



**Strauss**

**Capriccio**

**Pacific Opera Victoria**

**February 2010**

## **Activity Guide**

**Dear Educator,**

Pacific Opera Victoria is proud to present *Capriccio*: a story about the Countess Madeleine, who is caught in a love triangle with a poet and a musician. She decides to commission an opera for which she will decide the ending! But in choosing one lover, she must lose the other.

And thus begins this opera appropriately subtitled, “A Conversation Piece for Music”. Which is more important: words or music? Watch the conversation unfold and see where our characters sit in this often comical debate. Perhaps just as interesting, consider how you yourself would answer this unique question.

Students will enjoy what Strauss considered to be his artistic legacy. The music is witty, wise, and full of life. We know you’ll enjoy the Victoria Symphony under the direction of Maestro Timothy Vernon.

Check out our website at [www.pov.bc.ca/capriccio.html](http://www.pov.bc.ca/capriccio.html) for inside information about *Capriccio*. Please suggest that your students take advantage of our website. The more your students know about the production, the more they will enjoy it.

A special welcome to our **Club Opera** members! I know this will be a rich experience for you and your students.

See you at the opera!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Andrew Snyder".

Andrew Snyder  
Education and Outreach Coordinator

## Activity Overview



**Performance Activities:** The performance activities can be completed by the students by simply attending the opera.

*My Thoughts* This activity allows the students to view, reflect, express, compare and contrast the drama, music and design of the specific scenes and artists. The activity comes with a ready matrix.

*Name That Voice!* In this activity, students learn about different voice types and will classify the voice types that they hear at the dress rehearsal.



**Classroom Activities:** Activities designed for teachers that desire introduction or follow up activities to the dress rehearsal of *Capriccio*.

*O Canada!* Students consider and learn about the composition of our national anthem.

*Capriccio Word Find:* A word find full of all the characters from the opera!

*Opera Crossword:* Do you know music like the characters in *Capriccio*?



**Debrief Activities:** Use these debrief activities as prompts to get your students thinking, responding, relating and discussing their opera experience.

*Recall:* Recollect facts, figures and concepts from *Capriccio*.

*Words or Music?* The debate continues in this activity where students compare the worth of music and words.

*Free Think:* Discussion prompts for debrief about the opera.

*Point of View:* Students will express and defend an opinion on who they think Madeleine should choose (Flamand or Olivier).

*Soul Mates:* Students will clarify their opinion about soul mates.







*Journal:* An activity where students actively think about difficult decisions they've made.

*An Opera in 1 Act?* A discussion where students will consider current cultural aspects on the creation of art.

**Capriccio- My Thoughts**  
 Pacific Opera Victoria  
 February 23rd, 2010  
 Conducted by Timothy Vernon



Reviewed by: \_\_\_\_\_

The Artists	Description of Character	Description of Voice
Erin Wall- <i>The Countess</i> 		
Kurt Lehmann- <i>Flamand</i> (composer) 		
Joshua Hopkins- <i>Olivier</i> (poet) 		
James Westman- <i>The Count</i> 		
Norine Burgess- <i>Clairon</i> 		
Brian Bannatyne-Scott <i>-La Roche</i> 		

<b>The Scenes</b>	<b>Drama Star Rating</b>	<b>Music Stars Rating</b>	<b>Design Stars Rating</b>
Opening Scene My Thoughts:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
Entry of the Dancers My Thoughts:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
The Octet My Thoughts:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
Servant Scene My Thoughts:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
Final Scene (Countess' Aria) My Thoughts:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5

*My compliment to the director, Robert McQueen, would be.....*

*My compliment to the lighting designer, Alan Brodie, would be....*

*My compliment to the costume and set designer, Christina Poddubiuk, would be...*

*My favourite part of Capriccio was....*

*My favourite prop or part of the set was.....*



*Name that Voice!*

Following are six common voice types.

**Soprano:** The highest female voice. Usually plays the heroine, a young woman or a girl in the opera. The high, bright sound suggests youth and innocence.

**Mezzo-soprano:** The middle-range female voice. The mezzo, called an alto in choral arrangements, often plays a wide variety of characters including gypsies, mothers, nurses, and even the part of young men.







**Contralto:** The lowest female voice, similar to an English horn in range and tone color. Usually plays unique roles including fortune-tellers, witches, and older women.

**Tenor:** The highest male voice. Usually plays the hero or the romantic lead in the opera.

**Baritone:** The middle-range male voice. Often plays the leader of mischief or the villain.

**Bass:** The lowest male voice, similar to a trombone or bassoon in tone color. Usually portrays old, wise men, or foolish, comic men.

Listen to the *Capriccio* cast and decide which category best fits each voice.

ARTIST	CHARACTER	VOICE TYPE
Erin Wall- <i>The Countess</i>		
Kurt Lehmann- <i>Flamand</i>		
Joshua Hopkins- <i>Olivier</i>		
James Westman- <i>The Count</i>		
Norine Burgess- <i>Clairon</i>		
Brian Bannatyne-Scott - <i>La Roche</i>		

What do you think your voice type is? \_\_\_\_\_

Words and Music: Case Study and Activity Sheet  
"Oh Canada"

We are all familiar with our national anthem, "Oh Canada". But have you ever thought and wondered how it was composed? Which came first: music or words? Our country also has two official languages. Was the French poem written before or after the music? Was the original poem in French or English?

