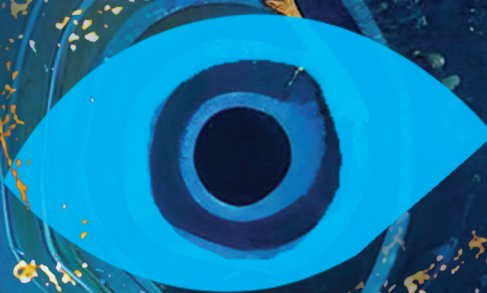


LYRIC UNLIMITED  
LEARNING & CREATIVE  
ENGAGEMENT

*Lyric*  
OPERA OF  
CHICAGO

# JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS





# WELCOME

In this edition of Lyric Opera of Chicago's *Backstage Pass!* you'll learn about the world of opera and this production of *Jason and the Argonauts*.

**op-er-a (noun)** A story told through music with singing, acting, movement, scenery, costumes, and other art forms.



*All photography by Todd Rosenberg*



**When you watch the opera, see how many old items have been reused to make the set and costumes. Keep your eyes out for plastic bottles, sticks and twigs, fishing nets, and a bicycle wheel!**

## WHAT TO EXPECT

- The performance will last 45 minutes
- This opera is sung in English
- Our show requires you to be a quiet listener, but you can clap and cheer loudly at the end

## LOOK FOR

- Scenery, props, and costumes that help tell the story
- Performers changing costumes quickly and playing many characters

## LISTEN FOR

- People singing their stories
- Different kinds of voices, from high (soprano) to low (baritone)
- Different sounds from the singers and piano: high, low, loud, and quiet

# JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS

*An opera for young people*

**Music by Gregory Spears**

**Libretto by Kathryn Walat**

**Jason,** *Ace Gangoso*

**Female Narrator, Atalanta, Siren, Medea, Lamb,** *Isobel Anthony*

**Chiron, King Pelias, King Aeetes, Dragon,** *Peter Morgan*

**Male Narrator, Orpheus,** *Samuel J. Dewese*

**Music Supervisor, Harpsichord,** *Laurann Gilley*

**Violin,** *Diane Duraffourg-Robinson*

**Viola,** *Mira Williams*

**Cello,** *Kerena Fox*

**Original Director,** *E. Loren Meeker*

**Revival Director,** *Rose Freeman*

**Set Designer,** *Joe Schermoly*

**Costume Designer,** *Theresa Ham*

**Assistant Director,** *Luther Lewis III*

**Stage Manager,** *Gemma DeCetra*

**Tour Manager,** *Mari DeOleo*

**Lead Sponsor**



**With major support from the**

Nancy W. Knowles Student and Family Performance Fund

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# OPERA STARTS WITH A STORY

## THE STORY OF THE OPERA

**L**ong ago in a magical world, Jason is raised in the forest by the centaur Chiron. Wise Chiron plays music and teaches him about nature and the animals, but Jason is impatient to become a hero. When Jason turns 19, he learns that his uncle Pelias took the throne that should be his.

Jason goes to reclaim his throne, but King Pelias says he will give it up only if Jason brings him the Golden Fleece. Jason builds the ship Argo, and with his crew, the Argonauts, he sets sail on his quest.

On their voyage, Jason and the Argonauts face deadly dangers. They sail between sharp, treacherous rocks that snap shut to crush passing ships, and they resist the enchanting song of the evil Siren.

They arrive at Colchis, where King Aeetes has the Golden Fleece. Jason and the king's daughter Medea fall in love, and she helps him get the Golden Fleece. But just as they are about to leave, they discover the golden Lamb, held captive by King Aeetes. Jason must learn that becoming a true hero means respecting nature. Will he make the right choice?





# MEET THE CHARACTERS

## DID YOU KNOW:

A person can play many characters in one performance? The singers in this opera act as different heroes and villains, with the help of costume changes and puppets!

## CHARACTERS AND IMPORTANT WORDS

**Ancestors** are family members that lived a long time ago.

**The Argonauts** are the crew of Jason's ship, the Argo.

**Atalanta**, like Jason, grew up in the forest. A mighty bear raised her, and she can hunt and fight as a bear does.

**Centaurs** are make-believe creatures with the top half of a person, and the bottom half of a horse. Chiron is a centaur!

**Chiron** (*KAI-ron*) is Jason's friend and teacher. Chiron teaches Jason about being a true hero.

**The Dragon** guards the Golden Fleece and never sleeps. He really, really needs a nap.

**The Golden Fleece** is a coat made of solid gold wool that King Pelias wants. The solid gold wool of The Golden Fleece comes from the Lamb!

**Jason** is the rightful king, raised in the forest by Chiron. Jason becomes a hero, which is a person who shows great courage, wisdom, and nobility.

