragedy based on the historic Children’s Crusade.
- Anthony Wharton’s comedy In the Barn. Puccini had seen it performed in Milan in Italian under the title of Mollie.

ACTIVITY ALERT!

Choose a book and set it to your favorite music.

What aspects of the book fits with the music you chose?
**La rondine Has Many Operatic Parallels, Perhaps, Too Many for Comfort.** Puccini stated that he wanted to write something like Richard Strauss’ *Der Rosenkavalier*, only lighter and with more comedy. It might have been better if Puccini had never mentioned *Der Rosenkavalier* in this connection, since *La rondine* suffers greatly in comparison (It does, however, give us a clue how to approach the opera, with *Rosenkavalier*’s famous motto of “one eye wet and the other dry.”). The story of the worldly lady who relinquishes her young lover through her own wisdom hovers over *La rondine* and makes us question the real motivations of the protagonists, who are not as profoundly drawn out as in Strauss’ masterpiece.

There is also *La traviata*, whose heroine renounces her great love for the sake of respectability. This is another comparison that does *La rondine* no service: *Traviata* is clear tragedy, and it might be the lack of a truly tragic crisis in *La rondine* that deprived Puccini of an opportunity to show his true abilities. Tito Ricordi, Jr., who was against this opera from the very start, called it “bad Lehâr,” and remains the only opera by Puccini published outside Ricordi auspices.

The operetta comparison does, however, carry some weight in relation to Johann Strauss Jr.’s *Die Fledermaus*, with which *La rondine* has some structural similarities. *Fledermaus*, however, does not attempt any deep human drama and succeeds by maintaining a veneer of charming frothiness over some very serious and difficult music. *La rondine* has no such solid tone.

There are elegant scenes of Parisian life, which bring to mind *Manon* (in both incarnations) and about a hundred other repertory operas. When the story of *La rondine* moves into a tale of budding love against the backdrop of the racier elements of Paris, we have no choice but to think of Puccini’s own *La bohème*, against which no opera can survive a comparison. So one of *La rondine*’s biggest problems is that it is neither *Der Rosenkavalier*, nor *La traviata*, nor *Die Fledermaus*, nor *Manon*, nor least of all *La bohème*, while making us think of all of these masterpieces.

Unfortunately for Puccini, composing an opera with narrative aspects of many other masterpieces was not the recipe for success. This being said, the opera certainly deserves to be performed more often than it is, and with the right singers and actors, as well as the right production, its good qualities can still impress and please an audience.
UNFORTUNATELY WHILE COMPOSING LA RONDINE, PUCCINI FOUND HIMSELF IN THE MIDST OF A POLITICAL MESS. Italy preserved its neutrality for a while, but Puccini was under contract to nationals of a country soon to become his nation’s active enemy. Puccini was not exactly a political patriot like Verdi. Verdi’s very name became a battle cry of Italian patriotism, “Viva Verdi” or “Vittorio Emanuele, Re d’Italia.” Instead, Puccini preferred to stay impartial, and he had good reason for doing so. While on the one hand Puccini was a proud Italian and artist, on the other he was at home in the world at large, and a sort-of resident of London, Paris, New York, Berlin, Vienna. Puccini loved to travel and the enforced immobility made him feel claustrophobic. Furthermore, Puccini found most of his inspiration and subjects for composition while traveling. Puccini believed that, “War is too horrible a thing, whatever the results, for whether it be victory or defeat human lives are sacrificed.”

But as an increasingly well-known public figure, Puccini was expected to choose sides. Sometime in early 1915, a German paper announced that Puccini had signed a manifesto condemning Germany’s brutal invasion of Belgium. What may have given rise to this report was the publication in England of the so-called “King Albert’s Book,” in which representative men and women throughout the world paid tribute to the heroism of the Belgian King and his people, expressing their horror at Germany’s unprovoked aggression against a small neutral country. A number of musicians contributed short compositions to this book, including Elgar, Debussy, Mascagni, and others, but Puccini was not among them. No sooner had this German report appeared than Puccini felt obliged to issue a public denial, asserting that he had never signed such a declaration for the simple reason that he was never asked to.

