

OPERA
IN
SCHOOLS



THE CHILD
AND THE
ENCHANTMENTS



The
Florentine
Opera

RESOURCE GUIDE

A Note to Teachers

Dear Educators,

Welcome! Thank you so much for choosing us to be a part of your school year. We are certain that you will find our program, ***The Child and the Enchantments***, to be engaging and fulfilling for everyone who sees it! We have included some information about our Florentine Education mission and how our education materials will benefit your students.

We encourage you to take advantage of our electronic format and share the opera guide with students and other colleagues. We would also like to encourage you to **fill out the teacher evaluation**. Your input is very important to us as we continue to implement arts education in schools.

In addition to the tour of *The Child and the Enchantments* at the Florentine Opera this season, we encourage you to look into our other education and community engagement programs. Please visit www.florentineopera.org for more information on our Opera Inside Out, Opera Up Close, and Community Circle!

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions regarding the performance, the study guide, or the Florentine Opera.

Thanks again and we look forward to seeing you this year!

Renata Herrera
Education and Community Engagement Manager

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Some quick facts about *The Child and the Enchantments* to get you started:

The opera was written by Maurice Ravel in 1925. The French title for the opera is *L'enfant et les sortilèges*. Our Florentine Studio Artists will perform the music in French, the original language! The English dialogue was added by our director and local Milwaukee artist, Doug Clemons, to help English-speaking students understand the story.

The Florentine's performance will be 30 minutes long.

The Child and the Enchantments 2023/24

Teacher Feedback Form

The Florentine Opera Company is dedicated to bringing the enjoyment and appreciation of the opera to all audiences and has a particular interest in introducing young audiences to this rich medium. Thank you for taking a few minutes to share your comments. Your feedback is instrumental in furthering the development of our educational programs and materials. You can [click here to access the form](#).

The Child and the Enchantments Preview Video

[Click on this link](#) to access the preview video for our 2023/24 Opera in Schools tour! You can find videos of past student productions at florentineopera.org/operainschools.

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Why The Florentine?

The Florentine Education team understands that educators juggle lesson planning, supplementary activities, and the personalities and needs of all of their students. We strive to make arts engagement easy and fun, for teachers and students.

The mission of the Florentine Opera Company Education Department is to make opera more inviting and approachable by:

- Providing resources and materials for in-classroom use to support an introduction to opera.
- Creating accessible opportunities for students to engage with live performances in their community, both at school and in our performing spaces.
- Connecting the artists on our stage to the future performers and audience members in your classrooms.

Why opera education?

- Our in-school programs present material through visual, aural, and action methods, thus reaching out to many different types of learners.
- Exposure to opera as a multidisciplinary art helps students develop intelligence in a variety of areas, including abstract thinking and problem solving.
- Opera provides opportunities for self-expression through a variety of forms, which in turn leads to the development of valuable communication skills, self-discipline, perseverance, and leadership.
- Opera combines drama, poetry, instrumental music, singing, scenery, costumes, lighting, and many wonderful special effects. Such collaboration is important for students to witness, as it helps to encourage them to develop a broadened, multidisciplinary perspective.

“With my lifestyle and the way I was brought up, I would have never been naturally introduced to the opera. I can replace movies with the opera, I can relax at the opera, I can get away from the world at the opera.” – student at West Bend High School

“They made me laugh through the whole show. I think they should come again so we can see another show. All the kids were enjoying it.” – student at Honey Creek School

About this Study Guide

Why Being an Opera Novice Helps You Enjoy Opera

We firmly believe that newcomers have a great advantage over many opera fanatics worldwide. The composers of the great operas knew what they were doing – they created potent musical dramas aimed straight for the heart. More than many other art forms, opera is meant to appeal directly to the senses. To fully appreciate an opera, all you need are eyes, ears, and a soul. Let us help you activate your senses!

The Popular-versus-Classical Myth

Until very recently (at least in geological terms), going to an opera was like going to a movie. People went to an opera as you might go to a rock concert: to have fun! They went to see their favorite stars and hear their favorite tunes. They wore casual clothes; they brought along food and drinks; they even cheered (or booed, or threw flowers or tomatoes) during the show if the spirit moved them. Classical music back then *was* pop music.

In fact, when Verdi wrote *Otello*, the crowd went crazy, calling him back to the stage over and over again with standing ovations, finally carrying him all the way home on their shoulders, and then serenading him under his window. Opera is just as entertaining as it ever was. But these days, it has become much less familiar.

-adapted from [Opera for Dummies](#)

What is Opera?

Before defining opera, ask your students to share their ideas about what opera could be. Write “opera” on the board and list their answers beneath it. Here are some possible discussion starting points.

What is opera?

About this Study Guide

An opera is simply a play in which people sing. In most operas, all the words are sung, and none are spoken. There are other types of operas, however, in which there is as much speaking as singing.