**King Aeetes** (*eh-EE-tes*) is the king of Colchis, on the other side of the sea. He has the Golden Fleece.

**King Pelias** is Jason's uncle. He took the throne from Jason's father.

**The Lamb** is the magical source of the Golden Fleece. It is held captive by King Aeetes.

**Medea** is the daughter of King Aeetes. She's also a powerful sorceress.

**Orpheus** (*OR-fee-is*) is a musician. His music has powerful magic.

**The Oracle** is a person who uses magic to tell the future.

**Overthrow** means to take something from someone else by using force. Jason's father is overthrown as king by his uncle, Pelias.

**Siren** is beautiful but very dangerous. Her enchanted song lures sailors so close to shore that they wreck their ships.



# TRIALS AND OUTCOMES

Jason's adventure is full of **trials**: *hard tests that a person has to go through to get to a goal*. Jason's friend and teacher Chiron tells him to use the patience of a deer, swiftness of a bird, wisdom of a bear, and the help of his team, the Argonauts, throughout his journey.

## MATCHING GAME

Can you guess how Jason and the Argonauts make it through each trial?

**Draw a line connecting each trial on the left with the best solution on the right.**

After the performance, come back to this page and see if you guessed right!

TRIALS	SOLUTIONS
Jason's boat, the Argo, is too big to set sail.	<input type="radio"/> Orpheus and his friends sing an even louder song to pass her safely!
Snapping rocks try to smash the Argo.	<input type="radio"/> Medea gives Jason a potion that protects him from fire.
A siren tries to trick the Argonauts with her song.	<input type="radio"/> The Argonauts sing a soft lullaby about nature to lull him to sleep.
King Aeetes asks Jason to plant dragon teeth with the help of fire-breathing bulls.	<input type="radio"/> The Argonauts take the Golden Lamb home with them, and give it a green field to live in.
The planted dragon teeth make angry skeletons grow from the ground.	<input type="radio"/> Orpheus uses the power of music to help the Argonauts start their trip across the sea.
A dragon is guarding the Lamb with its Golden Fleece. He hasn't slept in 50 years!	<input type="radio"/> Jason throws a rock to distract the skeletons.
The Golden Lamb wants to be set free.	<input type="radio"/> The Argo follows a swift little bird through the rocks to safety.



# USING YOUR VOICE

Opera is full of different voice types! These different voice types can help give life and special traits to the characters on stage. Here are the voice types usually found in opera, and words that are sometimes used to describe them.

## SOPRANO

The highest voice type in opera—when people sing together in harmony, sopranos usually sing the highest note! A soprano's voice may be called shiny, bright, and youthful, and may make you think of flutes or birdsongs!

## MEZZO SOPRANO

The second highest voice type in opera—a mezzo soprano sings some of the high notes of a soprano, with more notes in the lower or middle of their range. A mezzo soprano's voice may be called warm, round, or smooth, and may make you think of clarinets!

## TENOR

The middle voice in opera—when people sing in harmony, the tenors often sing in the middle! A tenor's voice may be called pointy, sharp, or crisp, and may make you think of trumpets!

## BARITONE

The second lowest voice type in opera—a baritone may sing some of the highs of a tenor, and some of the lows of a bass. A baritone's voice may be called mellow, moody, or rich, and may make you think of cellos!

## BASS

The lowest voice type in opera—when people sing in harmony, the basses often sing the lowest note! A bass' voice may be called rumbling, spooky, or strong, and may make you think of an upright bass!



# MAKING THE OPERA HAPPEN

## STORY

Someone, usually a librettist or composer, finds a story that would make a good opera. The story can be from literature, myths or fairytales, or from historical or current events. It can even be completely made up! *Jason and the Argonauts* is inspired by a Greek myth—a traditional story typically involving supernatural beings or events.

## LIBRETTIST & COMPOSER

The **librettist** is a writer who turns the story into a script, like a play. In opera, the script is called the libretto.

The **composer** writes the music in a way that best tells the story. The written-out music (with the words of the libretto) is called the score. The composer for *Jason and the Argonauts* is Gregory Spears, and the librettist is Kathryn Walat.

## DESIGNERS

The designers work with the director on how the opera will look and how its story will be told. They create the scenery (or set) and costumes.

## STAGE DIRECTOR

The stage director decides how the opera will look and be acted out onstage. The designers and the performers bring the director's ideas to life.

## STAGE MANAGER

Through signals and whispered commands backstage, the stage manager controls everything that happens onstage during a performance.



(Above) Original costume sketches for *Jason and the Argonauts* show depictions of Atalanta, Jason, Orpheus, and the Centaur.



## MUSIC SUPERVISOR

Like a conductor, the music supervisor leads music rehearsals and the performances. In *Jason and the Argonauts*, the music supervisor also plays the keyboard at each performance.

## INSTRUMENTALISTS

The instrumentalists are musicians that play the music written by the composer to fit the story. A composer may write for all sorts of instruments depending on the opera—they might write only for one instrument, or for a whole orchestra!

## STAGEHANDS

The stagehands support everyone in an opera by making sure the stage is ready for the show! Stagehands help bring in the items important to tell an opera's story, like stage elements, costumes, and the objects that characters use in a show.

## CAST

The cast includes all of the singers who perform the opera.

## AUDIENCE

The audience is YOU. What would a show be without an audience? That's when everybody's hard work pays off!





