

The cover features a stylized illustration of Figaro, the barber, in a dynamic pose. He is depicted in a warm, golden-yellow color, wearing a ruffled shirt and a cravat. He holds a pair of scissors in his right hand, poised to cut. The background is a deep blue, showing a classical building facade with an arched doorway and a balcony with ornate railings. The overall style is graphic and artistic.

ROSSINI

THE BARBER OF  
*Seville*

*IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA*

STUDENT & FAMILY GUIDE

# TOC

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## Get There

**Visiting Center City doesn't have to be a tough trip.**

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Performing Arts  
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**Ride.** Hop on the  
Lynx Lightrail.  
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**Drive.** Directions  
from door to door  
[here](#).

**Park.** Participating  
garages are just \$5.  
Find details [here](#).

# The Belk Theater

Make any seat in the house the best one

Attending an opera in the Belk Theater is an experience not to be forgotten. The performance you are attending is the **final dress rehearsal** in which the cast performs one last full run through of the opera before opening night. Just like a regular performance, there will be an intermission(s) between acts.

Upon entering the theater, notice the production crew's station in the orchestra level seating (the lowest level of seating). The crew is set up with computers and headsets to allow them to communicate with people backstage to ensure that the performance runs smoothly. During this final rehearsal they will be making sure all cues and technical features of the performance are in place. Also notice the supertitles (English translations of the lyrics

being sung) that are projected onto a screen above the stage.

Please remember that this is a **working performance** and the performers on stage are very aware of their audience, especially a distracting audience. The polite audience member should always refrain from talking and stay seated during a performance. Nothing shows more respect and appreciation for the performers on stage than giving them your full attention.

## Shout it Out

Give a shout out to the cast after a beautiful aria or at the end of the evening – literally! Shout **"Bravi!"** for a job well done to the whole cast, **"Brava!"** to the diva who aced it, or **"Bravo!"** to the guy who left it all on the stage.

# Opera Carolina

## Invested in our community and its life.



### Then, now, & years from now

Let's take a journey back to 1948: the Charlotte Music Club is formed by a handful of arts enthusiasts who realize that Charlotte's artistic landscape -but more importantly, cultural community- would be enhanced by opera performances. Fast forward to today: Opera Carolina is a 67 year-old company that's still blossoming, hitting new highs with each season of glorious music, drama, and all that encompasses the operatic art form. Your resident Opera continues to bring high-quality standards of the operatic repertoire to stages near you, but is also continually striving to perform lesser-known gems.

What does our future hold? A rich commitment to our community -which we take seriously- to continue enriching the lives of citizens from all walks of life; a continual quest to produce excellent opera from all eras on our stage; and, most importantly, to connect our community.

### The people

In the early days of Opera Carolina, volunteers designed the sets, built costumes, sang in the chorus, filled leading roles and, of course, sold tickets and held fundraisers to support the company.

Now a fully professional company that not only produces Opera performances on a big scale but also travels programs into local schools and community venues, we never forget the legacy of the original volunteers who made this company the what it is today. Opera Carolina is rooted in the Carolinas; 90%

of our company live and work right here in our region, complimenting the international artists who join the resident company to perform on our mainstage. We guess you can say we've got Carolina on our mind.

### The House

If the paragraphs before didn't sell you on our commitment to our community, maybe information on the Opera Center will. We may be 67 years old, but we've just moved out on our own. Opera Carolina now resides in the historic Biberstein house, in the Elizabeth neighborhood. The last remaining historic home in the Uptown radius, Opera Carolina's new digs are as much a part of the community as is the company.

Built in 1906, the Biberstein House was designed and lived in by R. C. Biberstein, one of the noted mill architects of the Southeast. Mr. Biberstein is credited with building many of the mills in the Charlotte region, including the Highland Park #3 mill. Mr. Biberstein eventually moved his business into this house, his talents and self-designed home playing a role in the New South Industrial movement. Today, the home is registered as a Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmark.

