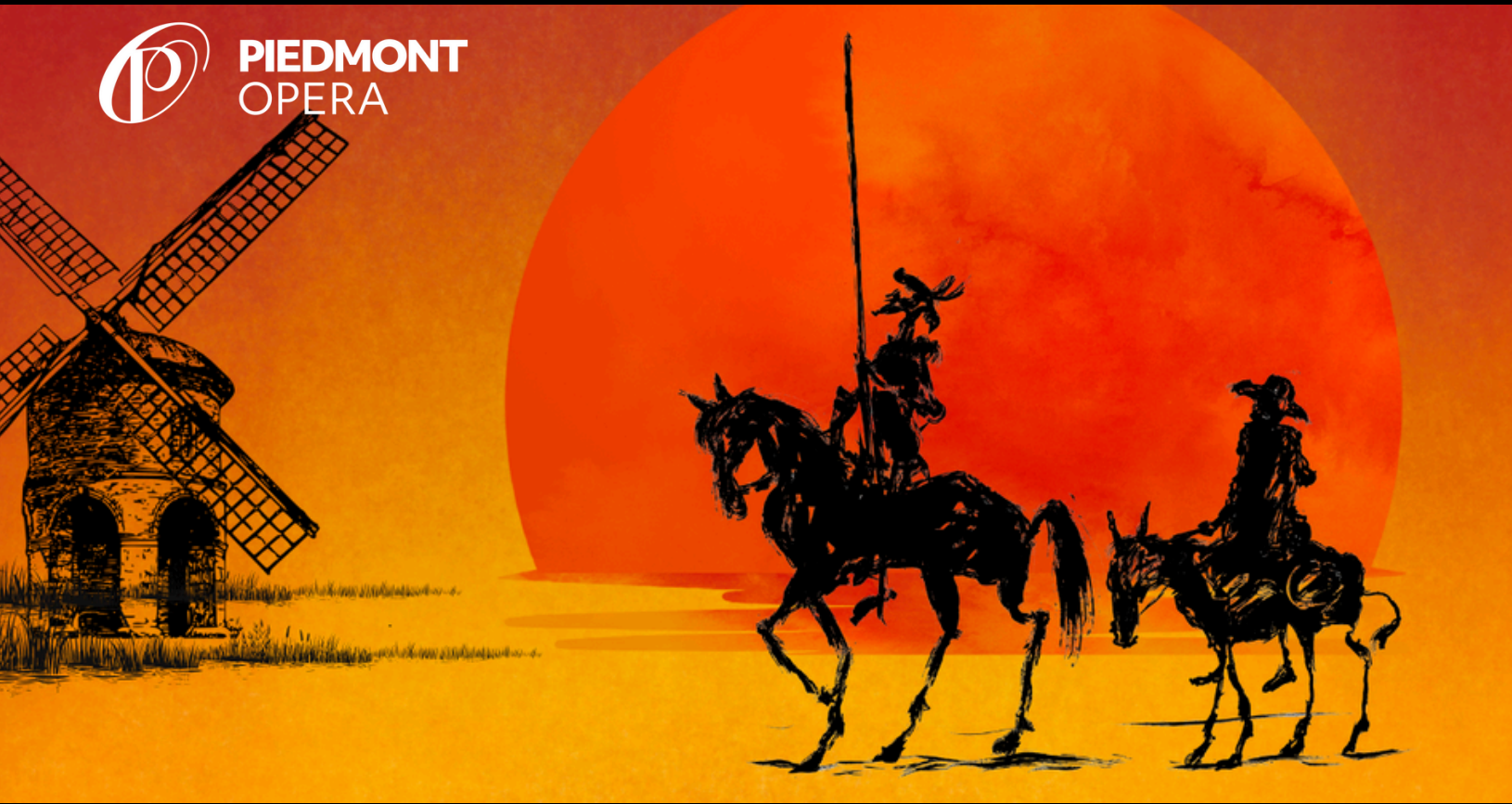


This show contains adult situations and violence and is not recommended for younger audiences.

STUDY GUIDE FOR GRADE 6 - ADULT

Developed by Piedmont Opera 2025



Man of La Mancha

Written by **DALE WASSERMAN**

Music by **MITCH LEIGH** Lyrics by **JOE DARION**

Original Production Directed by **ALBERT MARRE**

Based on the Spanish novel *Don Quixote* by Miguel de Cervantes

MAN OF LA MANCHA is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Tams-Witmark LLC.
www.concordtheatricals.com

STUDENT NIGHT, FRIDAY, MARCH 21

OPENING DAY, SUNDAY, MARCH 23

WEEKDAY NIGHT, TUESDAY, MARCH 25

CLOSING PERFORMANCE, FRIDAY, MARCH 28

Please take time to review before your visit to help manage expectations and to establish or reinforce good theatre etiquette.

Before the Performance

Arrival

We recommend that you arrive at the theatre at least 30 minutes before the performance time allowing you to park, have your ticket scanned, and use the restroom. Please try to be in your seat at least 5 minutes before the performance begins.

Seating

There are ***no assigned seats for Student Night***, so you can sit in any available seat. Seats ***are*** assigned for all other performances, and an usher will be happy to help you find your seat. Chaperones should disperse themselves among the students for sufficient supervision. We ask that you remain in your seat unless you have an emergency - it's not ok to come and go. If you do have to leave, when you come back, we may ask you to take a seat in the back to avoid disrupting other audience members. Don't switch seats with your friends and please, do not put your feet up on the seats or armrests.

