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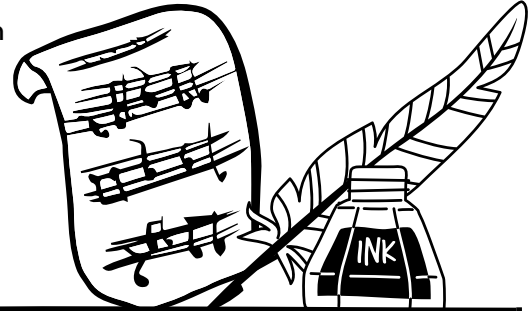
TEACHER: _____

CLASS: _____

DATE: _____

Adapting a Story into an Opera

When writing an opera, the composer has to choose which voice type to assign each character. The sound of a character's voice tells us a lot about who they are.



Read the voice type descriptions below and decide how you would adapt your favorite story into an opera.

Soprano

- The highest voice type, sopranos usually play young girls or the heroine of the opera

Mezzo-Soprano

- "Mezzo" means half, so this voice is halfway between soprano and alto
- Usually cast as maternal types like mothers or nurses
- Mezzos can also be cast as young boys in what is called a "trouser role"

Contralto

- Also called an alto, this lower voice type often plays older women and witches

Countertenor

- A male voice that sings mainly in falsetto or "head voice"; specializes in music from the Baroque era or otherworldly characters

Tenor

- Often the hero or the romantic lead

Baritone

- Lying between tenor and bass, this medium voice type often plays fathers, comic characters, or villains

Bass

- The lowest voice type, can be cast as wizards, kings, or the Devil

EXAMPLE: Hansel and Gretel by Englebert Humperdinck

CHARACTER	VOICE TYPE	REASON
Hansel	Mezzo-Soprano	Young boy (trouser role)
Gretel	Soprano	Young girl
The Witch	Contralto (sometimes Tenor!)	Older, villain
Mother	Mezzo-Soprano	Older, maternal
Father	Baritone	Older, paternal, comic

Choose your favorite story: _____

List each main character. Then choose what voice type you think fits them best and why.

Character: _____

Voice Type: _____

Reason: _____

Character: _____

Voice Type: _____

Reason: _____

Character: _____

Voice Type: _____

Reason: _____

Character: _____

Voice Type: _____

Reason: _____

Character: _____

Voice Type: _____

Reason: _____

What do you like most about this story?

Do you think this story would work as an opera? Why or why not?

What voice type do you think you have? What kind of characters would you like to sing?

