**Opera Terminology**

**act** - a group of scenes with a common theme, such as a specific time or place, forming a major section of the opera

**aria** - a musical piece sung by one person, usually about the emotions a character is feeling; arias are the songs in opera

**baritone** - the middle-range male voice; often plays the villain or a second hero who loses to the main hero

**bass** - the lowest male voice; often plays an older man or a comic role

**bravo** - Italian for “nicely done”; audience members who really like a performance often shout “bravo!” while applauding

**chorus** - a musical piece sung by a group of people; also a name for a large group of singers

**coloratura** - singing long, fast, rapid strings of notes; usually a soprano technique

**composer** - a person who writes music

**conductor** - the person who leads the musical performance

**duet** - a musical piece sung by two people

**finale** - the final musical number in an opera (or an act), often involving multiple people

**libretto** - the words or script of an opera

**mezzo-soprano** - the middle range female voice; often plays the female villain or a young boy

**opera** - a play in which the story is told through music and singing

**operetta** - literally a “small opera,” usually comic, generally shorter than an opera, with popular-style music (for its time) that stops for spoken dialogue

**overture** - a musical introduction to an opera played by the orchestra

**production** - the scenery, staging, and costumes of an opera

**quartet** - a musical piece sung by four people

**recitative** - sung dialogue, usually more about telling the story than about emotions; recitatives are the conversations in opera

**score** - a book of all the vocal and instrumental music for an opera

**soprano** - highest female voice; often plays the heroine of the story

**supernumerary** - a performer with a non-singing role, like an “extra” in a movie

**tenor** - the highest male voice (usually); often plays the hero of the story

**titles** - English translations of what’s being sung projected on a screen above the stage

**trio** - a musical piece sung by three people

**trouser role** - a boy’s role played by a woman