Cell Phones and Other Electronics

Please turn off your cell phone and all other devices that could potentially make noise - not on *airplane mode*, not on *vibrate*, not on *do not disturb*, but completely off. A notification or an alert can derail a performance and having a phone out during a live performance is inconsiderate and distracting to others.

During the Performance

Pictures, Audio, and Video

We want you to be in the present moment and enjoy this experience! Not only is having a phone out a disservice to you, it's terribly distracting to other audience members, and it's actually illegal to photograph or record a copyrighted show (copyright infringement). It's ok before the show starts and when the show ends, but not at all during the show. Your phone should be off. Piedmont Opera will have professional photos on Instagram for you to view and share.

Eating and Drinking

Food and beverages from outside the theatre are not allowed. Some concessions may be for sale before the show and during intermission. High Point Theatre allows food and beverages in the theatre, but please be aware that the sounds of wrappers, chewing, and drinking are amplified in a theatre space. Just because you CAN do something doesn't mean you SHOULD. We would rather you didn't, but if you do, please be mindful of the noise you're making. And remember to throw away your trash.

Talking

It's ok to react appropriately to a character's actions (laugh at the funny, gasp at the surprising, cry with the sad, etc.). We encourage you to clap and cheer at the end of songs to let the artists know how much you appreciate their performance. However, it is not ok to talk or sing along. This is very distracting, and others have come to hear the singers and musicians, not a fellow audience member.

During Intermission

Take a Break

This is the time to use the restroom, get a snack (if concessions are available), and talk to your friends and family. You can turn on and use your phone as long as you remember to turn it back off. When the lobby lights flicker that means you need to return to your seat in the theater.

After the Performance

Applaud!

It is customary to stand while applauding (standing ovation) if you loved the performance. We encourage you to clap and cheer.

Exiting

Please stay in your seat until the theatre lights are turned back on. Look around you for trash or anything you may have dropped.

What is an opera?

An opera is a play where the characters usually sing the words instead of speaking them. The idea to create this new art form came about in the late 1500s in Italy during the period in history known as the Renaissance. Audiences loved opera, and it became popular throughout Europe by the mid-1600s, which is fast considering there was no method of mass communication.

Why do they sing instead of talk?

Music tells part of the story, just as it does in film. Opera singers have to learn a very special style of singing which can also help us understand the story even if we don't understand the words. It takes years of intense vocal training to become a professional opera singer.

What is a musical?

A musical is a play where the characters talk and sing. The songs help us understand the story and the characters.

Is this show a musical or an opera?

The show you're seeing is a musical, not an opera. Opera is a European form of lyrical theater while the musical is an American form of lyrical theater. Before microphones were invented, all musicals were performed by opera singers. *Man of La Mancha* is a musical and will be performed by professional opera singers and the live music will be played by an ensemble of professional musicians led by a real conductor. Piedmont Opera is proud to produce American contributions to lyrical theater, including musicals!

In what language will this musical be sung? Will I understand what's happening?

Many operas are in different languages like Italian, French, and German and project the translation above the stage. This is called *supertitles*. (For tv and film, we have *subtitles* because the words are on the bottom of the screen.) Most musicals, including *Man of La Mancha*, are sung in English and do not have supertitles. Even if you don't hear or understand every word in the musical, it's helpful to listen for cues in the music, observe the performers' movements and expressions, and know about the story before you go.

What is *Man of La Mancha* about?

Man of La Mancha, based on episodes from Miguel de Cervantes' epic 17th-century novel, *Don Quixote*, is a remarkable, poignant, moving musical that was one of the first shows to musicalize a piece of historical literature.

Set in the context of the Spanish Inquisition in the late 1500s, *Man of La Mancha* is presented as a play-within-a-play. (This means you will be watching a performance where the actors put on a play.) We encounter historical author Miguel de Cervantes in prison, awaiting trial by the Inquisition. When his fellow prisoners try to take Cervantes' belongings from him, including his manuscript, Cervantes proposes a trial in which he proves the merit of the manuscript through a reenactment, enlisting his fellow prisoners as characters in his play. Together, they tell the story of the aged Alonso Quijana who believes himself to be a knight errant (a wandering knight searching for romantic and chivalrous adventures), names himself Don Quixote, and pursues an obsessive quest to attain an impossible dream. Against all odds, Quixote and his trusty squire Sancho Panza take to the road in a quest to chivalry, and seek out the good and innocent in a world filled with darkness and despair.

Through the story, all the prisoners – at least for a moment – are transformed. The mad Don Quixote may think a windmill to be a giant and a tavern to be a castle, but along the way he also transforms a wretched woman into a beautiful lady – and proves that an old man's belief can truly make him a knight. *Man of La Mancha* features such stirring songs as “Dulcinea” and the now-famous standard, “Quest” – more famously known as “The Impossible Dream.”

- synopsis borrowed from the Magnus Theatre Study Guide

Synopsis

MAN OF LA MANCHA is set in the late 1500s, when Miguel de Cervantes is thrown into prison by the Spanish Inquisition. Having failed as a soldier and as a playwright, Cervantes was working as a tax collector—until he made the mistake of foreclosing on a church. Now Cervantes and his manservant face a group of fellow prisoners, who stage a mock trial before the inmate known as “The Governor.” Faced with the loss of all his possessions, including a tattered manuscript, Cervantes proposes that his defense will take the form of a play. He begins to spin the tale of Alonso Quijana, “a country squire...no longer young...bony, hollow faced...eyes that burn with the fire of inner vision.” Quijana, having read too many tales of heroic knights in the age of chivalry, declares he will become a knight-errant— Don Quixote de la Mancha —traveling the countryside righting all wrongs. Cervantes’ manservant takes on the role of Don Quixote’s faithful companion, Sancho Panza.

