

OPERA BUFFA!



an improvised opera
by Tayler Stokes
Stockholm Scenario Festival 2017

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A roleplaying scenario by The Act Apart
<https://theactapart.com>

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*an improvised opera by Tayler Stokes
Stockholm Scenario Festival 2017*

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Contents

Welcome to the *Opera Buffa!* ..1

What You Need to Play.....	1
How it Works.....	2
How to Use this Text	3
The Techniques!.....	3
The “Optional Rules” Principle.....	4
Recitative and Bel Canto.....	4
The Motifs	7
Dramatic Resolution.....	8
The Maestro.....	8
The Vocalists and Characters	10
Player Support	11

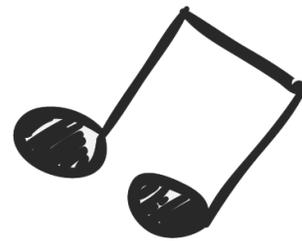
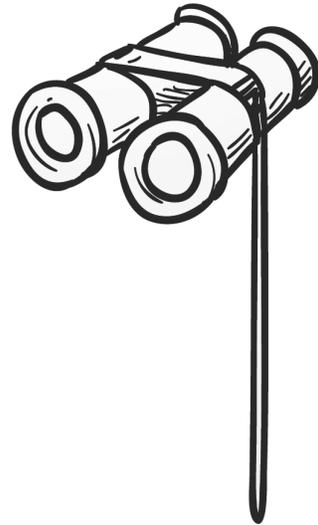
The Game!12

Presenting the Game.....	12
Using the Space.....	13
Masterclass, Casting, and Rehearsal.....	14
Casting	15
Before the Show.....	17
Acts and Scenes	17
Curtains	19

The Opera!.....21

The Characters.....	21
Act I.....	22
Act II.....	26
Act III.....	29
Compose Your Own!.....	33
Design Notes!.....	34
Print Materials!.....	34
About the Designer.....	34
Media References.....	35
Acknowledgements.....	35

Print Materials36



Welcome to the *Opera Buffa!*

Players of *Opera Buffa!* will take center stage to improvise the lost opera *La promessa della capra*, realizing their potential as operatic vocalists who either make or break their careers in the process. The tragic tale of *La promessa della capra* tells a story of those caught between unwanted marriages, plagued by jealous ghosts, and lured by honeyed words of a deceitful goat.

Never fear, for this opera was composed in an avant-garde style and is poorly translated; you will sing big and passionately, but you need not sing well!

Play involves techniques inspired by operatic singing that support players in the hilarious endeavor of improvising a ridiculous story while shamelessly emulating the dramatic bravado of the operatic singing style.

What You Need to Play

- One Maestro (that's probably you, congratulations!)
- Six to seven players¹
- Two to three hours
- A room large enough to enjoy being loud in
- The printed materials found at the end of this text
- A sharpie
- A roll of tape
- Name tags for each player
- Eight clip-on badges
- A manila envelope, bowl, or pouch
- Breath mints
- A music playing device with Internet connection (laptop or smart phone with portable speaker)

¹ Five players is doable, but more is better. If you duplicate *The Rest* character role, you could accommodate an eighth player.

- The following props²:
 - ◆ A hunter's hat
 - ◆ A woman's scarf
 - ◆ Three white cloths
 - ◆ A fake mustache
 - ◆ Goat horns
 - ◆ An elegant looking cape
 - ◆ Two magician's wands (sticks)
 - ◆ A large cross necklace
 - ◆ A nun's habit
- Bravado
- Shamelessness

How it Works

At the beginning of the game the Maestro guides the players through a short “masterclass” which introduces the singing style used in play. Then, each of the players will take the role of an operatic vocalist, each with their own (misplaced, petty, unrealistic) motivations. Those singers will play a few different roles in the opera, distinguished by light costuming. The opera is divided into acts and scenes that the Maestro will call for and pace. This is a high activity scenario.

Once the opera is over, we'll find out how the vocalists wind up after the show. This concludes *Opera Buffa!*



²Props and light costuming are used to keep track of who is which character in which disguise. If you have other props/costuming available, you'll probably be able to make do. What's important is that everyone can easily recognize who is who despite disguises and changing roles.

How to Use this Text

This text is written as instructions to the Maestro, and assumes that you, the reader, will be the Maestro. This text is intended to be read front to back first, and then referenced as needed.

Since you or the players may find the prospect of singing daunting, the first order of business is to review the singing techniques so you can visualize what's about to happen.

This is followed by a step-by-step procedure of the entire game. This includes conducting the masterclass at the beginning as well as playing out the opera. This also includes advice on how to run a successful game and how to troubleshoot a floundering one.

Next is a summary of the entire opera - the characters, the acts, the scenes, the soundtrack. The Maestro will work through this section of text while playing.

After that are some techniques for “composing” your own operas once you are ready to go beyond *La promessa della capra*, as well as optional techniques if you are interested in tweaking the game just a bit.

The text concludes with some design notes and acknowledgments. This isn't essential for your opera, Maestro, but you might find it interesting.

Finally, at the end of the document are the player and character handouts you'll need, ready to print.

In bocca al lupo!

The Techniques!

Keep in mind that it's not important to sound “good” when applying the following techniques. These techniques are designed to mimic a style and to get the players to go all-out. Unless your group contains professional vocalists or especially talented amateurs, it's not going to sound “good” and that's okay.

Remind your players of the premise: “*La promessa della capra* is a recently discovered, poorly translated avant-garde opera. It's atonal with curious melodies, the libretto doesn't rhyme and has awkward phrasing, and is rather experimental.” So-called “bad” singing is excused from the get go!

The “Optional Rules” Principle

Only a few techniques are mandatory for a successful play of *Opera Buffa!* The majority of the techniques the players might use are optional - they're there if you need it, but if you don't it's perfectly fine to ignore them. This is true of all of the musical techniques other than recitative and *bel canto*, as well as everything on the vocalist sheets aside from the description of their personalities.

Comfort levels with singing vary a lot person to person and play group to play group. Some players will use the techniques a lot and others won't use them at all, even within the same play group. Most players will be glad they have tools at their disposal even if they never use them. As the Maestro, consider these techniques to be a lifeline you can throw to floundering players.

Recitative and Bel Canto

The two basic vocal styles are recitative and bel canto. Here are non-professional demonstrations of each for your enjoyment (this is what a game will actually sound like much of the time).

Example: <http://theactapart.com/opera-buffa-resources>

Recitative (re-sih-ta-teeve) is a rhythmically free vocal style that imitates speech used in dramatic music. In this game it is a manner of melodiously speaking by using musically exaggerated inflections which produces a sing-song like speech quality that allows players to have dialogue without full-on singing. Recitative sounds like regular speech rhythmically and does not need to stay in time with a beat or anything like that. It's a lot easier to demonstrate than it is to describe.

Here is an example of a professional vocalist performing recitative. You don't even need to sound like an amateur, much less a professional. Fake this and you'll be doing it right.

Example: <http://youtu.be/npNcNCpRIIc>

Bel canto means “beautiful singing.” For our purposes this contrasts recitative by involving more of a deliberate melody, and is taken up when characters have something they want to express or the players just feel like belting it out. You know what this is - it's straight-up singing!

The vocal style of opera is characterized by wide vibrato, deep resonance, and dramatic intervals.

- Vibrato is the subtle oscillation of pitch that makes notes sound like they are shimmering. It's used to emphasize expressiveness. Some styles use a subtle vibrato. The *Opera Buffa!* is anything but subtle.
- When you imagine operatic vocalists singing you probably envision them singing with their mouths wide open making a deep “singing from the throat” kind of tone. Having great tone isn't the point, but resonant singing is desirable.
- An interval describes the difference in pitch between two notes. Opera is very dramatic, so for our purposes large intervals are used to express outward emotions and small intervals are used to increase tension.

Here is an example of Pavarotti singing an opera classic. Imitate this without overthinking it and you'll be doing it exactly right.

Example: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rTFUM4Uh_6Y

But you know all of this, and so do all of your players. You don't need to describe this, you need to visualize this and show them.

In the beginning of the game, most dialogue will probably be in the recitative style and then migrate to the bel canto style once the players know what the scene is about and can lay into the drama a little more. Later in the game it's likely that players will do more and more bel canto, but there is no need to moderate this.

Recitative is easy and doesn't ask much of the players. Bel canto, on the other hand, benefits from having a few more techniques to fall back on. The following will help players capture an operatic style without too much trouble. All of the following techniques can also be applied to recitative if you so desire.

Hold it Out

When in doubt, hold notes out real long. You can cover a lot of ground by extending a note a few extra beats. Hold a note out a very long time at dramatic moments.

Go Low

Get out of your typical singing register by just dropping to a lower range.

Get Soft

Most of your singing will probably be at speaking volumes or higher. Create a dramatic contrast by getting real soft.

Repeat Yourself and Others

Literally repeat yourself, verbatim. Just a few words, or a whole phrase. Repeat your melody too, or give it just a minor variation. Also, repeat what others say.

Inch Up or Crawl Down

Raise the pitch of a phrase by a “half-step” (think adjacent keys on a piano or “TI - DO”). This is great in combination with repeating yourself and generally raises the tension. You can all string them together for great effect, just like walking up a keyboard key by key.

Going the opposite direction, dropping down by half-steps, is also great and increases the tension in a more foreboding way.

Leap Up or Down

Similarly, leaping up or down by a large interval is dramatic, and combines well with extended notes. Just pick one of each: large or small interval, up or down.

Don't Worry About the Words

Just say whatever you want and don't worry if it doesn't fit well, doesn't rhyme, or if you have a weird syllable hanging at the end. Blame the person who wrote the libretto.