If an opera is just a play, then why do people sing?

The theater has been around for hundreds of years. People were being entertained by plays long before television and radio were even invented. Music was added to enhance the feelings that were being portrayed on the stage. Singing is a very special form of music because the instrument (like our feelings) comes from inside. Our voice is a part of us which expresses how we feel, whether we sing, talk, shout, laugh, cry, moan, growl, whisper, gasp, hiss, etc. It is the actor's job to express such feelings, and singing is a perfect way of doing just that. Naturally, singing was used very early in the history of the theater; however, opera as we know it is only about 400 years old. Opera powerfully combines drama of the theater with music – vocal and instrumental – to create the lasting art form that is enjoyed throughout the world today.

From opera to musical theater, to music videos and everything in between – the length of musical performances is considerably shorter today than it was in the past.

How is this a reflection of society today compared to hundreds of years ago?

Is it harder for us today to sit through a three-hour-long opera than it was for people back in the 1800s? Why or why not?

The Story of The Child and the Enchantments

The Florentine Opera for Schools touring production of *The Child and the Enchantments* is an abridged version of Maurice Ravel's opera (in French, *L'enfant et les sortilèges*). The story was created by French author Sidonie-Gabrielle Colette, known by just her last name - Colette. Ravel reached out to Colette about collaborating and she was so excited about the opportunity to write for a musical work that she wrote the libretto in only eight days!

Ravel was an Impressionist composer, meaning that he was focused on creating a mood and atmosphere with his music. This particular opera was inspired by American musicals and revues, including the works of jazz composer George Gershwin. It was Colette's idea to include some dance elements in the opera.

The Florentine Opera's adaptation of *The Child and the Enchantments* maintains the sung music in the original French language. The scenes are tied together by witty dialogue in English, written by local Milwaukee director Doug Clemons.

The Child and the Enchantments: Adapted by The Florentine Opera **Run time: 30 minutes + 10 minute Q&A**

A child is grumbling as he does his homework. He feels angry. He hatches a plan for being naughty.

His mother comes into the room to check on him. She is angry that he has not been doing his homework. She punishes him.

Alone in his room, the child throws a tantrum! He throws his teacup and teapot. He torments a squirrel and a frog. He pulls the cats' tails. He rips up his storybook and his math homework. He breaks his clock.

Then he is surprised when the unhappy objects in his room come to life! The clock complains about how he has hurt him. The teapot and teacup are angry at him too.



The Story of The Child and the Enchantments



The child feels cold. He walks close to the fireplace and the fire tells him that she will warm the good kids. But, she will burn the kids who misbehave! The child begins to feel scared.

The Princess comes out of her storybook. She complains that he has ruined the story she was in by ripping out the last pages. Now she does not know how her story ends! The child begins to feel sad and embarrassed.

The child's homework takes the shape of a little old man and a chorus of numbers. They ask him lots of math questions!

Two of the child's cats come into his room. They meow at him. Then, they lead him into the garden. There are many animals in the garden and they are all angry at the child! The bat, the squirrel and the frog sing about the ways that the child has hurt them. The child realizes that the animals all love each other, but not him. The child feels guilty and lonely. He cries out for his mother!

The animals start to make plans to attack the child. In all the confusion, the squirrel gets hurt! The other animals stop arguing. They are worried about the squirrel. The child decides to help the hurt squirrel. When the animals see the child being kind, they decide to help him too. The animals feel happy and loved. The animals help the child get back home.

While they are making their way back to the house, they sing about how the child is good!



Activity: Create a Frog Headband

Costumes help to bring a story to life by making the characters recognizable on stage. Use this tutorial to make your own frog costume at home! You'll fit right in with the dancing frogs in *The Child and the Enchantments*.

[Download the printable template here!](#)



You'll need:

- 2 sheets of green construction paper
- Scissors
- Tape
- Markers
- Large googly eyes (optional)
- Foam stickers (optional)
- Frog template (see link above)

Coloring Page: Characters in this Opera



The Child



Maman



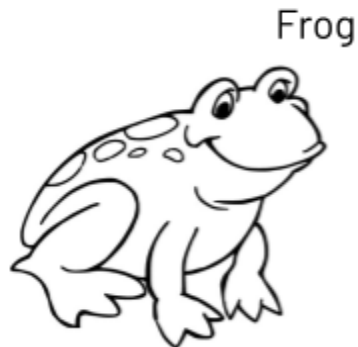
Teapot



Fire



Teacup



Frog

The Story of The Child and the Enchantments



Princess

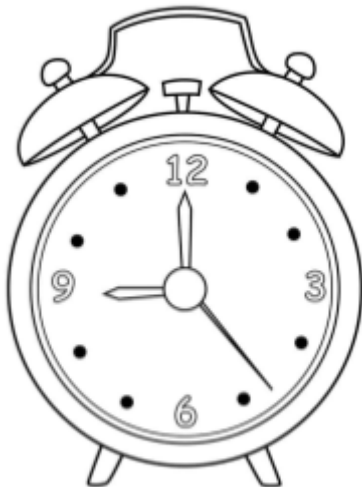


Cats

Bat



Squirrel



Clock



Little Old Man

Meet the Cast

We asked the big questions you wanted to know about the cast of *The Child and the Enchantments!*