Quixote battles a “giant”—in reality, one of the many windmills that dot the landscape of the plains of La Mancha. He is defeated, retreating to a “castle”—really a roadside inn. The inn is populated by rough mule drivers (muleteers); the kitchen serving-wench, Aldonza, scorns their advances, making no secret of her low beginning and harsh life. (“I was spawned in a ditch by a mother who left me there....”)

Quixote sees the boisterous muleteers as fellow knights and believes the hard-edged Aldonza to be a beautiful noble lady, whom he calls “Dulcinea” (meaning “sweetness”). Aldonza is confused by this; no one has ever treated her with kindness.

Cervantes now takes the story to Quijana’s home, where his niece Antonia and her fiancé, Dr. Carrasco, along with the housekeeper and Quijana’s friend Padre Perez, worry about Quijana’s increasingly erratic behavior. Although they each declare they are “only thinking of him,” it’s clear that they are determined to put a stop to Quijana’s antics and bring him home.

While Quixote admires “Dulcinea” from afar, Aldonza confronts Sancho: she asks why he follows a madman like Quixote. Sancho replies that he simply likes Quixote; Aldonza, alone, wonders what Quixote could possibly see in a woman like her. Meanwhile, the muleteers jeer at Aldonza and her eccentric admirer.

A wandering barber arrives at the inn. Quixote believes the barber’s brass shaving basin to be a magical golden helmet that makes its wearer invulnerable and demands that the barber give it to him. Dr. Carrasco and the Padre witness this. Carrasco is certain that Quijana/Quixote is mad, while the Padre is not so sure.

The Innkeeper, whom Quixote believes to be the “Lord of the Castle,” agrees to dub Quixote a knight once he has spent a night holding vigil. As he meditates alone, Aldonza interrupts him. She cannot understand...



View of the City of Seville
Painting attributed to Alonso Sanchez-Coello (circa 1531-1588)

...why does he do these things? He replies that it is necessary to follow the quest—every knight’s mission.

When the lead muleteer abuses Aldonza, Quixote leaps to her defense, leading to a fight between Quixote (aided by Sancho and Aldonza) and the gang of muledrivers. Quixote is victorious and is dubbed a knight by the Innkeeper. Meanwhile, Quixote is unaware that the angry muleteers have abducted Aldonza in revenge.

Setting out on the road once more, Quixote and Sancho are attacked by thieves, who take everything they have. When they return to the inn, they find Aldonza, who has been beaten bloody by the muleteers. She expresses her frustration and rage at ever having believed in Quixote’s dreams.

The Knight of the Mirrors, whom Quixote sees as his mortal enemy, the Enchanter, enters and challenges Quixote to a duel. As they battle, Quixote is struck by his reflection in the Knight’s mirrored shield—he sees himself for the broken old man that he truly is. The Knight reveals himself to be Dr. Carrasco.

The guards interrupt the story to inform Cervantes that he will soon be taken to face the Inquisitors. He asks for enough time to conclude his story.

Alonso Quijana, no longer Don Quixote, lays in his bed at home, surrounded by his family. His spirit has been broken; he is dying. Fighting her way through his family, Aldonza comes to Quijana’s side. He does not recognize her and does not know her name. She pleads with him, saying that he once called her “Dulcinea,” and he begins to remember. She reminds him of the words of his quest —“to dream the impossible dream.” Quixote dies as the Padre prays over him, and Aldonza declares that she is now Dulcinea.

Cervantes’ story is finished: the prisoners give him his manuscript, as the guards return to remove him from the cell and bring him before the officials of the Inquisition. As Cervantes is lead out of the prison, the inmates join together, singing Quixote’s song of his impossible dream.

Setting and Characters

Time: End of the 16th Century (late 1500s)

Place: A prison in Seville, Spain

THE “REAL” PEOPLE IN THE PRISON

Cervantes

A poet, trained actor, playwright, and tax-collector filled with curiosity and candor. He is imprisoned and awaiting trial by the Spanish Inquisition.

The Governor

Authority among his fellow prisoners, he leads Cervantes’s “trial”.

The Duke

Another prisoner, he asks to take charge of Cervantes’s mock trial.

Cervantes’s Manservant

The pragmatic and devoted servant to Cervantes. Also imprisoned for helping Cervantes.

Other Prisoners

THE CHARACTERS IN CERVANTES’ STORY/PLAY

Alonso Quijana/Don Quixote

An older country squire, portrayed by Cervantes, disheartened by the cruelty of man, decides to abandon his identity and assume a new one: a chivalrous knight called Don Quixote whose purpose is to right all the wrongs in the world.

Sancho Panza

Quixote’s faithful squire, portrayed by Cervantes’s manservant

AT THE INN

The Innkeeper

Maria

The innkeeper’s wife

Aldonza/Dulcinea

A waitress at the Inn, she is tough and suffers no fools. She also works as a prostitute. When Quixote sees her he falls instantly in love and exclaims she is his lady, who he renames, Dulcinea.

Barber

Muleteers

Jose, Juan, Pedro, Anselmo, Paco, and Tenorio all spend time at the inn and frequently harass Aldonza.

IN QUIJANA’S OLD NEIGHBORHOOD

Dr. Sansón Carrasco

Antonia’s fiancé is self-important and concerned about the embarrassment of marrying into a family with a “lunatic” in it.