Use Your Body

Think overacting, and then double it. Use your body as much as possible to convey emotion and drama. Your singing will instinctively follow suit.

Use the Motifs

The motifs are all around the room so you can use them in part or in whole without having to think about it too much.

Which brings us to...

The Motifs

Motifs are a common compositional device used by many real composers. A motif is a short recurring musical gesture that undergoes numerous variations. Think about Beethoven's Symphony No. 5. The famous opening ("dun dun dun duuuuuuuuuun") is a motif. It's repeated over and over again from there on out - it's even several phrases before we hear anything else.

This is more or less how motifs are intended to work in play. Grab one, use it, reuse it. Modify it. This will make your music sound more intentional even though it's improvised. We just need to throw motifs in here and there. Here is how it works in play!

Since not everyone can read music, we'll use an intuitive notation system that anyone can read. For our purposes, motifs are a short series of lines that indicate relative pitch and duration, and are associated with a general emotion as represented by an emoji. The motifs are recorded on sheets of paper hung around the room so you can find them at a glance.

- The length of a line indicates the duration of a note relative to the other notes. Durations boil down to short, long, or very long. Motifs are read left to right.
- The vertical distance indicates the relative distance and direction of the interval between two notes. Again, intervals are small, large, or very large. Or none, indicating a repeated pitch.
- The emoji represents the emotion these motifs are associated with. These are simple emotions that can be interpreted in various ways if desired.
- All that's important is getting the general shape of the motif across. It will be recognizable even if the pitch and rhythm isn't the same every time.
- A game of *Opera Buffa!* makes use of four motifs.
- Using motifs is entirely optional. They're there to help you if you need them.

Use the Emotion

The emotion tells you when to use a motif. But it's sometimes a great idea to throw a motif in during the opposite emotion as well. Just make sure the emotion you are portraying comes through first and foremost.

Break It Up

You don't have to use the entire motif; take just a few notes and use them as you like, maybe even a single interval.

Chain Them Together

Motifs are meant to be repeated and reused, so go for it. Whether you repeat the whole thing or just a part, Inching Up, Crawling Down, or Going Low can all be used to great effect.

Mix Them Up

Transition between motifs or motif fragments, move back and forth between multiple motifs.

Dramatic Resolution

Events in scene are resolved dramatically. Which is to say that there are no game procedures to determine what happens - that's all up to what the players do and how the other players respond.

As a general guideline, players determine what their characters do and what happens to them when someone takes action against them. Players should lean into the most dramatic possibility - this is a game where goats talk and ghosts roam the earth, so there will be a way forward narratively no matter what happens. In game players should lean into the drama by taking the consequences and scheming up something ridiculous for later.

The Maestro

The Maestro conducts the game. Their job is to help everyone have a good play experience.

First of all, that means helping everyone have a game in the first place. They'll need to gather the players, find a space, assemble the materials, and know the game or appoint others to do so accordingly.

Second, that means helping everyone have a good time improvising an opera. They'll keep the players informed and answer their questions. They'll lead them through the "masterclass" that rehearses the singing and play styles, help them

workshop some musical content for easy use in play, and they'll help pace the opera so the players don't have to think too much about it. But most importantly, they'll celebrate the players' antics and keep the energy high.

The Maestro is also a character - one who advocates strongly for the opera - but they should be distant from the vocalists. Between acts the Maestro should only directly interact with the others infrequently, perhaps barking orders or dropping remarks and walking away.

It may sound like a lot, but the Maestro will never be doing more than a couple of those duties at any one time. You'll spend most of the scenario watching the other players' shenanigans (probably with disbelief). This text will guide you through every step of the way.



The Vocalists and Characters

Each player will take the role of one vocalist who plays various character roles within the opera. Playing the vocalist is the central component of the game, and influences play in a variety of ways.

Vocalist descriptions include a few pieces of practical information.

- **Archetype:** A general indicator of their personality and attitude.
- **Description:** A more detailed summary of their background and why they need this opera to be a success.
- **Backstage Demeanor:** A loose suggestion about how to interact with the other singers, comprised of “to their face” and “behind their backs” instructions.
- **Goal:** Something they want to get from someone else. If they manage to achieve their goal they’ll get a better ending.
- **Feature:** Something special that the vocalist can make happen in play. Features are irrevocable - everyone is beholden to seeing that they occur once a player invokes their feature. Players signal that you are invoking their feature by holding their finger up in the air and stating your demand clearly.
- **As the Goat:** An optional suggestion of what you might try as the Goat if you aren’t sure what to do.
- **After the Show:** A few narrative prompts based on whether or not the vocalist achieves their goal and what result they draw near the end of the third act. Players will use these prompts to determine how their vocalist fares after the opera.

The information on the vocalist sheets are just a starting point. Players should stick to the core concept of each vocalist, but they don’t have to achieve their goal, invoke their feature, or follow the backstage demeanors if they don’t want to.

Full vocalist descriptions can be found in the Print Materials.

Player Support

The one item that isn't a play procedure is player support. This is something everyone will need to do on an ongoing basis throughout the entire play experience.

- **Trust and Compassion:** When we come together to play, we do so from a place of compassion and trust. We are here to celebrate each other's creativity and to find some amazing moments together as we do and say ridiculous things. We are not here to judge anyone else creatively or personally.
- **The Door's Always Open:** If anyone needs to leave the play space for any reason, they may - with or without explanation. Ask players to give you a heads up (again, with or without explanation) if they don't intend to return so that you don't intrude by going to look for them.
- **Let's Talk:** Make yourself available and approachable on the breaks so that if others need to talk, they can find you.
- **Physical Boundaries:** *Opera Buffa!* assumes that players are comfortable with friendly contact - hand, forearm, and shoulder contact, hugs, and being in close proximity - but this isn't critical and can be pantomimed if desired. Intimate or violent actions should always be pantomimed.
- **Support Tools:** If your play community makes use of any support tools or techniques introduce them to the group and practice them if need be.

Though this is a comedic scenario that's unlikely to touch on sensitive subjects, you just never really know what's going to happen when anything goes. All of the support tools in the world aren't a substitute for players who are attentive to each other's needs.



The Game!

This section describes how to play the game from start to finish.

Presenting the Game

Pitching the game to a group of prospective players can be interesting. Two reactions are very common:

- Being smitten by the silly premise right away
- Being intimidated by the singing

Since the people who are into it from the get-go already know what they need to know, your priorities are:

- Get people the basic information
- Lower the stakes

Here's a possible pitch:

Tonight we will perform the world premiere of La promessa della capra, a previously unknown comedic opera about accidental marriages, family feuds, jealous ghosts, and a deceitful goat. You will be the up-and-coming vocalists, and together we will improvise an opera while singing like opera stars!

Fortunately for us, the opera is poorly translated, stylistically inconsistent, and entirely atonal. You don't need to be a good singer, or even an okay singer - you just have to sing with gusto!

No musical experience of any kind is required. We'll practice some simple singing techniques to help you fake it. All you need is an acute sense of shamelessness and overwhelming bravado!

It's recommended that you sing some portion of the pitch in the style of play. This will not only be fun and exciting, but it will also communicate the style of singing more effectively than any verbal description. Besides, putting your neck out there and singing like a total fool will make it easier for others to follow suit.

Using the Space

Opera Buffa! doesn't require much set-up, but being organized goes a long way. The two most important things are that the space is large enough to enjoy being loud in, and that the different play areas are demarcated so that players can comfortably move between on-stage, off-stage, and out-of-play areas. A house with a few connected rooms works well, but a single large space will also work if clearly divided.

1. Decide where the players will be performing the opera - they'll need a bit of room to move around.
2. Tape the motifs to the walls in places that are easy to see from the performance area. This is also where the "audience" is. This will be behind the Maestro, or off to the sides.
3. Designate an off-stage area for vocalists to mill about while not in a scene. Somewhere adjacent to the performance area is ideal but anywhere within earshot will do. Hang the opera summary and singing techniques in this area. Place the After the Show tickets and bowl (or manila envelope or pouch, whichever you're using) here as well. Prime the receptacle with three of each ticket.
4. Lay out the vocalist sheets in an area that the players may peruse during casting. Place the name tags, character badges, and sharpies in this location as well. You can remove the remainder of these before the opera begins, so anywhere is fine.
5. Designate some out-of-play areas, perhaps outside the stage space or another connected room. The restrooms should always be an out-of-play space - no banging on the bathroom door in-character or anything like that. Players will also need to have access to water because singing will wear them out, especially if they aren't used to it.
6. Set up the music playing device off to the side or behind the stage area (in other words, the speaker should face the "audience"). The music won't need to be loud, but it should be easily audible with two or three vocalists on stage. Test the sound and adjust the volume.

Masterclass, Casting, and Rehearsal

First item of business: pass around some breath mints, and discuss player support and boundaries (see **Player Support**).

The activities that precede the game proper are crucial to having a positive play experience because singing is both the fun and the challenge of this scenario.

It's important for the Maestro to demonstrate as much as possible throughout these exercises, especially at first. If the play group is picking everything up naturally (as they will most of the time) then just go with the flow. But if there is hesitation or uncertainty step up and sing!

Move quickly and trust players to latch onto things intuitively. If the players are getting it, just keep moving forward. This whole section should take about 30 minutes.

Singing with Bravado

These exercises practice the singing style. Conduct the entire masterclass in this style, using recitative and bel canto as desired.

Singing Exercises

1. Recitative: Explain what recitative is while speaking in recitative. Explain that most of the game takes place in recitative. Ask everyone to introduce themselves in recitative, one at a time. Introductions should include names, preferred pronouns, and what they hope to get out of playing this game.