The house has since been adapted into offices and is now the proud home of Opera Carolina. The Opera Center hosts the company's administrative offices but also serves as space for auditions, recitals, and more. ***Our doors are always open.***



# THE BARBER OF *Seville* IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA

If you think opera is nothing but drama and death, you haven't seen Rossini's comic masterpiece. But you've undoubtedly heard its music. Both [Bugs Bunny](#) and [Woody Woodpecker](#) sampled its songs.

With slapstick antics that rival The Three Stooges, it's a madcap story involving disguises, false identities, and a busybody, matchmaking barber.



# 40

operas written

“Every kind of music is good, except the boring kind.”



## Gioachino Rossini (1792 – 1868)

*Master of Music*

(10 minutes)

When we hear the title *The Barber of Seville* often comes to mind Bugs Bunny and Elmer Fudd. But much credit is due to the composer of perhaps the most famous comedic opera of all time.

Born on Leap Day, 1792 in the Italian town of Pesaro, Gioachino Rossini came by his musical talents honestly, his father a horn player and his mother a singer. As a child – and like so many other famous composers – Rossini learned to play piano and other instruments and began composing music before he went to conservatory in Bologna at age 15. Once in Bologna, he worked as a theater musician while he studied and composed. By the age of 18, he had already written 10 operas; just 3 years later, he had his first real success with his serious opera *Tancredi* (1813). Just 3 more years later, his *The Barber of Seville* was written. Between 1808 and 1829, he wrote a total of 40 operas, and he abruptly stopped writing operas following the success of his final opera, *Guillaume Tell*, though he continued to write sacred music.

Rossini was known for his uncanny speed at writing operas – it is said he wrote *The Barber of Seville* in just 3 weeks! He was also known for borrowing his own music

and using it in other operas; the famous overture to *Barber* was originally written for his earlier opera *Aureliano in Palmira*. Aside from borrowing his own music, Rossini is also known for his simple melodies, variety of rhythms, musical energy and wit, and providing structure to the Italian art form of opera that his contemporaries such as Donizetti, Bellini, and others would adopt and adhere. Rossini's operatic music is notoriously difficult to sing, requiring the finest singers with agile voices to produce the showy, embellished passages and energy of his composing.

Rossini's personality is often painted as lacking initiative and overly jovial and indulgent, but he actually held a balance of laxness and reserve that can be seen in his body of musical works. It is only in recent history that Rossini's character and compositions are being reexamined and given due credit – from the comic operas to the serious.

# *The Barber of Seville*

## COMEDY WITH A PURPOSE

Using humor and irony to criticize and draw attention to issues in society is known as **satire**. Satire has been used throughout history and across cultures, to expose social inequalities and injustices, all while getting a laugh.

The opera, *The Barber of Seville*, is based on a play by the same name, which was written in France 40 years earlier. The play and the opera poke fun at the absurdity of the aristocracy and cast Figaro, the commoner, as the person who solves problems using his wit.

**"The original was kind of a criticism of society. I think people today still enjoy that part of the opera -- the fact that all the educated, sophisticated people can't really handle themselves, and they need Figaro, someone less educated, to help them get what they want."**

**- Pablo Elvira, baritone**

Citation: [http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/1988-02-26/lifestyle/0020170216\\_1\\_figaro-opera-barber-of-seville](http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/1988-02-26/lifestyle/0020170216_1_figaro-opera-barber-of-seville)

- What are some examples of television shows, youtube videos, or other forms of media that use humor to make fun of something serious? What kinds of topics does it deal with?
- Do you think humor is effective for this purpose? Why or why not?

# SYNOPSIS OF THE OPERA

Becoming familiar with the opera's story will make for a great evening in the theater. Use the Who's Who chart on page 10 to keep everyone straight!

## THE STORY IN SHORT

A nobleman, Count Almaviva, with the help of the town Barber, Figaro, outsmarts Dr. Bartolo and his sidekick, Don Basilio, in order to free Rosina from Bartolo's captivity and marry her.