Antonia

Alonso Quijana’s niece who is engaged to Dr. Sansón Carrasco.

Housekeeper

Quijana’s housekeeper of many years worries Quixote may return and mistake her for his true love.

The Padre

He has known Quijana all his life. Antonia and the Housekeeper go to him for guidance when Quijana assumes the identity of Quixote.

JASON FERRANTE jasonferrante.com

Cervantes' Manservant and Sancho Panza



American tenor and voice teacher JASON FERRANTE has been praised by Opera News for "singing up a stylish storm" and by the Sarasota Herald Tribune as "one of the best voices I have heard in a very long time." He has performed internationally on opera and concert stages including the Kennedy Center, Lincoln Center, and Teatro Comunale di Bologna to name a few. He created the role of Little Victor in Kevin Puts' *Elizabeth Cree* for Opera Philadelphia as well as the role of Cornaccio in John Musto's *Volpone* for Wolf Trap Opera. In concert, he has appeared as a soloist with the Boston, Detroit, National, Chicago and Juilliard Orchestras and has performed with some of the world's leading conductors including Ozawa, Slatkin, Nelsons, Maazel, and Conlon. He is one of today's most in-demand teachers of singing, serving on the faculties of the training programs at Banff, Brevard, Portland Opera, Nashville Opera, Canadian Opera Company, Florentine Opera, Pensacola Opera, and Jen Rowley's Aria Bootcamp and his students sing leading roles at companies such as the Met, Royal Opera Covent Garden, Salzburg Festival, Houston Grand Opera, Vienna State Opera and Rome Opera. He holds both a BM and MM from The Juilliard School. When not making music, Ferrante spends time cooking, enjoying nature in Arizona and cheering for the Baltimore Orioles.

"From age 5-14, I was a serious little league baseball player and hoped to pursue playing baseball as a profession. When I realized I wasn't going to be tall enough to play as a grown-up, I auditioned for the Baltimore School for the Arts which is a small and coveted performing arts high school in Maryland. I had no training but was funny, I could carry a tune but had never read or studied music. I was accepted to the voice division and on the first day of class, I heard an upper classman sing and the rest is history."

BRENNAN MARTINEZ brennanmartinez.com

Aldonza and Dulcinea



BRENNAN MARTINEZ has been described as "a mezzo-soprano to be watched" (Opera Lively) and sings with "power, authority, and a most intriguing color to her wide-ranging voice" (Classical Voice of North Carolina). Ms. Martinez was last seen at Piedmont Opera in the virtual production of *Cinderella* and *Mary, Queen of Scots*. Other recent role credits include Third Wood Nymph in *Rusalka* (Milwaukee Opera Theatre), Lily Craven in *The Secret Garden* (Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre), Hansel in *Hansel and Gretel* (Chautauqua Opera Company), Dorabella in *Così fan tutte* (Brew City Opera), Marian Paroo in *The Music Man in Concert* and Mother in *Ragtime* (Metropolis Performing Arts Centre). She has also performed with Cedar Rapids Opera, Glimmerglass Festival, Chicago Fringe Opera, Utah Festival Opera and Musical Theatre, and Hawaii Performing Arts Festival. She trained at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts as a Fletcher Fellow at the A.J. Fletcher Opera Institute and at the Wanda L. Bass School of Music at Oklahoma City University. She is a member of AGMA and represented for theatre and film/tv by Big Mouth Talent. Thank you to the family and Audrey.

"I have two favorite parts of this musical. I love the music - I love the Spanish flair and how every song is a bop. It's so catchy! I also love the message: to follow your quest no matter how impossible the dream may be. You have the power to inspire and make a difference. Never give up and always keep learning. Persistence is key and don't be afraid to learn about anything and everything you want."

RICHARD OLLARSABA richardollarsaba.com

Miguel de Cervantes, Alonso Quijana, and Don Quixote



Mexican-American bass-baritone, RICHARD OLLARSABA praised by The Washington Post for his "meltingly smooth bass-baritone" and for "evoking a young Ruggero Raimondi in looks and manner," represented the USA in the 2019 BBC Cardiff Singer of the World competition, was a member of the prestigious Ryan Opera Center at Lyric Opera Chicago for three seasons, and a grand finalist in the 2013 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. This season he makes his company debuts with Nashville Opera and Hawai'i Opera Theatre as Escamillo in *Carmen*, and role debuts as Riolobo in *Catán's Florencia en el Amazonas* with North Carolina Opera and as Miguel de Cervantes/Don Quixote in *Man of La Mancha* with Piedmont Opera. He will make his return to the Sacramento Philharmonic & Opera in the title role of Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*. Previous credits include the title role in *Don Giovanni* with Opera Hong Kong, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Arizona Opera, Opera Carolina; Escamillo in *Carmen* with the Glimmerglass Festival, Portland Opera, Lyric Opera of Kansas City; in *Le nozze di Figaro* as Figaro with New Zealand Opera, and Minnesota Opera, as Count Almaviva with Portland Opera and Virginia Opera. Richard earned his graduate degree and post-graduate certificate from the UNCSCA A.J. Fletcher Opera Institute.