Example: <https://theactapart.com/opera-buffa-resources>

2. Facial Techniques: Alternate making your facial expression large and small by alternating between “tiger face” and “bitter lemon” in quick succession. Next do “chewing really sticky taffy.”

3. Choral Warmups: Guide the players through the following choral warmups:

a. Say the phrase “Red Leather Yellow Leather” as fast as possible while rising in pitch. It's a tongue twister!

b. Imitate a siren with your singing voice as obnoxiously as possible. Go very low and very high.

4. Happy Birthday: Have the players sing happy birthday together in the operatic style. Explain the directions while full-on singing. Make sure they sing loud! *Happy Birthday* is useful because everyone knows it, and it covers a full octave.

5. Motifs: Explain how they work, then point to a motif and sing an example (just sing the emotion it's supposed to be: "Thiiiiiiiiis one is saaaaaaaad"). They will get it immediately. Go around in a circle and have them do the same, picking whichever motif they like.

6. Singing Techniques: Demonstrate each of the techniques from **Recitative and Bel Canto** by going in a circle and having everybody practice a technique by singing a motif and answering one of the prompts (or come up with your own). Go around once demonstrating a different technique for each person. Go around a second time for practice if they still seem unsure of themselves.

- a. Hold It Out - tell us about your favorite color
- b. Go Low - tell us about your favorite food
- c. Get Soft - tell us about your favorite book
- d. Inch Up/Crawl Down - tell us about your favorite movie - ask them to express with body movement as well
- e. Leap Up/Down - tell us about your favorite animal - ask them to overdo the body movement

Casting

Direct players to the vocalist sheets, and explain what information they'll find on them (name, archetype, background, backstage demeanor, goal, feature, future, - see **The Vocalists**, below). Mention that some vocalists aren't as proficient as others. Trust them to pick whatever is best for them.

Players choose between eight vocalists roles. Once players have made their choices, ask players to give their vocalist a more-or-less modern name, then fill out and wear a name tag.

Once everyone has selected a vocalist, they will now select a primary character. Each of the primary characters has nearly equivalent screen time in the opera as written. Players should just pick whichever ones they like the most, and know that they may wind up changing roles later. The Goat is a shared role - nobody starts as or has ownership over the Goat. Leave the Goat near the opera summary for

players to grab at will. Players take and wear the name badge for the character they've selected, as well as the prop indicated on the badge.

Players/vocalists may do as they wish as the characters they are playing. Maybe someone decides that Scipio is a woman, and plays them accordingly - I guess the libretto is inconsistent! Any remaining primary characters should be played as secondary characters instead. Direct their attention to the opera act summary and point out that the characters names are color coded with their badges for quick reference.

Finally, show them the **After the Show** tickets and receptacle. Tell them that near the end of the opera they will draw a ticket to determine their ending, in combination with whether or not they achieve their goal. They can make things better or worse for everybody by putting a ticket in the receptacle whenever they like - just stick to one at a time. The receptacle already has tickets in it, so it's okay if they forget or choose not to meddle with fate.

Rehearsal

The players are now in character - they are roleplaying their vocalists warming up before the show.

1. **Pass the Introduction:** Players take turns introducing their vocalists while singing and making use of the motifs. This is done in character. One or two short sentences will do. Ask them to repeat the same motif or string different ones together - and use the emojis! Most importantly, players should practice jumping in without singing over each other by singing only a line or two and leaving a gap for someone to jump in - listen for your opening!

2. **Aria with Greek Chorus:** Ask whoever you consider to be the most comfortable singer perform an Aria. Instruct them to start singing about something they did yesterday (mundane or exciting is fine). Instruct the other players to be a "Greek Chorus" by briefly interrupting the aria singer to repeat a few words the vocalist just sang - this should emphasize and punctuate the story they are telling. Lead the way and demonstrate this yourself. The aria singer should keep going until at least a few people have jumped in.

Now you are finished with the masterclass and rehearsal! If players want to revisit anything, that's okay. Just insist the everyone keep talking in character in recitative and bel canto.

Before the Show

Play officially begins backstage. Players interact as their vocalists (no other character roles) backstage just before the show. There are no special instructions or objectives - this is a chance for everybody to find their characters and interact a bit before they start singing.

Maestro, set up your music playing device. The volume should be soft but distinct. Each scene description will have a recommended track for that scene. Just follow the link. If more than one track appears, play the top result.

Give them a two minute warning before it's time to take places.

Acts and Scenes

The Opera is divided into three acts, which are comprised of eight or nine scenes each. For each act the Maestro has a list of scenes to help them manage the plot. It's important that scenes be short because singing while aimlessly traversing a scene can be tiring. Keep scenes no longer than two minutes.

Most scenes call for two to four characters to act and sing according to their instructions. The vocalists will almost certainly take things into their own hands despite those instructions.

The Maestro acts as a narrator of sorts. Each scene has a bullet list of events and instructions that the Maestro calls out one at a time. In this way the Maestro paces each scene. Once you've issued all of the listed directions, cut the scene when ready. You may want to let the scene unfold on it's own for a few moments.

Vocalists may or may not obey, but the Maestro cannot directly respond - instead use a passive-aggressive narrator voice to insist a bit before giving up. Players will probably need these directions to keep track of what's going on even if they don't follow them.

When not acting in a scene, off-stage vocalists may act as a kind of Greek chorus by echoing/repeating what the onstage characters are saying. This is voluntary - nobody needs to do it but they are welcome to if they don't have another active role at the moment.

Arias

An aria is both a solo and monologue to the audience that takes place within a scene. The Maestro calls for arias at dramatic or ironic moments, or when the Maestro has no idea what's going on and needs an explanation. Each player should get at least one by the end of the opera.

During an aria the vocalist will step forward as though addressing the audience, and sing bel canto about their thoughts and feelings. Arias only need to be a few sentences in length. The scene probably won't slow down much despite the aria. Other vocalists don't need to be silent, but they should switch gears and support the soloist by emphasizing and echoing their aria, and following their lead.

Backstage

When a vocalist isn't performing they are off-stage. Vocalists are free to interact with whoever else is backstage as they like, but they should pay at least a little attention to what's happening on-stage. Players can also use this time to take a short breather.

Intermission

Intermissions are a short, ten-minute break between acts of the opera. The players might need some reminders about some things, so here is the breakdown:

1. The first five minutes is a bio-break for the players - nobody is in character.
2. Remind them to get some water.
3. The second five minutes are in character. Let them know when this period begins. During this time players are only their vocalists, and may interact with other vocalists off-stage. Move around the entire play area.
4. Give them a two minute warning before the next act begins.
5. Remind them to get their character badges and props.

Intermissions are an opportunity for them to try to weasel their way into whatever their agenda is. They will know what to do with this time, or at least they'll have ideas about it. They should "play the game," as it were, by making or breaking promises, concocting schemes, forging alliances, unleashing drama, and otherwise trying to work their agenda. If vocalists change character roles, the players need to swap badges and props as well.

Curtains

After the opera concludes, it's time to see how each of our singers wound up after the show. The final "scene" is a montage of epilogues. This activity is included in the Maestro's opera summary.

After this is done the game is over. *Bravi!*

Debriefing

Have everyone dispense with all play materials and costuming. Have a short conversation that celebrates the high points from your play.

An extensive conversation isn't required. Just make sure that everyone gets a chance to say what their favorite moments were and why. If anyone was unsure about all the singing at the beginning, check in with them now. Above all, thank everyone for putting on quite a show!

Troubleshooting

What do you do if things aren't quite syncing up?

The most important thing is for the Maestro to listen to the needs of the players. If energy is dropping it's probably because things are taking too long. This is true of both the workshops and the opera.

Players who are getting something out of the workshops will be engaged. If your play group "gets it" they may not need as thorough of a workshop - it's okay to make cuts and move on. Regardless, move quickly - ten seconds or less per player is ideal for most exercises in the workshops (there are some obvious exceptions).

If energy is dropping off during the opera make scenes shorter and give more direction. Tell them how the characters in the opera feel. Give more physical instructions, asking them to do all sorts of things - lying down on the floor, exaggerated pantomimes, dancing, fighting - anything to get them moving. Direct them to use specific motifs. Some groups may need less instruction - in this case just stick to the narrative directions.

Assess who your "strongest" player is and call for an aria and have others support/echo them. It seems like a breakneck pace, but fifteen or twenty minutes for a whole Act is best - time slows down when you are singing, apparently.

Even with only five minutes, players sometimes feel the Intermissions are too long. Get the players to spread out rather than clump together. Pull someone into your dressing room and admonish them for something - make something up if need be and implicate another player. If the previous act ended with some low energy, ask a player to orchestrate stealing one of the first two scenes with another player or two. Alternatively, request that a player invoke their feature.

In one playtest, two players leapt into the middle of the and faked a Russian Peasant's dance, while going on about the plight of Russian Peasants. This didn't have anything to do with anything, but it injected lots of energy and inspired future mayhem.

If everything is chaos and people only kinda know what's going on with the opera, it's working! Players being more involved with the opera is better than less involved, but the vocalist's drama and the overall energy is more important. The chemistry of the group has a large impact on how a the game will go - every group will shine in different ways!



The Opera!

This is a summary of *La promessa della capra*. The following sections break down the opera's performers, characters, acts, and scenes.

The Characters

→ Ines Orbiana

Daughter of Antonin, in love with Scipio. She is held captive at home by her father. Antonin feeds her poison every day making her kiss deadly. She is cunning and resentful of her father. She hatches a plot to elope with Scipio by escaping while disguised as the ghost of Lucrezia.