Undoubtedly, this event shook Puccini. Until then his feelings were not particularly anti-German, but as the war progressed he became deeply concerned with the fate of the Italian troops, particularly since his son Tonio was one of them. Puccini was perfectly aware that underlying the indignation of the attacks was a resentment common among French intellectuals against the prominent place of Puccini’s operas in the repertory of the Comique in Paris. Puccini also saw his operas boycotted in Germany.

This goes to show that World War I did not stop at the trenches, but extended also to the sphere of art, so that plays, operas and other by “enemy” artists, including even some of the great masters of the past, were banned.

When Italy declared war on Austria-Hungary in May 1915, La rondine could obviously no longer premiere at the Karltheater in Vienna. So Puccini met with one of the impresarios of the Karltheater in neutral Switzerland and Puccini managed to gain some release from his contract. Puccini retained fifty percent of the rights and was free to negotiate with an Italian publisher. Viennese publishers retained performance rights in a number of countries including Austria, Germany, and the United States. Most importantly for Puccini, he obtained the rights to arrange the premiere. The first performance was negotiated to take place in Monte Carlo, far from the war in miles and atmosphere.

ACTIVITY ALERT!
Research other artists that became entangled in politics.

What role do you think the arts should play in political agendas?
THE THIRD TIME ISN’T A CHARM

Considering all the work Puccini put into LA RONDINE with libretto revisions and performance negotiations, and at such a mature point in his career, Puccini was not willing to settle with LA RONDINE’S SEEMING MEDIOCRITY. By the spring after La rondine premiered in Monte Carlo, Puccini had already decided on substantial revisions.

In this new version that was tried out in 1920 at the Teatro Massimo in Palermo, Prunier was lowered from tenor to baritone, Ruggero was given a “romanza” to the music of a song Puccini recently contributed to the Italian Red Cross with other notable Italian composers, Lisette’s tessitura was raised throughout the score, and the brindisi-concertato in Act II was slimmed down to a quartet of principals. In Act III Prunier and Lisette, instead of quarreling, as in the original version, unite in trying to persuade Magda to return to Rambaldo. Ruggero duly returns with his mother’s letter but leaves before Magda could protest at its contents. The final duet instead features Prunier, who would lead the sorrowing Magda away.

A few days after the performance in Palermo, Puccini reported in a letter to a friend that he was again going to rewrite La rondine! This time, Acts I and II would revert to the first edition with a few retouchings of no great significance. Act III, on the other hand, would be radically overhauled and brought into line with Willner’s original scheme. Puccini even tried a tragic ending with Magda committing suicide, but this violated the essentially comic tone of the first two acts.

Although Puccini continued for some time to urge this final edition on singers and managements, it was never performed during his lifetime. Lorenzo Sonzogno (the publisher) had died in 1920, and the new directors of the publishing house evidently saw little point in worrying themselves over an opera for which there was so little demand. Therefore the third edition was never put into circulation. Both autograph and orchestral material remained in the firm’s archives, which were bombarded during World War II. Only a vocal score survives containing six pages of new music. Many have assumed that Puccini himself authorized a return to the Monte Carlo edition; but for this there is no documentary evidence.

For its first two acts, La rondine can rank with any of Puccini’s mature operas. Unfortunately, critics agree that the third act, in whatever version, falls short. Puccini was never quite able to bring the swallow’s flight to a satisfying landing.

ACTIVITY ALERT!

Write a new ending for La rondine that you think would have been most successful.
The La Rondine that you will see is the finished product. But, aside from the performances of the soloists, what type of work was done to reach this point, and who did this work? This section will tell you about all of the puzzle pieces which make an opera a complete and beautiful picture.

The Production Team

The Stage Director: A staging director is responsible for what the actors and performers do on stage. They also work with the opera singers on acting, characterization, and believability of performance.

The Costume Designer: This person designs each character’s costume. They research the production’s chosen period meticulously and determine what each character will wear, and why they will wear it. This designer and a crew of seamstresses will then build each costume to fit the performers, or alter costumes the company already has in stock.

The Set Designer: A scenic designer is responsible for the furniture, buildings, and other sets seen on the stage. He or she will also research architectural details of the chosen period and location, furniture of the period, even gardening of the time. The set may be very minimal and modern, or it could be sumptuous and complex.