*"One of my first roles in a musical was Linus in **Snoopy! The Musical** when I was 11 years old. However, my first ever stage-role was when I was 5 years old as one part of a two-headed snake. My parents never understood why I was always so dusty until they saw how much slithering the role demanded!"*

Musical Numbers

Act 1

<i>Overture Man of La Mancha</i>	Don Quixote, Sancho and prisoners
<i>It's All the Same</i>	Aldonza and the Muleteers
<i>Dulcinea</i>	Don Quixote, Anselmo and the Muleteers
<i>I'm Only Thinking of Him</i>	Antonia, Padre and Housekeeper
<i>I Really Like Him</i>	Sancho
<i>What Does He Want of Me</i>	Aldonza
<i>Little Bird, Little Bird</i>	Cervantes, Anselmo, Pedro and the Muleteers
<i>The Barber Song</i>	The Barber
<i>Golden Helmet of Mambrino</i>	Don Quixote, Sancho, Barber and Muleteers
<i>To Each His Dulcinea</i>	Padre

Act 2

<i>The Impossible Dream</i>	Don Quixote
<i>The Dubbing</i>	Innkeeper and Don Quixote
<i>Knight of the Woeful Countenance</i>	Innkeeper and chorus
<i>The Abduction</i>	Anselmo and Pedro
<i>The Impossible Dream (reprise)</i>	Don Quixote
<i>Aldonza</i>	Aldonza
<i>Knight of the Mirrors</i>	Orchestra
<i>A Little Gossip</i>	Sancho
<i>Dulcinea (reprise)</i>	Aldonza
<i>The Impossible Dream (reprise)</i>	Aldonza, Don Quixote
<i>The Psalm</i>	Padre
<i>Finale</i>	Company

Music Insights

“The Impossible Dream” is a bolero, an immediately recognizable style with a patient but persistent beat, embodying Quixote’s determination.

“Aldonza” is a musical nervous breakdown about the pain of re-birth; Aldonza has been given a new life by Quixote, a new sense of dignity and self-worth, but birth is a painful experience, and “Aldonza” expresses that pain.

Interestingly, Quixote also shares her rhythm in his song about her, “Dulcinea.” Giving these two characters similar rhythms links them and shows that they are alike, that they belong together.

Aldonza’s song, “What Does He Want of Me?” is in a highly irregular 7/8 meter, giving it a feeling of impatience, discomfort, uneasiness. Quixote’s attentions have thrown her off balance, so she can’t sing in a regular meter.

Sancho’s songs share the same accompaniment rhythm, a much simpler, much more repetitive accompaniment than the other characters’ songs, based almost entirely on one or two chords in each case, perhaps to emphasize the simplicity and lack of education of Sancho.

“The Combat” and “The Abduction” both have constantly shifting meters to accompany the very explicit, violent action.

In the last interior scene, back at Quijana’s house, Aldonza and Sancho try to revive Quijana’s memory of his adventures as Don Quixote, and as Quijana searches for those memories, Mitch Leigh dramatizes that with his music. We hear bits and pieces of “Dulcinea,” “Man of La Mancha,” “The Quest,” and other songs, as bits and pieces of memory come back to Quijana; and his ultimate regaining of his memory is set to his opening number, a kind of re-birth as Quixote, the same music against which we first met our knight errant.

*-borrowed from the study guide from A Noise Within.
Original Source: Scott Miller (1996), “From Assassins to West Side Story: The Director’s Guide to Musical Theatre”.
Scott Miller is the founder and artistic director of New Line Theatre, an alternative musical theatre company he established in 1991 in St. Louis, Missouri.*

About the Creators



Miguel de Cervantes (1547-1616)
Author of the novel that inspired the musical

Miguel de Cervantes was a Spanish novelist, playwright, and poet, the creator of *Don Quixote* (1605, 1615) and the most important and celebrated figure in Spanish literature. His novel *Don Quixote* has been translated, in full or in part, into more than 60 languages. Editions continue regularly to be printed, and critical discussion of the work has proceeded unabated since the 18th century. At the same time, owing to their widespread representation in art, drama, and film, the figures of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza are probably familiar visually to more people than any other imaginary characters in world literature. Little is known about his early education, and although he did not attend a university, he was an avid reader of books. He eventually enlisted as a soldier in a Spanish infantry regiment where he was shot twice in the chest, and a third shot rendered his left hand useless. He was a decorated hero when he was captured and sold into slavery. This dangerous and adventurous time in his life undoubtedly inspired his writing. *Don Quixote* is considered a founding work in western literature and often considered the first modern novel. It has influenced thousands of other pieces of art in every medium since it was published in 1605.



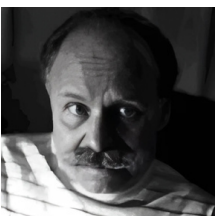
Dale Wasserman (1914-2008)
Book and Script

Dale Wasserman was born in Rhinelander, Wisconsin on November 2, 1914 and was orphaned at the age of nine. He lived in a state orphanage and with an older brother in South Dakota before he "hit the rails". Growing up orphaned and homeless, Wasserman hopped on trains and slept on rooftops in Los Angeles. He later said, "I regret never having received a formal education. But I did get a real education about human nature." Wasserman worked in various aspects of theatre from the age of 19. He became a self-taught lighting designer, director, stage manager, and producer before he decided to become a writer. In addition to his well-known plays (*Man of La Mancha* and *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*), he wrote more than 30 television dramas, making him one of the better known writers in the Golden Age of Television.



Mitch Leigh (1928-2014)
Music

Mitch Leigh was born in Brooklyn, New York as Irwin Michnick on January 30, 1928. He graduated from Yale in 1951 with a Bachelor of Music degree and received his Master of Music in 1952. He began his career as a jazz musician and writing commercials for radio and television. Leigh established Music Makers, Inc. in 1957 as a radio and television commercial production house and was its creative director. He wrote various jingles and instrumental music, some of which reached the Top 40. *Man of La Mancha* was his most commercially successful work; "The Impossible Dream" landed him in the Songwriter's Hall of Fame.