→ Scipio Riego

Grandson of Gretel, younger brother to Torquato, in love with Ines. Scipio accidentally killed Lucrezia in a hunting accident when he was young, and was proclaimed to be cursed ever since. He is considered an outcast because of this, and is very unlucky.

→ Lucrezia Cornaro

A ghost, formerly a nun, secret lover to Beatrice. Killed by Scipio in a hunting accident. Obsessed with tormenting those that have wronged her. Marries Scipio thinking he was remorseful, becomes hurt and wrathful when she learns it was all a mistake. Wields ghostly powers. Frequently spies on others.

→ Torquato Riego

Older brother to Scipio, heir to the Riego estate. Torquato believes he is a magician, but is merely very naive. He believes the Goat outright. Torquato dies part way and becomes a ghost with powers he attributes to his "magic."

→ Antonin Orbiana

Head of the Orbiana estate, father to Ines. Antonin is constantly scheming. Has plot to disguise himself as a salesman, goad someone into insulting him so he can justify executing them. Feeds Ines poison daily so that her kiss will be deadly, thus killing her future husband so he can seize their lands.

→ "Enzo"/Beatrice Villegas

Formerly a nun and secret lover to Lucrezia. Beatrice was excommunicated for her affair with Lucrezia, but has since been masquerading as the late Father Enzo. As Enzo, Beatrice secretly advises both houses. Beatrice is mostly blind, and mistakes the Goat for the Golden Goose.

→ **The Goat**

A talking goat and compulsive liar. Your goal is to pit people against each other. Being the Goat is *la carte blanche* for doing just about anything. Use this to your vocalist's advantage. However, you should play this role somewhat seriously - there will be plenty of mayhem on stage as it is.

→ **The Rest**

You got stuck with all of the unnamed bit parts. What a crock. So you won't get any recognition, but you can step on stage in pretty much any role you want. That's convenient. Even so, try to pass this role off to someone else sooner rather than later.

About the Music

Following the links for the music should lead you to a page with a single track. If multiple tracks appear, use the first result. If convenient, open an entire act's tracks in separate tabs of your browser and just work with them in sequence, closing tabs as you go to stop the music.

Act I

Cast

- | | | |
|------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| → Ines | → Enzo/Beatrice | → Merchants |
| → Scipio | → Antonin | → Market goers |
| → Torquato | → The Goat | → Woodland animals |
| → Lucrezia | → Gretel | → Orbiana servant |

Scenes

1. *Orbiana estate, Ines' room in tower, night time.*
 - a. Scipio is in a tree outside Ines' window and cannot quite reach her.
 - b. Ines and Scipio proclaim their love for each other. (Happy motif)
 - c. Scipio mentions his curse.
 - d. Antonin arrives, Scipio flees.
 - e. Antonin gives Ines her nightly poison.

Beginning: *Adagio For Strings* by Jody Jenkins

<https://www.audionetwork.com/track/searchkeyword?keyword=jenkins+adagio+for+strings&sort=2>

Antonin's Entrance: *Fate* by Verdi

<https://www.audionetwork.com/track/searchkeyword?keyword=verdi%2Bfate&sort=2>

2. *Oviedo Marketplace, busy street, middle of the day.*
 - a. Antonin, disguised as a salesman, is selling pickled duck fetuses.
 - b. Enzo arrives, Antonin consults with Enzo about his scheme to trick any one of the hapless market-goers or merchants into insulting him so he can execute them. (Scary motif)
 - c. Enzo suggests marrying Ines to Torquato so that he will die, defeating the family, and ending their feud.

Entire Scene: *Potato Potato* by Simon Porter

<https://www.audionetwork.com/track/searchkeyword?keyword=potato%2Bportato&sort=2>

3. *The forest outside of town, sunset.*
 - a. Beatrice remembers her old lover, Lucrezia, who was killed in this spot by a hunter years ago. (Sad motif)
 - b. Lucrezia watches, and tries to speak with Beatrice, but Beatrice doesn't recognize her.
 - c. Torquato arrives practicing magic unsuccessfully - Beatrice flees and Lucrezia hides.
 - d. The Goat arrives and speaks with Torquato about treasure, Lucrezia witnesses the conversation.

Beginning: *Lady of Sorrows* by Mozart

<https://www.audionetwork.com/track/searchkeyword?keyword=mozart%2Clady+of+sorrows&sort=2>

Torquato's Entrance: *Ballet For A Bear* by Ponchielli

<https://www.audionetwork.com/track/searchkeyword?keyword=ponchielli+ballet+for+a+bear&sort=2>

4. *Riego estate, Gretel's chambers, night time.*
 - a. Lucrezia takes revenge on Gretel Riego, killing her. (Mad motif)
 - b. Enzo arrives to convince Gretel to allow Torquato to marry Ines.
 - c. Enzo receives Gretel's "blessing" (objection from the corpse).

Entire scene: *Angst* by Julian Gallant / Jeff Meegan / David Tobin
<https://www.audionetwork.com/track/searchkeyword?keyword=gallant+meegan+angst&sort=2>
5. *Oviedo Marketplace, busy street, morning.*
 - a. Antonin, still disguised as a salesman, finds Torquato introducing Scipio and other market-goers and merchants to the Goat and exclaiming the treasure. (Happy motif)
 - b. Antonin tells them of a "rumor" about the forthcoming marriage of Ines and Torquato.
 - c. Scipio gets upset.
 - d. Antonin seeks insults from the brothers but doesn't get one.
 - e. Torquato leaves to meet his fiancée.

Entire scene: *Theme For Villain* by Joe Kraemer
<https://www.audionetwork.com/track/searchkeyword?keyword=kraemer+theme%2Bfor%2Bvillain&sort=2>
6. *Orbiana estate, dining hall, mid-day.*
 - a. Antonin, no longer disguised, introduces Ines to Torquato.
 - b. Antonin informs Ines of the marriage arrangement. (Scary motif)
 - c. Ines gets upset and storms off, to discover Lucrezia spying on them.

Entire scene: *Rue Des Reves* by Michael Levine
<https://www.audionetwork.com/track/searchkeyword?keyword=rue+des+reves&sort=2>
7. *Orbiana estate, Ines' room in tower, night time.*
 - a. Scipio pretending to be Torquato, again in the tree, has brought Enzo to Ines' window.
 - b. Ines convinces Enzo to marry them in the woods in secret at midnight. (Angry motif)

- c. Ines declares her plan to sneak out disguised at the ghost of Lucrezia.

Entire scene: *Winter Approaches* by Jody Jenkins

<https://www.audionetwork.com/track/searchkeyword?keyword=jenkins+winter+approaches&sort=2>

8. *The forest outside of town, night time.*

- a. Torquato is treasure hunting with the Goat. Ines disguised as Lucrezia encounters them.
- b. Torquato believes he's summoned the ghost, Ines lets him believe this. (Scary motif)
- c. The Goat promises to lead her to her destination, but gets her lost instead.

Entire scene: *Capriccio* by Paul Mottram

<https://www.audionetwork.com/track/searchkeyword?keyword=mottram+capriccio&sort=2>

9. *The forest outside of town, midnight.*

- a. Scipio and Enzo wait for Ines, but the real Lucrezia arrives instead. Neither of them realize that this isn't Ines.
- b. Lucrezia believes Scipio is remorseful for what happened. (Happy motif)
- c. Enzo marries the couple.
- d. Lucrezia and Scipio disappear to consummate their marriage.

Entire scene: *Cherished Obsession* by Ian Hughes

<https://www.audionetwork.com/track/searchkeyword?keyword=cherished%2Bobsession&sort=2>



Act II

Cast

- | | | |
|------------|------------|----------------|
| → Ines | → Enzo | → Goblins |
| → Scipio | → Antonin | → Baraqiel |
| → Torquato | → The Goat | → Soldiers |
| → Lucrezia | → Gretel | → Market goers |

Scenes

1. *The forest outside of town, early morning.*
 - a. Torquato and the Goat have discovered treasure (it's actually a dead bird that ate some marbles).
 - b. They encounter Enzo, returning home from the wedding.
 - c. Enzo mistakes the Goat for the Golden Goose, and decides to follow until it lays an egg. (Happy motif)

Entire scene: *Outdoor Pursuits* by Patrick Hawes

<https://www.audionetwork.com/track/searchkeyword?keyword=hawes+outdoor+pursuits&sort=2>

2. *The forest outside of town, morning.*
 - a. Ines discovers Scipio and Lucrezia in each other's arms in a meadow.
 - b. Ines is furious, Scipio realizes his mistake and chases after Ines. (Sad motif)
 - c. Lucrezia weeps, curses Scipio again.

Entire scene: *Scheherzade* by Rimsky-Korsakov

<https://www.audionetwork.com/track/searchkeyword?keyword=scheherzade&sort=2>

3. *Oviedo Marketplace, busy street, morning.*
 - a. Ines, disguised as Lucrezia, rushes into town and encounters Antonin, disguised as a salesman as well as other passers-by.

- b. Ines is weeping and considers being consoled by enjoying a pickled duck fetus. (Sad motif)
- c. Ines insults him savagely.
- d. Antonin is thrilled.

Entire scene: *Elephant* by Saint-Saens

<https://www.audionetwork.com/track/searchkeyword?keyword=elephant%2Bsaint-saens%2Btobin&sort=2>

4. *Riego estate, Gretel's chambers, noon.*

- a. Lucrezia, pretending to be Gretel, summons Scipio to her chambers.
- b. She congratulates him on his marriage, saying she heard from Enzo. (Scary motif)
- c. Lucrezia, controlling Gretel's body, insists that Scipio kiss Gretel (the rotting corpse).