The Lighting Designer: This designer must focus lighting equipment on the areas of the stage which will be used in the Stage Director’s blocking. He or she also has to know exactly what is going on in each scene to set the lighting levels and colors.

Props Master: The Properties Master is in charge of all objects the performers use onstage. Swords, guns, flowers, knives, wine bottles, lanterns, food, and just about anything else imaginable may be needed as part of the stage action. A Props Master must procure all of these props, ensure that they are period appropriate, and organize them backstage so the performers can easily find their individual props before each scene.

Activity Alert!

The Production Team decides in which period they want to place an opera.
1. How would you set La Rondine?
2. What specific area of the production team interests you the most?
The Musical Team

The Conductor: The Conductor, or Maestro, is responsible for all elements of the musical aspect of the opera. He or she determines tempos and interpretations of the music, and rehearses with the orchestra, choral ensemble, and soloists to achieve the effects he desires. The conductor possesses an intimate knowledge of the entire opera score as well as appropriate musical style for each particular composer.

Rehearsal Accompanist and Coach: When the staging director is blocking a scene of only soloists, or a choral number early in the rehearsal process, it is unnecessary to require the entire orchestra. Instead, the cast members rehearse with a pianist, who must also know the score exceptionally well and understand the conductor’s musical approach.

Chorus Master: A Chorus Master is responsible for preparing the opera chorus for rehearsals with the Maestro and the soloists. Chorus members are always expected to be musically prepared, but the Chorus Master instructs them on phrasing (when to breath in a musical line), dynamics (volume levels), uniform vowels and diction, and interpretation of the music.

The Technical Team

The Stage Manager: An audience may never see the production’s Stage Manager, but their responsibilities extend far and wide. They coordinate all of the efforts of the stage director, lighting designer, set designer, and props master. Every change of lighting, curtain open and close, set movement, and stage entrance is done at a cue from the Stage Manager. Additionally, they are responsible for the safety conditions of the stage. Stage Managers must be exceedingly organized from start to finish. He or she oversees:

Fly Master: Many theatres have a system of pulleys and ropes called a Fly System from which flat set pieces hang. The Fly Master operates the fly system to change scenery.

Stage Hands: The stage hands help safely move large set pieces in order to create seamless scene changes. They may also clear props and furniture from the stage during a black out.

Master Electrician: The Master Electrician is the Lighting Designer’s primary assistant in creating all lighting cues. He or she helps set up the lighting instruments and focus them for the most effective look onstage.

Sound Technician: If the opera requires any non-instrumental sound effects, such as a cannon shot during a battle scene, the production will make use of a Sound Technician to be responsible for these effects, as well as controlling microphones for curtain speeches and other announcements.

As you can see, there are many, many roles in an opera production beyond the costumed characters you see onstage. What you will see in La Rondine is a labor of love undertaken by easily hundreds of men and women who care passionately about this craft.
LisaMichelle Eigler grew up in Santa Clarita, California. From a very young age she was involved with the arts. Her first dance classes were as young as 3 years old. At the age of 6, she started playing the piano. In the 5th grade she transitioned to the flute and eventually into singing with the Jr. High Chorus and Drama department. In addition to the performing arts her family encouraged her to learn about fine arts and practical arts. She was encouraged to sew, paint, build, design, draft, and learn fix and repair techniques.

For the first two years of high school LisaMichelle was focused on dance and choreography. She worked with the Hart High Varsity Dance and Color Guard as an underclassman officer. She was also hired by other Jr High and High School team to coach and choreograph their half time shows.

In LisaMichelle’s Jr. Year of High School, she was assigned to the new Drama Teacher as a student teaching assistant. After working with Mr. Coon for a few days, he encouraged LisaMichelle to explore the field; as the job encompassed many of her hobbies. Over the next two years she stage managed several of the school’s productions as well as concerts for the City’s Parks and Recreation division.