Joe Darion (1917-2001)
Lyrics

Joe Darion was born Joseph Schmul on January 30, 1917 in New York City. He studied journalism at City College of New York and served in the Navy during World War II. He began writing lyrics after the war, and his first Broadway show was *Shinbone Alley* (1957). Although the show only ran a little over a month, it attracted critical favor. Darion's next Broadway show also found critical favor and was, this time, a massive commercial success. Opening on November 22, 1965, *Man Of La Mancha* ran for a total of 2,328 performances. Mitch Leigh's music and Darion's lyrics brought them a Tony Award for Best Score, and Darion won a Tony Award for the best lyrics of the 1965-66 Broadway season.

La Mancha Region in Spain

La Mancha is an area of both historical and agricultural significance. Castile-La Mancha is located south of Madrid and is made up of the provinces of Ciudad Real, Albacete, Cuenca, and Toledo. The name 'La Mancha' comes from the old Arabic word ma-ansha (no water).



La Mancha has always been an important agricultural area. Vineyards and grains abound, and sheep are also raised in this region providing the famous Manchego cheese. To grind the grains that grew so well in the unique climate, locals took advantage of the wind. They built towering windmills with large outstretching arms to catch the air movement and spin, and inside, this turned the grinding stones.

Many of these windmills in Castilla-La Mancha are still operational and can be visited. Many also host annual festivals to celebrate Don Quixote and local culture. While perhaps now more of a tourist destination, it is important to note these once were crucial to everyday life in the area.

Some people believe that through his work *Don Quixote*, Cervantes was making fun of the region. The word 'mancha' can also mean a stain on one's honor and Cervantes could have been making a pun as this would have been a totally inappropriate homeland for a dignified knight. Others think La Mancha is the perfect place for an idealist to originate as it is a very harsh region.

voyaged 🇪🇸 Don Quixote got lost on its way to fight the windmills.
#MolinosDeConsuegra #spain #Consuegra



ajda.borntotravel The dreamy landscapes of Central Spain. Crisp air and unforgiving sun. Everything is quiet during a siesta. Only the windmills are there. They are always there. Like an army that's waiting to show off it's courage as Don Quixote believed. Or a reminder of the invisible force that is wind. And the wind brings life in its own way. Well not to be too poetic. The windmills are so picturesque here in Castilla La Mancha region. But I do recommend visiting at sunrise or sunset! Have those photos too, but this one caught my eye while I was browsing through the photos of our family adventures.
ES ❤️ 🇪🇸 🌅 🏰

Discussion Questions and Writing Prompts

Social Class and Worth:

Distinguishing between a person's class and a person's worth was a fairly radical idea in Cervantes's time. *Man of La Mancha* addresses the conventional notion that aristocrats are automatically respectable and noble. Aldonza is no more than a kitchen wench, and yet, Don Quixote sees in her great worth.

How does the social class of each character define their worth?

When is the class system adhered to? When is it broken?

What are some factors; societal, socioeconomic, political, or otherwise, which prevent people from achieving their dreams?

Madness and Reality:

Don Quixote has a tendency to transform everyday people and objects into more dramatic, epic, and fantastic versions of themselves and forces those around him to choose between adapting to his imaginary world or opposing it. Where others see a windmill, he sees a giant. Where others see a wench, he sees a lady.

Is Don Quixote really insane, or is his behavior a conscious choice?

How does Don Quixote's perception of reality influence other characters' perceptions of the world?

How does Cervantes' fate at the end of the musical affect our understanding of the play's themes of hope, despair, and imagination?

Chivalry:

Don Quixote tries to be a flesh-and-blood example of a knight-errant in an attempt to force his contemporaries to face their own failure to maintain the old system of morality, the chivalric code. This conflict between the old and the new reaches an absolute impasse.

What is chivalry?

How has chivalry changed since the time of Don Quixote?

What does chivalry mean to you?

Musical and Opera Appreciation

The musical begins with a prelude played by the orchestra. How did this music prepare you for the musical that you saw? How did this music make you feel?

Lighting design enhances or reflects what is happening in the performance with both subtle and bold choices. What did you notice about the lighting design?

What was your favorite costume and why? How did it add to the production? Would you have changed anything about costuming?

How did the set design impact the storytelling? If you were to design the set, what changes would you make? How would modernizing the set change the vibe?

If you could portray any character in this musical, who would you play and why?

Reflect on the song, "The Impossible Dream". What is your personal quest or impossible dream? Is there a cause or an ideal you believe in so strongly that you would pursue it against all odds?

The Spanish Inquisition

- ed.ted.com/lessons/ugly-history-the-spanish-inquisition-kayla-wolf
- study.com/learn/lesson/reconquista-spanish-inquisition.html
- britannica.com/summary/Spanish-Inquisition-Timeline

Quotes from the author, Miguel de Cervantes, in his novel, *Don Quixote*

- Time ripens all things; no man's born wise.
- For neither good nor evil can last for ever; and so it follows that as evil has lasted a long time, good must now be close at hand.
- I know who I am and who I may be, if I choose.
- Thou hast seen nothing yet.
- He who sings scares away his woes.
- Never stand begging for that which you have the power to earn.