Entire scene: *Danse Macabre* by Saint-Saens

<https://www.audionetwork.com/track/searchkeyword?keyword=danse%2BMacabre%2Bsaint-saens&sort=2>

5. *The forest outside of town, mid-day.*

- a. Torquato, Enzo, and the Goat encounter some goblins.
- b. Torquato tries to impress them with his "treasure".
- c. The Goat and the goblins convince Torquato to climb a tree. (Scary motif)
- d. Torquato is struck by lightning cast by the angel Baraqiel, and dies horribly. (Sad motif)

Beginning: *Happy Life* by Paul Mottram

<https://www.audionetwork.com/track/searchkeyword?keyword=mottram%2Bhappy%2Blife%2Bmagical%2Bcarefree&sort=2>

Torquato's death: *The Killing* by Ian Hughes

<https://www.audionetwork.com/track/searchkeyword?keyword=hughes+the+killing&sort=2>

6. *Orbiana estate, dining hall, early evening.*
 - a. Enzo brings the Goat to Antonin, insisting that it's the Golden Goose about to lay a golden egg.
 - b. Antonin tells Enzo to fetch the one who insulted him. (Mad motif)
 - c. Enzo informs Antonin about Torquato's fate.
 - d. Antonin believes this is a ruse, and declares war on the Riego estate.

Entire scene: *In The Parlor* by Julian Gallant

<https://www.audionetwork.com/track/searchkeyword?keyword=gallant+in+the+parlor&sort=2>

7. *Orbiana estate, dining hall, evening.*
 - a. The ghost of Torquato arrives to find Antonin waiting for the Goat to lay an egg.
 - b. Antonin gets frightened by Torquato and flees. (Scary motif)
 - c. Torquato releases the Goat to continue their treasure hunt.

Entire scene: *Turkish Rondo*

<https://www.audionetwork.com/track/searchkeyword?keyword=turkish%2Brondo%2Bfoster&sort=2>

8. *Oviedo Marketplace, busy street, evening.*
 - a. Scipio finally catches up with Ines, but battle has broken out.
 - b. Lucrezia helps the soldiers dispatch Scipio with her ghostly powers. (Mad motif)
 - c. Ines is captured to be taken back to Antonin and executed.
 - d. Lucrezia is delighted.

Entire scene: *Night On A Bare Mountain* by Mussorgsky

<https://www.audionetwork.com/track/searchkeyword?keyword=night+on+a+bare+mountain&sort=2>



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Act III

Cast

- | | | |
|------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| → Ines | → Antonin | → Soldiers |
| → Scipio | → Enzo/Beatrice | → Dying soldiers |
| → Torquato | → The Goat | → Wedding attendees |
| → Lucrezia | → Choir of Angels | |

Scenes

1. *Orbiana estate, dungeon, morning.*
 - a. Scipio is being held in Antonin's dungeon.
 - b. Antonin arrives and declares his intent to torture Scipio. (Scary motif)
 - c. Antonin tickle tortures Scipio in a dungeon cell, and enjoys it greatly.
 - d. Torquato's ghost arrives with the Goat and scares Antonin away.
 - e. Scipio denounces his brother on account of Torquato's desire to marry Ines. (Mad motif)
 - f. Torquato is hurt and jealous, and leaves Scipio in the cell.

Entire scene: *Growing Spider* by Ceiri Torjussen

<https://www.audionetwork.com/track/searchkeyword?keyword=growing%2Bspider&sort=2>

2. *Oviedo streets, late morning.*
 - a. Torquato is crestfallen because Scipio denounced him. (Sad motif)
 - b. Lucrezia meets Torquato amidst the battle in the streets.
 - c. Lucrezia cheers him up by terrorizing and killing people. (Happy motif)
 - d. They both talk about how Scipio has wronged them. They fall in love.
 - e. The Goat wanders off as they stare into each other's eyes.

Entire scene: *Ride Of The Valkyries* by Wagner

<https://www.audionetwork.com/track/searchkeyword?keyword=ride+of+the+valkyries&sort=2>

3. *Orbiana estate, dungeon, late morning.*
 - a. Antonin visits Ines disguised as Lucrezia in her cell.
 - b. Antonin describes her crime and her punishment.
 - c. Antonin falls in love with Ines, recognizing his late wife, and proposes. (Happy motif)
 - d. Ines protests.
 - e. Antonin tells her to choose between marriage and execution.

Beginning: *Theme For Villain* by Joe Kraemer

<https://www.audionetwork.com/track/searchkeyword?keyword=kraemer+theme%2Bfor%2Bvillain&sort=2>

Antonin falls in love: *Time To Dream* by Patrick Hawes

<https://www.audionetwork.com/track/searchkeyword?keyword=time+to+dream+hawes&sort=2>

4. *Oviedo streets, late morning.*
 - a. Enzo is following the Goat (“Goose”) through the carnage, still waiting for it to lay an egg.
 - b. Lucrezia sees Beatrice and confronts her about the wedding to Scipio.
 - c. Beatrice recognizes Lucrezia for the first time. (Happy motif)
 - d. Soldiers around moan for help or peace from the priest but Enzo doesn’t notice.

Entire scene: *Envy* by Dan Skinner / Adam Skinner / Simon Skinner

<https://www.audionetwork.com/track/searchkeyword?keyword=envy%2Borchestra&sort=2>

5. *Orbiana estate, dungeon, mid-day.*
 - a. Enzo finds Ines in her cell and tells her the wedding was all a mistake.
 - b. Ines is still mad. (Mad motif)
 - c. Ines resolves to accept the marriage, but only if Scipio is watching.
 - d. Enzo leaves to tell Antonin.

Entire scene: *Day Of Wrath* by Patrick Hawkes

<https://www.audionetwork.com/track/searchkeyword?keyword=day+of+wrath+hawes&sort=2>

6. *Oviedo streets, main square, afternoon.*
 - a. Antonin announces his marriage to Ines.
 - b. Ines comes down the aisle.
 - c. Scipio is watching from the crowd, all chained up, and furious but too injured to do anything.
 - d. Antonin calls off the war, declaring victory.
 - e. Antonin and Ines proclaim their love for one another, and she kisses him passionately. (Scary motif)
 - f. Antonin dies in agony from the poison.

Entire scene: *Wedding March* by Mendelssohn

<https://www.audionetwork.com/track/searchkeyword?keyword=day+of+wrath+hawes&sort=2>

7. *Oviedo streets, main square, evening.*
 - a. After the wedding, the Goat finds Scipio, still chained up and tells him about a wonderful treasure that Torquato never found.
 - b. Scipio doesn't care. (Sad motif)
 - c. The Goat mentions that Scipio is the ruler of the Riego estate.
 - d. Scipio still doesn't care.
 - e. Ines arrives and releases him and tells them that they are free to be together. (Happy motif)
 - f. Ines tells Scipio that she is the ruler of the Orbiana estate, though the war ruined the city.
 - g. Scipio is exuberant, Scipio says not to worry because he knows of a marvelous treasure.

Entire scene: *Adagio For Strings* by Jody Jenkins

<https://www.audionetwork.com/track/searchkeyword?keyword=jenkins+adagio+for+strings&sort=2>

8. *Overture*
 - a. No singing.
 - b. Players draw an After the Show ticket from the receptacle.
 - c. Players consult their sheets and begin to formulate their epilogues.

Entire activity: *Presto Overture* by Mozart

<https://www.audionetwork.com/track/searchkeyword?keyword=presto+overture+m Mozart&sort=2>

9. *Oviedo streets, sunset.*

Note: *If you lack sufficient vocalists for whatever reason, break this into two scenes and re-cast roles as necessary.*

- a. Enzo catches back up with the Goat, Scipio, and Ines, who are about to go on a treasure hunt. (Happy motif)
- b. The Goat finally reveals the treasure, and defecates in Enzo's hands.
- c. Torquato and Lucrezia are rejoicing in how well they have ruined the lives of those that have wronged them. (Mad motif)
- d. Enzo, holding the Goat's poop, blesses both Torquato and Lucrezia as they ascend to heaven, greeted by a choir of angels.
- e. Sing along with the track until it's over - it's Beethoven's *Ode to Joy*.
- f. Take a bow after!

Entire scene - crank up the volume, especially for the end:

<https://www.audionetwork.com/track/searchkeyword?keyword=beethoven%2Btobin%2Bode%2Bto%2Bjoy&sort=2>

10. *Curtains*

- a. The final "scene" is a montage of epilogues.
- b. Maestro, invite players to narrate their epilogues. Appoint someone to go first if there isn't a volunteer. 15 - 20 seconds is plenty of time for an epilogue vignette.
- c. This concludes the game!

Entire montage: *Ode to Joy* by Beethoven

<https://www.audionetwork.com/track/searchkeyword?keyword=beethoven%2Btobin%2Bode%2Bto%2Bjoy&sort=2>



Turd by Lorc under CC BY 3.0 <http://game-icons.net/lorc/originals/turd.html>

Compose Your Own!

When it comes to making your own content for *Opera Buffa!* what we're talking about is the plot of the opera and the motifs. Whether or not you do this depends on how much time you have available - you could either do this in advance or have the players do it as a group.

Writing a Plot

Writing the plot can be involved. Unless you have sufficient free time to concoct one on your own in advance, or you have a group that doesn't mind improvising the plot (which is difficult), your best bet is to stick with existing stories. Consider adapting fairy tales, movies, or other operas for this purpose. The plot of *La promessa della capra* is itself a mashup of the plots of a few different operas.

The plot elements most suited to this have to do with repeated mistakes and accidents. Mistaken identities are a pretty sure bet, and it allows for a lot of flexibility if players switch roles around. Having a combination of foolish and passionate characters is a good starting point, too.