In May of 1999, LisaMichelle was accepted into the School of Performing Arts, Design and Technology (PADAT) at the California Institute of the Arts. In the same week that the acceptance letter arrived, she was also offered a position as a Stage Tech at Six Flags Magic Mt. The Institute and Theme. For the first year LisaMichelle worked summer, holidays and weekends at Magic Mt., and completed her studies in Stage Management & Technical Direction during the week.

In January of 2000, the Production Stage Manager (PSM) position for the Batman and Robin Live Action Show at Magic Mt. became available. LisaMichelle applied to the position as part of a school exercise in interviewing tools and techniques. She was hired for the position and became the youngest person in park history to hold that title. (She was 19 years old). Over the next 3 years LisaMichelle finished her Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) in Stage management and theatrical production degree, and continued to work as the PSM at Magic Mt.

In 2003, LisaMichelle became involved with USITT (United States Institute of Theatrical Technology). At the convention in Minneapolis she participated in the Stage Management Mentorship Project (SMMP). This program paired young stage managers with working professionals to run events throughout the convention. It was through this program that LisaMichelle was introduced to David Grindle, Barbra Donner, and Meredith Greenberg. David her mentor for the project became a mentor that she still communicates with and was the one who suggested she look seriously at Opera Stage Management. At this point she had only work on two small operas at CalArts. Barbra and Meredith were both working at the Los Angeles Opera and convinced LisaMichelle to apply for the LAO Internship in Production / Stage Management. At the end of the week, she left the convention 3 internship offers.
Over the next 8 years LisaMichelle worked as a free lance stage manager all across the country. In 2008 she made the move to the east coast. She was living in New Jersey, working mainly in New York, Princeton, and Philadelphia when the PSM position at Florida Grand Opera became available. She jumped at the opportunity.

As the Production Stage Manager, LisaMichelle has several responsibilities. She is responsible for creating and coordination the rehearsal and production schedules, runs / calls all rehearsals and performances and documents all that happens on the stage in each production. LisaMichelle acts as the hub of communication once a production goes into rehearsal. In performance she is the air traffic controller of the stage.

**FAST FACTS**

**Favorites:**

**Food:** I don’t have a favorite, I just like food

**Color:** Purple and Aqua

**Movie:** The Princess Bride

**Band / artists:** I don’t have a favorite, but I’m listing to a lot of Maroon 5 right now

**Opera:** Gianni Schicci, L’Elisie d’Amore

**Books:** The Giver, The History of God

**Education:**

B.F.A. in Stage Management / Theatrical Production, California Institute of the Arts

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**CAREERS IN THE ARTS:**

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**ACTIVITY ALERT!**

What career would you consider interesting?

Where do you think you could go to learn more about it?
Pablo Menvielle has long been a familiar face on the Florida Grand Opera stage. He began performing as a supernumerary in FGO's 2001 production of Jules Massenet's *Manon* at ten years old. Since then, Pablo has participated in seventeen operas. He is now twenty years old and is pictured at left with his younger brother Lucas and his father Gabriel after a 2010 performance of Offenbach's *The Tales of Hoffman*. In this section, he has answered some questions about what it is like to be involved in this aspect of the production.

What is a Supernumerary and what might they do in an opera?
A supernumerary is an actor of actress in an opera that has a minor role based on relevance to the libretto of the opera in question. Supers portray characters like soldiers, servants, pages, city people, and in some cases, nobles. However, supers almost never have speaking or singing roles.

What is the audition process like to become a Supernumerary?
The audition process highly varies from opera to opera. Sometimes the director trusts the discretion of the management and simply takes supers that are called by management. Other times there are auditions in which the director asks for specific attributes and then selects people based on demographics and how they physically fit the part being cast.

What has been your favorite memory as a Super?
Bizet's *Carmen* is my favorite memory as a super. It was truly a fantastic opera. We got to wear real "torero" outfits that had once been used in a real bullfight! It just adds to the experience. Not to mention that thanks to that experience, I found an irresistible appeal to flamenco. Now I'm crazy for it, and the way that Bizet incorporates that style and taste of Seville to a French opera is great! We were also soldiers, and village people... And smugglers! It was an all-around incredible production. Great music, great people, great singers, great dancers, great production!