Laura McCauley (she/her): Maman, Teacup, Fire, Princess, and Bat

Where are you from? Tashkent, Uzbekistan but I grew up in Philadelphia, PA

Where have you sung/performed? Philly, Arizona, Chicago/Illinois, California, New York, Virginia

What's your favorite food? Popcorn and sushi

What do you do for fun? Go to spin class, watch football, and snuggle with my pets!

Do you play any instruments? Flute and cello

Do you have any pets? Molly- dog and Kipling- cat.

Interesting fact about yourself? I once had a tortoise named Speckles.



Jerek Fernández (he/him): Cat, Teapot, Little Old Man, and Frog

Where are you from? San Juan, Puerto Rico

Where have you sung/performed? Apart from opera companies in Puerto Rico, I have sung at Sarasota Opera, Florentine Opera and am now looking forward to my debut at Wolf Trap Opera this upcoming summer.

What's your favorite food? My favorite food is Mofongo, which is one of the delicious traditional foods of Puerto Rico.

What do you do for fun? I like to spend time catching up with friends and family that are far away from where I am.

Do you play any instruments? I don't.

Do you have any pets? A lovely dog named Wazowski.

Interesting fact about yourself? I spent most of my childhood as an actor on a comedy television show in Puerto Rico.

Meet the Cast



Tzytle Steinman (she/her): The Child

Where are you from? San Diego, CA

Where have you sung/performed? Florentine Opera, Fargo-Moorhead Opera, San Diego Opera, Ohio Light Opera, Sarasota Opera and Utah Festival Opera.

What's your favorite food? Thai food

What do you do for fun? Hike, bake, play my switch, make TikTok's and work out

Do you play any instruments? Piano and I tap dance

Do you have any pets? A rescue dog named Golde

Interesting fact about yourself? I have triple jointed thumbs



Brandon Sanchez (he/him): Clock, Cat, and Squirrel

Where are you from? My hometown is Gilroy, CA. I've relocated to the midwest and now I call Chicago home!

Where have you sung/performed? All over California, New York, Iowa, Tennessee, Illinois. Even Ireland and Egypt!

What's your favorite food? I love to cook and eat all types of food, but Asian and Latin cuisine are my favorites!

What do you do for fun? I like to do yoga and go on runs when it's nice outside. I also enjoy cooking and playing video games to relax.

Do you play any instruments? Just my voice!

Do you have any pets? I have a cat whose name is Jack. He is the most friendly cat who loves to cuddle.

Interesting fact about yourself? I've visited The Pyramids of Egypt and Pyramids in Mexico!



Fumiyasu Kawase (he/him): Pianist

Where are you from? I'm from Japan: Chiba (next to Tokyo)

Where have you sung/performed? I've performed in Milwaukee, New York, Cleveland, San Diego, Chicago, New Jersey, Japan, Italy, Austria, and France

What's your favorite food? Sushi, Ramen, and any foods that contain calories.

What do you do for fun? Playing video games, watching soccer

Do you play any instruments? Piano, A little guitar and Bass

Do you have any pets? I used to have a Toy Poodle named Chocolat

Interesting fact about yourself? I used to play soccer and when I was in Junior High, I broke my arm in a game. Then, I performed one-handed in the piano concert.

Opera Websites

www.florentineopera.org - Learn more about Florentine's Opera in Schools Tour, Opera Inside Out, and Opera Up Close education programs.

www.operaamerica.org/notes - OPERA America's National Opera Teacher and Educator Source (NOTES) offers a catalogue of exemplary opera learning materials developed by opera companies across North America.

Arts in Education Websites

<https://www.aep-arts.org/> - Arts Education Partnership - A national network of more than 100 organizations dedicated to advancing arts education.

<https://www.kennedy-center.org/education> - The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts - Professional development for educators. Summer intensives for young artists. Teaching artist guided activities. Performances for young audiences. Classroom lesson plans. Arts-focused digital media.

www.aate.com - American Alliance for Theatre and Education - COVID-19 resources, internship opportunities and volunteer opportunities.

www.theperformingartsalliance.org - Performing Arts Alliance advocacy toolkit contains helpful information for connecting with lawmakers and building relationships that encourage their understanding of and commitment to our sector.

<https://nafme.org/> - National Association for Music Education members have provided these resources from their own original teaching experiences, music educators in their school districts, universities, communities, peers, or other trusted sources.

www.exploratorium.edu/music - Interactive website for music and science featuring online exhibits, movies, and questions.

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