In the end what you want is a situation that gets out of hand, goes topsy-turvy, and then resolves in an unexpected or ironic way. As long as complications lead to conflict and then to more complications you should have something to work with.

Composing Motifs

Your motifs should contrast each other. Try to include long notes, short notes, large intervals, small intervals, ascending intervals, and descending intervals. Compare them visually and make sure none of them look too similar.

Try starting with an emotion and just start singing little melodies to yourself and see what you come up with. A good motif can be broken up (in half or so), and still be recognizable somehow. If your motifs aren't distinct when broken in half, keep tweaking them.

Of course, simpler is better. And there is no shame in stealing from music you know!

If you are doing it as a group assign small groups to each tackle a motif, then come together to tweak them.

Design Notes!

Alternative Play Styles

Audience

Have a live audience. Let people jump up and play whatever roles they want, but designate some core players up front. The more the merrier! At the end, instead of using the tickets to determine the epilogue, let the audience decide with their applause.

Opera Seria!

Playing a serious game instead of comic one can be tricky. You will need a different plot, and you will need players who are more comfortable singing (they don't need to be good, just not too self-conscious). Further, you should probably also dispense with the vocalist personalities/futures and let the opera speak for itself. Consider drawing motifs/themes from Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture* or other well recognized works.

Print Materials!

On the following pages you'll find vocalist sheets, character badges, opera summary, Maestro's schedule, After the Show tickets, singing basics, and the four motifs. Print single sided for everything except the vocalist sheets and the character badges which should be printed double sided. The character badges will need to be assembled.

Enjoy!

About the Designer

Tayler Stokes is an avid explorer and curious designer of high-impact scenarios. While in the Pacific Northwest he was an active larp community organizer, during which time he founded a non-profit organization in Portland OR, and coordinated the events with local conventions and community organizations. Tayler is formerly an orchestral musician. Though he doesn't perform anymore, music has remained a central part of his personal life. You can find his other works at theactapart.com.

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- Shawn Stokes
- Eric Todd
- Kyle Townsend
- Harold the Cat
- The Stockholm Scenario Festival

The Artist

Opera is your calling. It's truly a shame that others haven't fully recognized your brilliant artistry. But that is about to change - you will make this opera great, and the world will remember your name!

Your career has been a bit of a disappointment and you've never been recognized for your accomplishments. As such, you've been postponing your retirement for some time now, hoping to make a splash while you still can. See that this opera is a resounding success no matter what - it's your last chance!

Backstage Demeanor

Offer to help others to their face, but take credit for it behind their backs.

Artist Goal

Your goal is to get a protégé, someone whose success will be your success after this is over. Taking them under your wing now and again isn't enough, they must also come to you for advice and accept your offer.

Artist Feature

Once per game you may pull rank to steal the spotlight and sing an aria of your own accord, including giving directions to the other vocalists. They must concede when you invoke this feature by raising your finger in the air, but that doesn't mean you can't try to get away with it more than once.

As the Goat

When you're the Goat, do as you please or play the victim left and right.

After the Show

How the Artist fares after the show depends on what happens during the game. After Act III concludes you'll narrate a short epilogue as a part of a montage based on two pieces of information found below. Embellish these items into a short vignette.

If you feel the two items don't quite fit together you are welcome to make adjustments as you like. Additionally, if you have a better idea that suits your outcome you can go with that instead.

Did the Artist accomplish their Goal?

- **YES!** You work your way into an adjunct professorship at a local university. You don't have many students, but you've got credibility.
- **NO!** A prominent rival of yours poaches your students, one by one.

What did the Artist draw?

- **Good!** You are internationally recognized as the definitive expert on *La promessa della capra*.
- **Bad!** Your performance is recognized as the only positive aspect of an otherwise dreadful production by a local music critic. You're career is still over, but that's nice.
- **Ugly!** A video of your performance becomes an embarrassing viral meme online.

The Diva

The stage, the lights, the crowds, the parties - it all suits you. You were born to be a star and everyone knows it. These lowlifes should be grateful that you are gracing them with your presence. You are going to do whatever you want, and if they don't like it, they can scram.

You live a lavish lifestyle. Unfortunately, you have recently discovered that you've been living beyond your means and you need a paycheck, fast. Which has led you to taking pitiful gigs like this. At least it will be over soon enough.

Backstage Demeanor

Simply adore others to their face, but show contempt for them behind their backs.

Diva Goal

Your goal is to get a personal minion, someone who worships you and will do your bidding without a second thought. If they defy you or turn against you, they aren't your minion.

Diva Feature

Once per game you can throw a tantrum and others must do what they can to pacify you. Of course, you can throw as many tantrums as you like, but unless you invoke this feature they may respond as they like (and you may retaliate accordingly).

As the Goat

When you're the Goat, do as you please or demand worship.

After the Show

How the Diva fares after the show depends on what happens during the game. After Act III concludes you'll narrate a short epilogue as a part of a montage based on two pieces of information found below. Embellish these items into a short vignette.

If you feel the two items don't quite fit together you are welcome to make adjustments as you like. Additionally, if you have a better idea that suits your outcome you can go with that instead.

Did the Diva accomplish their Goal?

- **YES!** Forget opera - you found a cult.
- **NO!** The tables turn and you become a groveling minion to one of the other vocalists.

What did the Diva draw?

- **Good!** After months of careful PR strategizing, you land a lead role on a *Glee* knock-off television show.
- **Bad!** Times are tough, which is why you star in a series of late night infomercials.
- **Ugly!** You get evicted from your penthouse suite and your assets are liquidated to cover your debt. You sing for change on the subway platform.

The Heartthrob

You exude an irresistible aura, and as a result you have left a trail of broken hearts in your wake. It's not your fault that you are beautiful and alluring, but it sure is nice. You've got everyone wrapped around your little finger.

You're here because you like the attention plain and simple. You know that you can get away with an awful lot this time around. This is a wonderful opportunity for you strut your stuff.

Backstage Demeanor

Tease others to their face, but swoon over them behind their backs.

Heartthrob Goal

Your goal is to get an engaged, someone who desires you more than anything else, even if you have no intention of being faithful. It isn't real until it's announced.

Heartthrob Feature

Should you hookup with someone, they become blissful and ecstatic (the other player must agree to this). If you break up with them they are utterly devastated, and if you cheat on them they are overwhelmed with jealousy (should they find out). After the hookup, tell them about the consequences of a breakup/affair.

As the Goat

When you're the Goat, do as you please or play matchmaker (poorly).

After the Show

How the Heartthrob fares after the show depends on what happens during the game. After Act III concludes you'll narrate a short epilogue as a part of a montage based on two pieces of information found below. Embellish these items into a short vignette.

If you feel the two items don't quite fit together you are welcome to make adjustments as you like. Additionally, if you have a better idea that suits your outcome you can go with that instead.

Did the Heartthrob accomplish their Goal?

- **YES!** You make out great on divorce settlements.
- **NO!** You make a bid for stardom by orchestrating a sex tape leak scandal against yourself, but it backfires horrendously and you are publicly humiliated.

What did the Heartthrob draw?

- **Good!** You work the industry so well you become the arbiter of who succeeds and who fails, allowing you to get even with those who have spurned you.
- **Bad!** You get played by someone far more devious than you, leaving you at their mercy.
- **Ugly!** You are plagued by rumors regarding your manipulative behavior and shunned, hard.

The Rock Star

You are here to have a good time. Who needs those stressful, high-profile gigs? You know this is below your level, but it's easy and you can relax. You don't take anything too seriously - the most important thing is that you have fun.

You didn't show up to any of the rehearsals. In fact you've recently been fired a few times for "unprofessional" behavior. You need to have one successful gig before you get blacklisted. Obviously, you can't sing well when you're messed up. Or can you?

Backstage Demeanor

Make merry with others in person, but play pranks on them behind their backs.

Rock Star Goal

Your goal is to get help for your addiction, someone who's actually going to offer sincere support and not judge you for being a pathetic wreck beneath your glamorous exterior.

Rock Star Feature

You've got some drugs on you, just enough to share. Once per game you and/or someone else can partake in whatever it is you've got. What is it, and what effects does it have? The effects will last through the end of this act, and then you'll both start to come down.

As the Goat

When you're the Goat, do as you please or get them to pity you.

After the Show

How the Rock Star fares after the show depends on what happens during the game. After Act III concludes you'll narrate a short epilogue as a part of a montage based on two pieces of information found below. Embellish these items into a short vignette.

If you feel the two items don't quite fit together you are welcome to make adjustments as you like. Additionally, if you have a better idea that suits your outcome you can go with that instead.

Did the Rock Star accomplish their Goal?

- **YES!** You clean up and become an inspirational speaker for high school students.
- **NO!** You get busted for possession with intent to distribute a controlled substance, and sentenced to 20 years in prison.

What did the Rock Star draw?

- **Good!** Nothing else matters when you are a six-figure dealer.
- **Bad!** An intravenous infection lands you in the ER, and you have to sub out all of your gigs for the season.
- **Ugly!** You get blacklisted by all of the regional unions after stealing medicine from another musician's gig bag.

The Cutthroat

You were never quite talented enough to make it big. But you are tenacious enough. Nothing - literally nothing - will stand in your way. What you lack in musical ability you make up for in ruthlessness. You're not one to just roll over.

This show is nothing special, really. But upstaging these other big names? That's priceless. You've got everything to gain, and they've got everything to lose. People will look at you differently if you come out on top. You're not above violence.

Backstage Demeanor

Insult others to their face, but compliment them behind their backs.

Cutthroat Goal

Your goal is to get dirt on someone else, something that's strong enough to blackmail them. It's no good if they don't know you have the dirt or aren't afraid of it going public.