What advice would you give to other young people who want to get involved in opera?
My advice to young people who want to be in the opera is, what are you waiting for?! Audition as soon as possible! The longer you wait, the less operas you can be in. It's a fantastic feeling to be part of something so big like an opera. Just to know that you're part of something huge with lights, costumes, staging, singing, it's just overwhelming. Hearing the roar of the crowd is the most rewarding feeling you can get for this effort, never mind the pay of a super; I don't know of any super that wouldn't do it for free! If you like opera, singing, or just want to try something new, you should audition. The opera is not stereotypically associated with the youth, but there's no reason why it shouldn't be. We can change that! We're young, and active, and the arts only belong to the present and the future. Past generations have handed us down this gift, and it's up to us to open it and use it wisely.

YOU TOO CAN BE ON STAGE
If you are interested in becoming a supernumerary please contact
FGO Production Stage Manager, LisaMichelle Eigler at: leigler@fgo.org
GLOSSARY OF OPERA TERMS

A
ACT: A portion of an opera designated by the composer, which has a dramatic structure of its own.
ARIA: A solo piece written for a main character, which focuses on the character's emotion.

B
BANDA: A small group of instrumentalists who play either on the stage or backstage.
BARITONE: The male singing voice that is higher than bass but lower than tenor.
BASS: The lowest male singing voice.
BEL CANTO: An Italian phrase literally meaning "beautiful singing." Also refers to opera written in this style.
BUFFO: From the Italian for "buffoon." A singer of comic roles (basso-buffo) or a comic opera (opera-buffa).
BRADO: Literally, a form of applause when shouted by members of the audience at the end of an especially pleasing performance. Strictly speaking, "bravo" is for a single man, "brava" for a woman, and "bravi" for a group of performers.

C
CABALETTA: Second part of a two-part aria, always in a faster tempo than the first part.
CADENZA: A passage of singing, often at the end of an aria, which shows off the singer's vocal ability.
CANZONE: A folk-like song commonly used in opera buffa.
CAVATINA: Slow section of a two-part aria.
CHORUS: A group of singers, singing together, who sometimes portray servants, party guests or other unnamed characters.
CHORUS MASTER: The one in charge of choosing chorus members and rehearsing them for performance.
COLORATURA: Elaborate ornamentation of vocal music written using many fast notes and trills.
COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE: A type of comic opera popular in Italy in the 16th to 18th centuries that involved improvisation using stock characters and gestures.
COMPRIMARIO: A secondary or supporting role or a person singing such a role.
CONTRALTO: The lowest female singing voice.
COUNTERTENOR: The countertenor is a natural tenor (or sometimes baritone) with an elevated range.

D
DOUBLE ARIA: An aria which consists of two parts. The first part, or cavatina, is usually slow and the second, or cabaletta is faster. There is often recitative between the two sections.
DRAMATIC: The heaviest voice, capable of sustained declamation and a great deal of power, even over the largest operatic orchestra of about 80 instruments.
DRAMATURG: One who suggests repertory, advises on the suitability of competing editions of operas and writes or edits material for program books and supertitles.
DRESS REHEARSAL: A final rehearsal that uses all of the costumes, lights, etc. While sometimes it is necessary to stop for corrections, an attempt is made to make it as much like a final performance as possible.
DUET: An extended musical passage performed by two singers. They may or may not sing simultaneously or on the same musical line.

E
ENCORE: Literally means "again." It used to be the custom for a singer to repeat a popular aria if the audience called "encore" loudly enough. This is still done in the middle of an opera in countries such as Italy, but it is rare elsewhere. Soloists frequently give encores at the end of a concert but not an opera.
ENSEMBLE: Two or more people singing at the same time, or the music written for such a group.
GLOSSARY OF...

F
FALSETTO: A method of singing above the natural range of the male voice. Often used in opera for comic effects such as a man imitating a woman.
FINALE: The last musical number of an opera or the last number of an act.

G
GRAND OPERA: Strictly speaking, opera without spoken dialogue. It is usually used to refer to opera which uses a large orchestra and chorus and grand themes.

I
INTERLUDE: A short piece of instrumental music played between scenes or acts.
INTERMISSION: A long break, usually about 20 minutes, between the acts of an opera, during which the audience is free to move around.

