

THE ELEMENTS OF OPERA

OVERTURE

Musical introduction played by the orchestra that often consists of melodies from the opera.

ACT 1

A group of scenes with a common theme, such as a specific time or place.

ARIA

A piece sung by one person. Arias allow singers to “show off” while reflecting on their emotions.

CHORUS

A passage sung by a group of people. The chorus may sing on or off stage.

DUET

A passage sung by two people.

TRIO

A passage sung by 3 people.

RECITATIVE

Speech like singing that advances the plot and fills spaces between arias and choruses.

INTERMISSION

ACT 2

After intermission, there is another act comprised of the same elements as the first (arias, choruses, duets, trios and recitatives). In some operas, there are as many as 5 acts and 4 intermissions!

FINALE

The last piece of music performed in the opera. It is often sung by the entire cast and contains parts of arias already sung in the opera.

CURTAIN CALL

After the finale, the singers come back onto the stage and the orchestra stands to take bows. The audience shows its appreciation by clapping and cheering “Bravo!”