# WHO MAKES THE OPERA HAPPEN?

1. I design the clothes singers wear in the opera.  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. I control everything that happens onstage during a performance.  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. We are the singers who perform the opera.  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. I decide how the opera should look and be acted onstage.  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. We play the music on instruments.  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. I lead music rehearsals and the performances. I may also play one of the instruments.  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. I design the look of the scenery or set.  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. We help behind the scenes to move props, scenery, and equipment.  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. We write the words and the music of an opera.  
\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

Create your own drawing of the people responsible for each job at the opera!





# RECYCLABLE ARTIFACTS

*Jason and the Argonauts* takes the ancient Greek myth of our hero Jason and gives it new life by adding new music and modern words, art, and jokes! In the same way that we can pass down old stories and make them new, the creators of *Jason and the Argonauts* decided to tell the “recycled” story of Jason and his friends

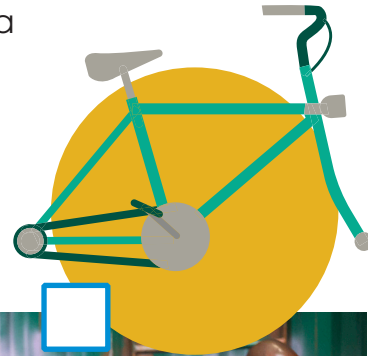
with recycled items! In this opera, you’ll see items that you may find in your home, like coffee cans and bicycle wheels. While these things may have already been used for their original purpose, imagination gives them new life in these shows! Can you spot some of the everyday items in this show? Be on the lookout for:



a bike helmet

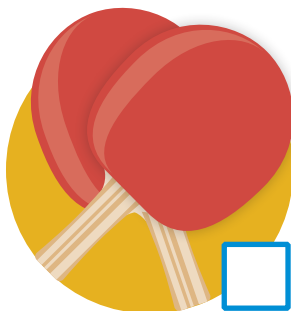


the base of a rolling chair



the back half of a bicycle

a classroom chair



ping pong paddles

ice cube trays



The centaur from *Jason and the Argonauts* is made of recycled items.

# GRAFFITI COMPARISON

**W**hile *Jason and the Argonauts* uses recycled materials to put a new spin on a Greek classic, it also uses new kinds of art! The makers of *Jason and the Argonauts* again decided to mix together older art with art you may see everyday in Chicago. The largest part of the *Jason and the Argonauts* set is a blue “ship”ping container that combines ancient Greek art forms (like statues) with a kind of art you probably see a lot of today—graffiti! Believe it or not, graffiti was also found in ancient Greek cities. While it may not have looked like the graffiti we see in our neighborhoods today, people still expressed themselves with city art!

**At first glance, these two pictures may appear to be the same—if you look a little closer, though, you may see seven differences!**





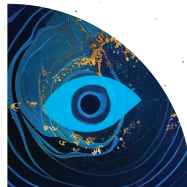
# ADVENTURE AWAITS

Now it's time for you to go on an adventure! Gather your team (or play by yourself) and get ready to sail across the sea and solve problems, just like Jason and his friends!

To play this game, all you need is a coin and something small to represent each team or individual player on the board (erasers or paper clips would work!).

**START**

What is the name of Jason's ship?



Your boat is too big to set sail—sing a fast song to get it moving!

Which of the Argonauts was raised in a forest, and can hunt like a bear?



Chiron has the legs of a horse and the body of a man. Pretend to walk with horse legs!

Which Argonaut is a musician?

Ah, skeletons! Chatter your teeth and rattle your bones like a skeleton to scare them off!

It's a sunny, calm day at sea—skip ahead 3 squares!

What is the name of the King of Colchis?

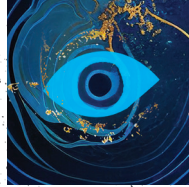


Oh no, your shoe fell into the water! Go back 2 squares to grab it.

What is the name of the powerful sorceress who helps Jason?

A true hero is kind to nature—think of a way you can be nice to nature!

Hooray, you have saved the Golden Lamb! Give your team (or yourself) a high five!



This dragon could use a nap! Sing it a lullaby.

The dragon is asleep—snore like a sleepy dragon!



The bulls' fire sure is hot! Name 3 cold things before you move on.

A hero must be patient—take 5 deep breaths before moving on.

How old is Jason when he starts his adventure?

Look, a siren! Do a happy song and dance to pass her!

There are snapping rocks ahead! Flap like a bird to fly over them!

What is the name of Jason's uncle?



## HOW TO PLAY

**Begin your adventure at the 'start' square, and flip the coin to see how many squares you can move forward—if you land on heads, move forward 2 squares. If you land on tails, move forward 1 square.**

When you land on a square with an activity, make sure you follow instructions like Jason to do the action or answer the question. If you get stuck on a question, flip through this book to help you along the way!

**Take turns flipping the coin, completing each action, and moving through your epic journey.**

**Race to the finish to save the Golden Lamb from the dragon's cave!**



If you land on a space with the sacred eye, you're safe—take a rest!





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