L
LEITMOTIV: A short, recurring musical phrase associated with a particular character or event.
LIBRETTO: The text or words of an opera.
LYRICS: The sung words or text of a musical comedy or operetta song.

M
MAESTRO: Literally "master," used as a courtesy title for the conductor.
MAGIC OPERA: An opera in which there are many magical effects and often animals appearing on stage.
MARK: To sing very softly or not at full voice.
MELODRAMA: In a technique which originated with the French; short passages of music alternating with spoken words.
MEZZO-SOPRANO: The middle female singing voice, lower than soprano, but higher than contralto.

N
NUMBER OPERA: An opera composed of individual numbers such as recitative, arias, duets, ensembles, etc.

O
OPERA: Italian for "work." A libretto acted and sung by one or more singers to an instrumental accompaniment.
OPERA BUFFA: An opera about ordinary people, usually, but not always comic, which first developed in the 18th century.
OPERA SERIA: A "serious" opera.
OPERETTA or MUSICAL COMEDY: A play, some of which is spoken but with many musical numbers.
ORCHESTRA: The group of instrumentalists or musicians who, led by the conductor, accompany the singers.
ORCHESTRATION: The art of applying orchestral color to written music by assigning various instruments different parts of the music.
OVERTURE: An orchestral introduction to an opera.

P
PARLANDO: A style of singing like ordinary speech. It can occur in the middle of an aria.
PATTER SONG: A song or aria in which the character sings as many words as possible in a short amount of time.
PIANO-VOCAL SCORE: Usually a reduction of an opera’s orchestral score.

PIT: A sunken area in front of the stage where the members of the orchestra play.

PRELUDE: Usually a short introduction that leads into an act without a break, as opposed to an overture which is longer and can be played as a separate piece.

PRINCIPAL: A major singing role, or the singer who performs such a role.

PRODUCTION: The combination of sets, costumes, props, lights, etc.

PROMPT: To help a singer remember lines, some opera houses will place a person (prompter) in a box below and at the very front of the stage.

RECITATIVE: Words sung in a conversational style, usually to advance the plot. Not to be confused with aria.

REDUCTION: In a piano reduction, the orchestra parts are condensed into music which can be played by one person on the piano.

RÉPERTOIRE: Stock pieces that a singer or company has ready to present. Often refers to a company's current season.

RÉPÉTITEUR: A member of the music staff who plays the piano for rehearsals and, if necessary, the piano or harpsichord during performances.

ROULADE or RUN: A quick succession of notes sung on one syllable.

SCENA: Literally "a scene;" a dramatic episode which consists of a variety of numbers with a common theme.

SCORE: The written music of an opera or other musical work.

SERENADE: A piece of music honoring someone or something.

SEXTET: A piece for six singers.

SINGSPIEL: German opera with spoken dialogue and usually, but not necessarily, a comic or sentimental plot.

SITZPROBE: Literally, "seated rehearsal," it is the first rehearsal of the singers with the orchestra and no acting.

SOPRANO: The highest female singing voice.

SOUBRETTE: A pert, young female character with a light soprano voice.

SPINTO: A lyric voice that has the power and incisiveness for dramatic climaxes.

STROPHIC: Describes an aria in which the same music repeats for all stanzas of a text.

SUPERTITLES: Translations of the words being sung, or the actual words if the libretto is in the native language, that are projected on a screen above the stage.

SYNOPSIS: A written description of an opera’s plot.

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GLOSSARY OF OPERA TERMS

V
VERISMO: Describes the realistic style of opera that started in Italy at the end of the nineteenth century.
VIBRATO: A natural wavering of frequency (pitch) while singing a note. It is usually inadvertent as opposed to a trill.
VOCAL COACH: A member of an opera company who coaches singers, helping them with the pronunciation, singing and interpretation of a role.

W
WIG DESIGNER: Designs and oversees the creation of the wigs used in a production.
REFERENCES


Written and produced by:
Florida Grand Opera
Education Department
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Kevin Mynatt
Florida Grand Opera

Kelly Anderson
Florida Grand Opera

Camilla Haith
Florida Grand Opera

LisaMichelle Eigler
Florida Grand Opera