## ACT I

*It starts with a serenade.*

Count Almaviva comes, in his first disguise (Lindoro), to the house of the elderly Dr. Bartolo to serenade Bartolo's young ward, Rosina. Dr. Bartolo intends to marry Rosina, and he's confined her to his house.

Figaro, the **titular** barber, has access to the homes of Seville's elite. He knows the town's secrets and scandals.

He arrives at Dr. Bartolo's home and pledges his help to Count Almaviva, who takes on the persona of "Lindoro," a poor student who hopes young Rosina will love him not because he's a nobleman, but for himself. To enter Bartolo's house, Figaro devises a plan: The Count will disguise himself as a drunken soldier with orders to be quartered at Dr. Bartolo's. Then, he can declare his love for Rosina.

*Team Almaviva is born.*

*Rosina dreams of love, Dr. Bartolo moves up the wedding.*

Alone in the house, Rosina reflects on the voice that has enchanted her and resolves to use her considerable charm to meet this "Lindoro" who has serenaded her. Dr. Bartolo enters with Rosina's music master, Don Basilio, who warns him that Count Almaviva has been seen in Seville. Dr. Bartolo decides to marry Rosina immediately – before any other suitor can have her. Figaro overhears this, warns Rosina and promises to deliver a letter from her to "Lindoro."

Almaviva, disguised as a drunken soldier, passes Rosina a note, which

she manages to hide from Dr. Bartolo, who argues that he has exemption from housing soldiers. An argument ensues between the Count and Dr. Bartolo.

*"Drunk soldier" delivers a love letter.*

Figaro enters and announces that a curious crowd has gathered in the street. The city guards burst in to arrest the drunk and disorderly soldier. The Count quietly reveals his true identity to the captain of the guards. He's released, to Dr. Bartolo's **chagrin** and everyone's amazement.

## ACT II

### ***“Young Music Teacher” fills in for Don Basilio***

Dr. Bartolo, alone in his study, suspects the “drunken soldier” was a spy. The Count returns, this time disguised as “Don Alonso,” a music teacher and student of Don Basilio. He says Don Basilio is at home sick, so he’s come to give Rosina her music lesson instead of Basilio. “Don Alonso” tells Dr. Bartolo he’s staying at the same inn as Almaviva and has found Rosina’s letter. He offers to tell Rosina it was given to him by another woman, proving “Lindoro” is toying with her. This convinces Dr. Bartolo that “Don Alonso” is a true student of Don Basilio, and he allows him to give Rosina her music lesson.

### ***The Barber helps Count Almaviva trick Basilio & Bartolo***

Figaro arrives to give Dr. Bartolo his shave and manages to snatch the key that opens the balcony shutters. The shaving is about to begin when Don Basilio shows up looking perfectly healthy. To get the meddlesome Basilio out of the way, Figaro convinces him he has scarlet fever and should go to bed at once. With Basilio out of the way, the shaving begins and Figaro distracts Dr. Bartolo from hearing Almaviva plotting with Rosina to elope that night. But Dr. Bartolo hears the phrase “my disguise” and realizes he’s been tricked again.

### ***Rosina despairs and agrees to marry Bartolo***

Later that evening, Basilio is summoned by Dr. Bartolo and is told to bring a notary so Rosina and Bartolo can be married. Dr. Bartolo then shows Rosina her letter to Lindoro as proof that Lindoro is tricking her. Convinced she’s been deceived, she agrees to marry Dr. Bartolo and tells him of the plan to elope with Lindoro.

### ***The Barber bribes Don Basilio***

After a thunderstorm, Figaro and the Count climb over the wall into Bartolo’s house. Rosina is furious with them, until Almaviva reveals his identity and professes his love for her. Basilio arrives with the notary. Bribing and threatening him, Basilio agrees to be a witness to the marriage of Rosina and Count Almaviva.