Artworks

- en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_works_influenced_by_Don_Quixote
- artsandculture.google.com/story/the-quixote-and-it-s-representations/zwWhsig9JdZbKg
- arthive.com/publications/894~Don_Quixote_with_best_paintings_and_illustrations_from_Dor_and_Daumier_to_Dali_and_Picasso

The most recognized visual art depicting Don Quixote and Sancho Panza was sketched by Pablo Picasso in 1955.



Elements of Opera in Your Curriculum

Opera is a story told through music.

The three components of an opera are **music, a story, and a performance**. Opera includes visual art, music, movement and dance, and language, and is considered by many to be the most complete art form. Add in historical context and world languages and cultures, you get an even fuller picture! Opera can be an interesting and unique vessel for teaching standards in many subjects and can be implemented into NC's Standard Course of Study.

MUSIC

ARTS EDUCATION

Because opera has been an integral part of musical development for 400 years, an opera performance provides students with the opportunity to learn pieces by some of the most famous composers ever known as performed by today's professional artists! Performances also display various voice parts (i.e. baritone, soprano, etc.) and the use of ensembles and soloists. Even the youngest of students can learn to appreciate and critique performances as they identify and process the elements of a live opera performance.

STORY

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Opera is a story told with music and contains all the elements of storytelling and drama. By following the plot of the libretto (or story) and learning the context of specific songs within a particular opera, students learn about story structure, sequencing, character development, and other dramatic elements. Many operas are based on plays, books, or stories that were popular at a given time.

HISTORY and SOCIAL STUDIES

Western opera is an artform born in late 16th-century Italy. However, the practice of telling stories with music has been present in every major culture of the world for as long as we have historical records. Many operas are set in times and places far removed from our own. The costumes are unlike our clothes of today, the settings are different, as is the manner of speech. However, the problems and concerns of the characters often reflect many similarities to today's world. Opera can give students a looking glass into the past while connecting to the present.

PERFORMANCE

THEATRE and VISUAL ARTS

Opera is a spectacle - high drama and the set, costumes, props, lighting, movements, facial expressions, etc.! These components work together to bring a very unique and engaging piece of art to audiences. Although operas are often sung in another language, the performance itself helps audiences understand the story even if they don't understand the words. Students can observe how everything working together creates a cohesive piece of performance art, and they can think critically how they may have done it differently.

Glossary of Opera Terms

Actor - a performer who has dialogue or significant action, but who does not sing.

Aria (ār ē a) - means *air* in Italian. Since a singer's voice travels on air, we call the songs they sing, arias. In an aria, the characters usually share their inner thoughts or feelings.

Bravo - is a word that audience members shout to the singers if they think they have done a good job. "Bravo" in Italian means GREAT! If the singer is a female, we shout "Brava!".

Cast - all the singers and actors who appear on stage.

Chorus - group of singers who mostly sing together; sometimes this group contains actors and dancers who do not sing, but who are part of the group as a whole. We also use the term *chorister*.

Choreographer - the person who creates the movements for the dancers.

Comprimario (kom pri mā riō) - an Italian word meaning "next to the first". A singer who performs a small character role in an opera. A *confidant* (a person you trust to tell your secrets to), is often in this category. Examples are maids, servants and messengers.

Conductor - the person who directs the singers and the orchestra during the performances. They use specific patterns of movement using their hands and a baton, which is similar to a wand.

Libretto (li bret ō) - means "little book" in Italian. It is the words or text of an opera and is the same as the script of a play. The person who writes these words is called the *librettist*.

Opera buffa (op era bu fa) - a comic opera. Buffa means "funny" in Italian. *The Marriage of Figaro* by Mozart is an example of an opera buffa, and so is *Pinocchio: The Opera*.

Opera seria (op er a ser ē a) - an opera with a story that is very serious. Usually, one of the characters dies in the end.

Orchestra - a group of musicians who play instruments for an opera. Led by a conductor, an orchestra is made up of string, woodwind, brass, and percussion instruments.

Orchestra Pit - instead of playing on stage like at a concert, the orchestra plays mostly out of sight in a pit below the front of the stage. The conductor stands at the front of the orchestra pit facing the stage so you would only see his or her back.

Overture - a song that may be played at the very beginning of the opera before any action takes place on the stage. Not all operas have overtures.

Principal - a singer who portrays a lead character of an opera, oftentimes heroes, heroines, or villains.

Production - the planning, rehearsal, and presentation of an opera. You have seen Piedmont Opera's production of *Pinocchio*.

Recitative (res i tā'tiv) - the part of an opera where the singers talk to each other. The music of a recitative tries to imitate the rhythms and inflections of speech and is not as melodic as an *aria*. This Italian word means the same thing as our word, "recite".

Score - musicians read from a score. It is a piece of music showing each vocal or instrument's part on its own staff.

Set - everything on the stage to show where the story is taking place. Short for "setting".

Stage director - the person who guides the action on stage and tells the singers where and how to move.

Supernumerary (sōō pur nōō'me rer'ē) - a performer who appears in a non-singing or non-speaking role, like an "extra" in a movie.

While the opera singer gets most of the attention, there are many ways to have a career in the world of opera including:

Arts Administration

Executive Director, Artistic Director, Business Manager, Box Office Manager, Marketing Director, Development/Fundraising Director, Education/Outreach Director, Volunteer Manager, Board Member

Costumes

Costume Designer, Costume Construction and Repair, Dresser, Costume Shop Manager, Wig Designer, Make-up Designer

Lighting

Lighting Designer, Lightboard Operator, Spotlight Operator

Orchestra

Orchestra Conductor, Musician

Performance

Soloist, Chorister, Dancer, Supernumerary

Production

Stage Director, Production Manager, Choreographer, Production Assistant, Prop Manager, Prop Designer, Set Designer, Set Builder

Sound

Sound Designer, Soundboard Operator

Theatre

Theatre Director, House Manager, Usher, Box Office Manager, Concessions Manager

Examples

An **Executive Director** manages the business-side of an opera company and an **Artistic Director** oversees productions of operas.