Cutthroat Feature

Once per game you can injure (not kill) someone. Tell them what you do to them. They must role-play the injury for the rest of the game. Don't forget that sometimes threats will do the trick as well.

As the Goat

When you're the Goat, do as you please or start fights.

After the Show

How the Cutthroat fares after the show depends on what happens during the game. After Act III concludes you'll narrate a short epilogue as a part of a montage based on two pieces of information found below. Embellish these items into a short vignette.

If you feel the two items don't quite fit together you are welcome to make adjustments as you like. Additionally, if you have a better idea that suits your outcome you can go with that instead.

Did the Cutthroat accomplish their Goal?

- **YES!** You rise to prominence after blackmailing several famous conductors.
- **NO!** You are hopelessly in debt to the mob.

What did the Cutthroat draw?

- **Good!** Turns out there isn't much of a difference between respect and fear - you are treated like a celebrity either way.
- **Bad!** People are afraid of you, and the only way you can get hired is by sniping others' gigs here and there.
- **Ugly!** Somebody you've crossed comes back for revenge - and gets it.

The Wreck

You're a natural talent, born for the stage. You've never even had to practice much. You are so brilliant that others are intimidated by you. That's the only possible reason you've never had much luck getting gigs.

This gig is your one chance because you aren't even supposed to be here. The personnel manager called the wrong person by mistake. They think you are someone else, and they haven't figured it out yet. You will never get another chance, so you'd better make this count.

Backstage Demeanor

Make excuses to others in person, but fess up behind their backs.

Wreck Goal

Your goal is to get someone to take the fall for some of your mistakes. They've got to take the heat for whatever it is and not rat you out until you're in the clear.

Wreck Feature

The truth is, well, you are completely clueless to how poor of a singer you actually are. You think you're hot stuff, but you are genuinely terrible and just don't know it. **Once per game you can biff it so bad that everyone else in the scenes screws up too.** Blame them for it on Intermission.

As the Goat

When you're the Goat, do as you please or stir up panic.

After the Show

How the Wreck fares after the show depends on what happens during the game. After Act III concludes you'll narrate a short epilogue as a part of a montage based on two pieces of information found below. Embellish these items into a short vignette.

If you feel the two items don't quite fit together you are welcome to make adjustments as you like. Additionally, if you have a better idea that suits your outcome you can go with that instead.

Did the Wreck accomplish their Goal?

- **YES!** You've got enough pity connections to keep you afloat for a while.
- **NO!** Time to relocate to a new city and start fresh. Again.

What did the Wreck draw?

- **Good!** You inexplicably land an incredible gig and everyone is baffled and jealous.
- **Bad!** You go back to music school for another performance certificate and much more debt.
- **Ugly!** You suffer a career-ending nervous breakdown on stage.

The Rookie

This is your first opera. You are an understudy to one of the other vocalists. You have an impressive resume with degrees from prestigious schools, but little professional experience. But now you've finally made it to the big leagues!

You are brand new to this, and though you are talented, it's a little much. You have a lot on the line because you have an otherwise spotless record. Not only that, your parents are so proud of you even though they never believed in you until now. If you prove to be a failure after all, they are going to cut you off financially. You may be a good singer, but you are still an amateur.

Backstage Demeanor

Act tough to others in person, but show respect to them behind their backs.

Rookie Goal

Your goal is to get a real gig from someone, and not some throw away holiday gig, either. Nothing shy of a solemn promise of a serious paycheck will do.

Rookie Feature

You often forget lines or directions, get confused, and make obvious mistakes. Sometimes come way out of left field, as though you are playing an entirely different scene. There's no limit on how you time your blunders, but don't overdo it.

As the Goat

When you're the Goat, do as you please or just break things.

After the Show

How the Rookie fares after the show depends on what happens during the game. After Act III concludes you'll narrate a short epilogue as a part of a montage based on two pieces of information found below. Embellish these items into a short vignette.

If you feel the two items don't quite fit together you are welcome to make adjustments as you like. Additionally, if you have a better idea that suits your outcome you can go with that instead.

Did the Rookie accomplish their Goal?

- **YES!** Broadway! And lots of performance anxiety medication.
- **NO!** You attend every church service in town leaving demo CDs, but never get any responses.

What did the Rookie draw?

- **Good!** Your alma mater names their music library after you on account of your exemplary success.
- **Bad!** You can't support yourself and have no choice but to move back in with your folks, who "told you so."
- **Ugly!** You get signed onto a contract you can't possibly fulfill. It's only a matter of time before you go down in flames.

The Burnout

You've enjoyed a modest career for quite a few years, and frankly, you're just over it. You don't have a passion for this any more. Maybe it was the insufferable people, maybe it's the industry, maybe you just don't care about opera any longer. Whatever it is it doesn't matter - this means nothing to you.

You've stayed for the paycheck, and because this is the only life you've known. But you are at the end of your rope. You don't want this opera to be a success - you want it to be a spectacular failure. At least it will give you something to laugh about. You're only a good singer when you feel like it.

Backstage Demeanor

Suck up to others to their face, but talk trash behind their backs.

Burnout Goal

Your goal is to get punched in the face by someone. You can't be asked perform with a black eye, and the union will help you get good representation.

Burnout Feature

Your pessimistic yet frank outlook is hard to ignore. Once per game you can convince another vocalist to believe whatever it is you're saying.

As the Goat

When you're the Goat, do as you please or offer practical, if unwanted advice.

After the Show

How the Burnout fares after the show depends on what happens during the game. After Act III concludes you'll narrate a short epilogue as a part of a montage based on two pieces of information found below. Embellish these items into a short vignette.

If you feel the two items don't quite fit together you are welcome to make adjustments as you like. Additionally, if you have a better idea that suits your outcome you can go with that instead.

Did the Burnout accomplish their Goal?

- **YES!** After the assault you get a most excellent settlement.
- **NO!** After filing many spurious claims with the union, when you finally goad someone into punching you, you lose your case and get counter-sued.

What did the Burnout draw?

- **Good!** You are the inside line for a scathing exposé on the famously disastrous performance of *La promessa della capra*.
- **Bad!** You leave the biz to work a dingy tanning salon.
- **Ugly!** You accidentally become an acclaimed vocalist and cannot justify turning down the money.

Ines Orbiana	Scipio Riego
Lucrezia Cornaro	Torquato Riego
Antonin Orbiana	“Enzo” / Beatrice Villegas
The Goat	The Rest

Ines Orbiana

Daughter of Antonin, in love with Scipio. She is held captive at home by her father. Antonin feeds her poison every day, making her kiss deadly. She is cunning and resentful of her father. She hatches a plot to elope with Scipio by escaping while disguised as the ghost of Lucrezia. *Wear the scarf, and when disguised as a ghost, wear a white cloth on your head as well.*

Scipio Riego

Grandson of Gretel, younger brother to Torquato, heir to the Riego estate, in love with Ines. Scipio accidentally killed Lucrezia in a hunting accident when he was young, and to be cursed ever since. He is considered an outcast because of this, and is very unlucky. *Wear the hunter's hat, and when you are impersonating Torquato, hold a wand as well.*

Lucrezia Cornaro

A ghost, formerly a nun, secret lover to Beatrice. Killed by Scipio in a hunting accident. Obsessed with tormenting those that have wronged her. Marries Scipio thinking he was remorseful, becomes extremely hurt and wrathful when she learns it was a mistake. Wields ghostly powers. Frequently spies on others. *Wear the nun's habit and a white cloth on your head at all times.*

Torquato Riego

Older brother to Scipio, heir to the Riego estate. Torquato believes he is a magician, but he is not. He is very naive. He believes the Goat outright. Torquato dies part way, and becomes a ghost with ghostly powers he attributes to him being "a magician." *Carry a wand, and when you're a ghost, wear a white cloth on your head as well.*

Antonin Orbiana

Head of the Orbiana estate, father to Ines. Constantly scheming. Has a plot to disguise himself as a salesman and goad someone into insulting him so he can execute them. Feeds Ines poison daily so that her kiss will be deadly, thus killing her future husband so he can seize their lands. *Wear the cape, and when disguised as a salesman, wear the fake mustache as well.*

"Enzo"/Beatrice Villegas

Formerly a nun and secret lover to Lucrezia. Beatrice was excommunicated for her affair with Lucrezia, but has since been masquerading as the late Father Enzo. As Enzo, Beatrice secretly advises both families. Beatrice is nearly blind, and mistakes the Goat for a Golden Goose. *Wear the cross necklace at all times.*

The Goat

A talking goat and compulsive liar. Your goal is to pit people against each other. Being the Goat is *la carte blanche* for doing just about anything. Use this to your vocalist's advantage. However, you should play this role somewhat seriously- there will be plenty of mayhem on stage as it is. *Wear the goat horns and dispense with your other props for the time being.*

The Rest

You got stuck with all of the unnamed bit parts. What a crock. You won't get any recognition, but you can step on stage in pretty much any role you want. That's convenient. Even so, try to pass this role off to someone else sooner rather than later.