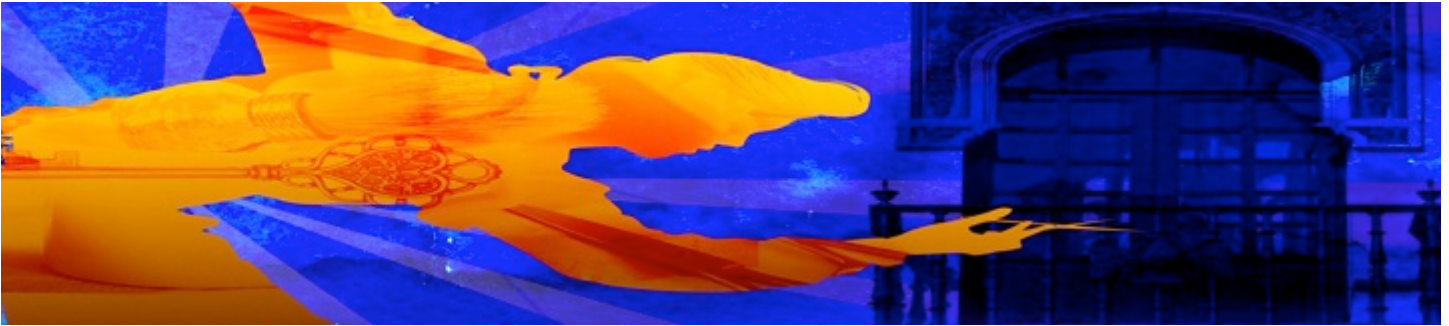
### ***Happy ending for Almaviva and Rosina, thanks to the Barber***

Dr. Bartolo arrives with soldiers, but it’s too late. Count Almaviva explains tells Dr. Bartolo that it’s useless to protest, and Dr. Bartolo accepts he has been beaten. Figaro, Rosina and the Count celebrate their good fortune.

Keep Your Ears Perked

# BIG HITS TO LISTEN FOR

Take a listen to the musical numbers below – some of opera's most iconic music. You don't want to miss them during the live performance!



## Overture (instrumental)

Famously used as music for the Bugs Bunny cartoon, *Rabbit of Seville*, this is the orchestral piece at the beginning of the opera which serves as the introduction, or ***overture***.

## Largo al Factotum (Baritone) (to 1:38)

This is an ***aria***, or opera solo, for a ***baritone*** singer. A baritone is a male singer with a low voice. A *bass* voice is the lowest, deepest voice. This is arguably the most famous opera song of all times.

## Una voce poco fa (Soprano) (to 1:29)

This piece is an ***aria*** written for a ***soprano*** singer, or a female singer with a very high voice. It is a specific type of soprano part called a ***coloratura***, which means that it has very difficult and ornate melody lines. Listen to the way the soprano in this recording sings a lot of notes really quickly.

## Ma Signor (ensemble) (to 0:59)

This piece is for an ***ensemble***, or a group of singers. It is an example of the kinds of “vocal gymnastics” Rossini is known for.

## Di si felice innesto (ensemble) (to end)

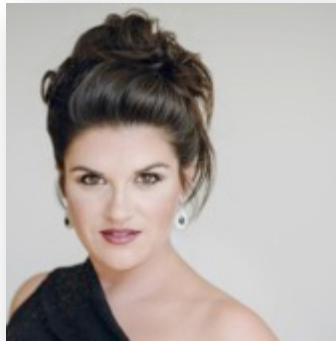
This is the ***finale*** of the opera, meaning it is from the closing scene. Rossini was known for his grand finales.

# Worksheet

## Who's Who in *The Barber of Seville*

As you read the synopsis, draw and label lines between the characters to illustrate the relationships between them. For example, between Rosina and Count Almaviva you might draw a line and label it with hearts to illustrate that they are in love.

**Rosina**



**Count Almaviva**



**Dr. Bartolo**



**Lindoro**

**Don Alonso**

**Figaro**



**Don Basilio**