A **Stage Director** is needed to make sure that everyone goes where they are supposed to on stage. This direction takes place during rehearsals where the director gives blocking to the singers.

A **Stage Manager** is hired to manage all of the logistics of a production. He/she maintains the rehearsal schedule and acts as a liaison between the cast and the production crew.

A **Set Designer** draws small-scale pictures of the set and oversees the building of them.

All of the clothing that the singers wear during an opera are called costumes. A **Costume Designer** draws and often aids in the sewing of the costumes for the production.

Makeup Designers aid the performers in looking more like their characters using makeup and wigs.

After all the physical elements have been rehearsed and designed, a **Lighting Designer** is brought in to set the atmosphere for the scene using stage lighting.

All of the physical items that singers use on stage to aid in acting their parts such as swords, baskets, notes, lanterns, etc. are called props. A **Props Designer** is responsible for all props in the production—that includes acquiring them, keeping them organized, and making sure they're used safely. To do this, the props designer leads a team of prop makers or props-department runners.

Many operas utilize dancers in ball and party scenes, ballets, and other special events in the opera. A **Choreographer** designs these dances using the music provided by the composer and teaches them to the singers and dancers.

Music

An orchestra led by a conductor usually accompanies the singers. Sometimes in a smaller opera (like Pinocchio), a piano is all that is needed. An orchestra is made up of four “families”:

- Strings - Violin, Viola, Cello, Double Bass, Harp, etc.
- Woodwinds - Flute, Clarinet, Oboe, Bassoon, Saxophone, etc.
- Brass - Trumpet, Trombone, Tuba, French Horn, Euphonium, etc.
- Percussion - Snare Drum, Cymbals, Bass Drum, Triangle, Timpani, Xylophone, etc.

Singing

Many kinds of singers are needed for operas.

- Soprano is the highest female voice and usually portrays the leading lady or heroine.
- Mezzo-Soprano (also known as Alto) is the middle female voice who often portrays a mother or even a villain. Sometimes a mezzo-soprano will play a male character and will wear pants instead of a dress to suggest they are a boy. This is known as a “pants role”.
- Contralto is the lowest female voice and depicts a wise old woman or maybe a witch.
- Tenor is the highest male voice, and he is the voice of the hero.
- Baritone is the middle male voice and portrays a commoner, a father, or a villain.
- Bass is the lowest male voice and typically indicates this is a wise leader.

Qualities of an Opera Singer

Volume: Opera Singers are trained to be heard in large theatres without using microphones. Singers train for years to be able to sing loud enough to be heard over other soloists, a chorus, and a large orchestra of about 50 musicians. Opera singers can sing really loud!

Stamina: Stamina is the strength or power to resist getting tired. An opera singer requires the ability to sing for two to three hours. Operas are rarely performed on consecutive evenings because it’s so physically exhausting for the performers because of the special way they have to breathe. Piedmont Opera plans its schedule so that the artists can rest up for a day between performances.

Range: Operatic music requires singers to have a wide vocal range; they must be able to sing very low notes as well as extremely high notes.

Acting ability: Opera singers don’t just stand on stage and sing, they must be able to act as well. Just like actors in a play, the singer must make the audience believe in the characters they portray.

Different languages: Since operas started over 400 years ago in Europe (before the United States existed!), most of them were written in languages other than English. A singer must be familiar with the pronunciation and each word of the foreign language, and they typically have to take language classes and/or hire a “language coach” to master the sounds of specific languages. American singers perform in Italian, French, German, and even Russian.

Art Challenge for Students in Grades 6-12

Piedmont Opera wants to see your art inspired by *Man of La Mancha* and the lyrics to “The Impossible Dream”. Deadline to enter is **April 6, 2025**.

Create an original piece of art using any medium. Whether it’s visual art, performance art, or written art, we encourage you to explore and experiment with your creativity.

To officially enter this challenge:

- Follow Piedmont Opera on Instagram and/or Facebook
- Post a photo or video of your work (or your child’s work on their behalf)
- Tag @piedmontopera to be sure we see it
- If you don’t have an account on Instagram or Facebook, email your submission to mhartle@piedmontopera.org by April 6 giving us permission to share it on our social accounts on your behalf

One winner will receive a \$50 gift card to a local restaurant of their choice and up to four tickets for their family to see one of our mainstage productions in 2025-26! The winner will be selected by a panel and announced on our social media on **April 7, 2025**.

The Impossible Dream (The Quest)

Lyrics by Joe Darion. Music by Mitch Leigh.

To dream the impossible dream,
to fight the unbeatable foe,
to bear with unbearable sorrow,
to run where the brave dare not go.

To right the unrightable wrong,
to love pure and chaste from afar,
to try when your arms are too weary,
to reach the unreachable star.

This is my quest,
to follow that star --
no matter how hopeless,
no matter how far.

To fight for the right
without question or pause,
to be willing to march into hell for a
heavenly cause.

And I know if I'll only be true to this
glorious quest
that my heart will be peaceful and calm
when I'm laid to my rest.

And the world will be better for this,
that one man scorned and covered with scars
still strove with his last ounce of courage.
To reach the unreachable stars.