Singing Basics

Recitative

- Exaggerated inflections
- Loose rhythm
- Speaking musically

Bel Canto

- Full-on singing
- Wide vibrato
- Has melody (sort of)

Making Music

- **Hold It Out** - *over the top*
- **Go Low** - *adds variety*
- **Get Soft** - *emotional shift*
- **Inch Up** - *increase tension*
- **Crawl Down** - *foreboding*
- **Leap Up or Down** - *adds expression, drama*
- **Repeat Yourself and Others** - *adds emphasis*
- **Don't Worry About the Words** - *go easy on yourself*
- **Use Your Body** - *your singing will follow suit*

Using the Motifs

- **Use the Emotion** - *pick the one that fits best*
- **Break It Up** - *use half of a motif*
- **Chain Them Together** - *repeat motif w/ above technique*
- **Mix Them Up** - *follow one motif with another*

La promessa della capra

-ACT I-

1. *Orbiana estate, Ines' room in tower, night time.* **Ines** and **Scipio** proclaim their love for each other. Scipio is in a tree outside her window and cannot quite reach her. Scipio mentions his curse. Scipio flees when **Antonin** arrives to give Ines her nightly poison.
2. *Oviedo Marketplace, busy street, middle of the day.* **Antonin**, disguised as a salesman, consults with **Enzo** about his scheme to trick any one of the **hapless market-goers or merchants** into insulting him so he can execute them. Enzo suggests marrying Ines to Torquato so that he will die, defeating the family and ending their feud.
3. *The forest outside of town, sunset.* **Beatrice** remembers her old lover, **Lucrezia**, who was killed in this spot by a hunter years ago. Lucrezia tries to speak with Beatrice, but Beatrice doesn't recognize her. **Torquato** arrives practicing magic unsuccessfully - Beatrice flees and Lucrezia hides. The **Goat** arrives and speaks with Torquato about treasure, Lucrezia witnesses the conversation.
4. *Riego estate, Gretel's chambers, night time.* **Lucrezia** takes revenge on **Gretel** Riego, killing her. **Enzo** arrives to convince Gretel to allow Torquato to marry Ines, gets no objection.
5. *Oviedo Marketplace, busy street, morning.* **Antonin**, still disguised as a salesman, finds **Torquato** introducing **Scipio** and other **market-goers and merchants** to the **Goat** and exclaiming the treasure. Antonin tells them of a "rumor" about the forthcoming marriage of Ines and Torquato. Scipio gets upset, Antonin seeks insults from the brothers but doesn't get one. Torquato leaves to meet his fiancée.
6. *Orbiana estate, dining hall, mid-day.* **Antonin**, no longer disguised, introduces **Ines** to **Torquato** and informs her of the marriage arrangement. Ines gets upset and storms off, to discover **Lucrezia** spying on them.
7. *Orbiana estate, Ines room in tower, night time.* **Scipio**, pretending to be **Torquato**, again in the tree, has brought **Enzo** to **Ines'** window. Ines convinces Enzo to marry them in the woods in secret at midnight. Ines declares her plan to sneak out disguised at the ghost of Lucrezia.
8. *The forest outside of town, night time.* **Torquato** is treasure hunting with the **Goat**. **Ines** disguised as Lucrezia encounters them. Torquato believes he's summoned the ghost, Ines lets him believe this. The Goat promises to lead her to her destination, but gets her lost instead.
9. *The forest outside of town, midnight.* **Scipio** and **Enzo** wait for **Ines**, but the real **Lucrezia** arrives instead. Neither of them realize that this isn't Ines. Enzo marries the couple. Lucrezia believes Scipio is remorseful for what happened, and the two disappear to consummate their marriage.

La promessa della capra

-ACT II-

1. *The forest outside of town, early morning.* **Torquato** and the **Goat** have discovered treasure (it's actually a dead bird that ate some marbles) when they encounter **Enzo**, returning home from the wedding. Enzo mistakes the Goat for the Golden Goose, and decides to follow until it lays an egg.
2. *The forest outside of town, morning.* **Ines** discovers **Scipio** and **Lucrezia** in each other's arms in a meadow. Ines is furious, Scipio realizes his mistake and chases after Ines. Lucrezia weeps.
3. *Oviedo Marketplace, busy street, morning.* **Ines**, disguised as Lucrezia, rushes into town and encounters **Antonin** disguised as a salesman, as well as other **passers-by**. Ines insults him savagely. Antonin is thrilled.
4. *Riego estate, Gretel's chambers, noon.* **Lucrezia**, pretending to be Gretel, summons **Scipio** to her chambers. She congratulates him on his marriage, saying she heard from Enzo, and insists that Scipio kiss her (Gretel's rotting corpse).
5. *The forest outside of town, mid-day.* **Torquato**, **Enzo**, and the **Goat** encounter some **goblins**. Torquato tries to impress them with his "treasure". The Goat and the goblins convince Torquato to climb a tree, and is struck by lightning cast by the angel **Baraqiel**. He dies instantly.
6. *Orbiana estate, dining hall, early evening.* **Enzo** brings the **Goat** to **Antonin**, insisting that it's the Golden Goose about to lay a golden egg. Antonin tells Enzo to fetch the one who insulted him. Enzo informs Antonin about Torquato's fate. Antonin believes this is a ruse, and declares war on the Riego estate.
7. *Orbiana estate, dining hall, evening.* The ghost of **Torquato** arrives to find **Antonin** waiting for the **Goat** to lay an egg. Antonin gets frightened and flees, Torquato releases the Goat to continue their treasure hunt.
8. *Oviedo Marketplace, busy street, evening.* **Scipio** finally catches up with **Ines**, but battle has broken out. **Lucrezia** helps the soldiers dispatch Scipio with her ghostly powers, and sees that Ines is captured to be taken back to Antonin and executed. Lucrezia is delighted.

La promessa della capra

-ACT III-

1. *Orbiana estate, dungeon, morning.* **Antonin** tickle tortures **Scipio** in a dungeon cell and enjoys it greatly. **Torquato's** ghost arrives with the **Goat** and scares Antonin away. Scipio denounces his brother on account of his love of Ines. Torquato is hurt and jealous, and leaves Scipio in the cell.
2. *Oviedo streets, late morning.* **Lucrezia** meets **Torquato** amidst the battle in the streets. Torquato is down, and Lucrezia cheers him up by terrorizing and killing people. They both talk about how Scipio has wronged them. They fall in love. The **Goat** wanders off as they stare into each other's eyes.
3. *Orbiana estate, dungeon, late morning.* **Antonin** visits **Ines** disguised as Lucrezia in her cell. Antonin describes her crime and her punishment, but seeing how she reminds him of his late wife, falls in love asks for her hand in marriage instead. It's that or execution.
4. *Oviedo streets, late morning.* **Enzo** is following the **Goat** ("Goose") through the carnage, still waiting for it to lay an egg. **Lucrezia** sees Beatrice and confronts her about the wedding. **Soldiers** around moan for help or peace from the priest but Enzo doesn't notice.
5. *Orbiana estate, dungeon, mid-day.* **Enzo** finds **Ines** in her cell and tells her how the wedding was all a mistake. Ines resolves to accept the marriage, but only if **Scipio** is watching.
6. *Oviedo streets, main square, afternoon.* **Antonin** calls off the war, declaring victory and instead holds his wedding to **Ines**. **Scipio** is watching from the crowd, all chained up, and furious but too injured to do anything. Antonin and Ines proclaim their love for one another, and she kisses him passionately. Antonin dies in agony from the poison.
7. *Oviedo streets, main square, evening.* The **Goat** finds **Scipio** still chained up and tells him about a wonderful treasure that **Torquato** never found, and that he is the ruler of the Riego estate. **Ines** arrives and releases him, informing him that they are free to be together and that with her father dead, she is the ruler of the Orbiana estate, though the war ruined the city. Scipio says not to worry because he knows of a marvelous treasure.
8. *Overture. No singing.* Players draw their After the Show tickets and begin to formulate their epilogues.
9. *Oviedo streets, sunset.* **Enzo** catches back with the **Goat**, **Scipio**, and **Ines**. The Goat finally reveals the treasure, defecating in Enzo's hands. **Torquato** and **Lucrezia** are rejoicing in how well they have ruined the lives of those that have wronged them. The Goat admits that there is no other treasure. Enzo, holding the Goat's poop, blesses both of Torquato and Lucrezia as they ascend to heaven, greeted by a **choir of angels**.

Maestro's Schedule

Briefing (5 min)

1. Introduce the scenario
 - a. Sing a bit
2. You'll play a vocalist with various roles in the opera
3. Don't need to sing well, do need to sing big
4. You'll move around a lot

Masterclass (10-15 min)

1. Recitative, player intros
2. Tiger Face/Sour Lemon, Chewing Taffy
3. "Red Leather Yellow Leather"
4. Siren
5. Bel Canto, Happy Birthday
6. Motifs, demo by stating emotion
7. Singing Techniques
Each player uses the motifs to demo one of the following while answering the prompt:
 - a. *Hold It Out*: tell us about your favorite color
 - b. *Go Low*: tell us about your favorite food
 - c. *Get Soft*: tell us about your favorite book
 - d. *Inch Up/Crawl Down*: Tell us about your favorite movie - ask them to express with body movement as well
 - e. *Leap Up/Down*: Tell us about your favorite animal - ask them to overdo the body movement

Casting (10 min)

1. Vocalists
 - a. Players peruse and select
 - b. Name tags
2. Characters
 - a. Players read out loud and select
 - b. Roles can change, the Goat is shared
 - c. Color coded opera summary
 - d. Badges and props

Rehearsal (5 min)

1. Pass the introduction, introduce the vocalists while leaving breaks to pass to others
2. *Aria and Greek Chorus*: One player sings about something they did yesterday, others interrupt by repeating words

The Opera (75 - 100 min)

1. Backstage (5 min)
2. Act I (15 - 20 min)
3. Player break (5 min)
4. Intermission (5 min)
5. Act II (15 - 20 min)
6. Player break (5 min)
7. Intermission (5 min)
8. Act III (15 - 20 min)
9. Curtains (5 min)

Debriefing (5 - 10 min)

1. Thank you
2. Highlights

Troubleshooting

- Pick up the pace
- Physical directions
- Musical directions
- Call for an Aria from strong player
- Privately admonish them
- Privately request a scene steal
- Privately request Feature