Predict the order in which "O Canada" was created.

*Music*                      *English poem*                      *French poem*

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_

**O Canada**

The year was 1880. The Lieutenant Governor of Quebec asked composer and music teacher *Calixa Lavallée* to write a patriotic song for the "Congrès national des Canadiens-Français" (The National Congress of French Canadians). Originally it was going to be a competition, but the committee ran out of time, and decided to commission the work instead. The committee used a French poem by *Judge Adolphe-Basile Routhier*.

O Canada!  
Terre de nos aïeux,  
Ton front est ceint de fleurons glorieux.  
Car ton bras sait porter l'épée,  
Il sait porter la croix.  
Ton histoire est une épopée,  
Des plus brillants exploits.  
Et ta valeur, de foi trempée,  
Protégera nos foyers et nos droits.

Interestingly, it was the English translation that took much more development. In 1904, a Toronto doctor translated the text to English.

"O Canada! Our fathers' land of old  
Thy brow is crown'd with leaves of red and gold.  
Beneath the shade of the Holy Cross  
Thy children own their birth  
No stains thy glorious annals gloss  
Since valour shield thy hearth.  
Almighty God! On thee we call  
Defend our rights, forfend this nation's thrall,  
Defend our rights, forfend this nation's thrall."



In 1908, there was a competition set up by a magazine (*Collier's Weekly*) to write English words to the music. The contest was won by *Mercy E. Powell McCulloch*. However, the translation did not take.

" O Canada! in praise of thee we sing;  
From echoing hills our anthems proudly ring.  
With fertile plains and mountains grand  
With lakes and rivers clear,  
Eternal beauty, thos dost stand  
Throughout the changing year.  
Lord God of Hosts! We now implore  
Bless our dear land this day and evermore,  
Bless our dear land this day and evermore."

**Answers:** 1. The French Lyric 2. The Music 3. The English Lyric

This particular version became popular in British Columbia!

" O Canada, our heritage, our love  
Thy worth we praise all other lands above.  
From sea to sea throughout their length  
From Pole to borderland,  
At Britain's side, whate'er betide  
Unflinchingly we'll stand  
With hearts we sing, "God save the King",  
Guide then one Empire wide, do we implore,  
And prosper Canada from shore to shore."

However, in 1908, a translation by *Justice Robert Stanley Weir* became widely accepted in English Canada. It was proclaimed as Canada's national anthem in 1980; it was 100 years since the first version was sung with the original French lyrics!

"O Canada! Our home and native land!  
True patriot love in all thy sons command.  
With glowing hearts we see thee rise,  
The True North, strong and free!  
From far and wide, O Canada,  
We stand on guard for thee.  
God keep our land glorious and free !  
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.  
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee."



Answer the following questions:

1. Sing "O Canada" together. Try singing some of the other English versions. Which one do you like best? Why?  

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2. Think of three examples where the music seems to complement the words. What techniques does the composer use to achieve this? (Use of high notes? Low notes? Held notes? Fast passage? Slow passage?)
  - a. 

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  - b. 

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  - c. 

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3. Do you think the music would have been different had the poem originally been in English?  

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4. Is the text or the music more important to you in "O Canada"? Why?  

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5. Write new lyrics for "Oh Canada" with the music in mind. Share with a partner and try singing it together!  

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# EXMINK

**Recall:** Recollect facts, figures and concepts of *Capriccio*.

Split your students into six groups. Give each group a large piece of paper and a marker. Assign each group to write in big, bold letters, one of the following titles: **Characters/Voice, Setting/Time Period, Set and Costume Design, Opera Atmosphere, Costumes and Plot**. Have the students recall every detail that they can brainstorm for two minutes on their given topic. After two minutes, the students switch clockwise to the next sheet of paper. They must be careful to only add to each list. Hang the sheets up and use them to spring board a discussion about their opera experience. Encourage the students to remember facts.

**Words or Music?** Draw a line down a piece of paper and write words on one side and music on the other. In 5 minutes, brainstorm with a partner and write down all the reasons why *words* would be more important. In the next 5 minutes, switch gears and do the same for music. Examine the English libretto (e-mail [asnyder@pov.bc.ca](mailto:asnyder@pov.bc.ca) for a copy) and add more ideas to your lists. Each partner will support a point of view by citing examples and giving rationale.

**Free Think:** Students will enjoy starting the class with a discussion of the production of *Capriccio*. What did they like? Did anything surprise them? What would they like to see or hear again? What would they have done differently? Facilitate the conversation and allow freedom for the conversation to head where it needs to.

**Point of View:** At the end of the opera, do you think that Madeleine made a choice about how her commissioned opera will end? Who do you think she chose to be with? Why? Think about the music playing, the staging and the libretto to defend your opinion.

**Soul Mates:** Robin Hood and Maid Marian. Lily and Marshall. Jim and Pam. Romeo and Juliet. Do you believe in soul mates? Or can people end up with a variety of people in their lives? Do you think either the poet or the composer was the soul mate for Madeleine? Was Madeleine's first husband her soul mate instead? What do you think Madeleine believes?

**Journal:** The Countess says the following in *Capriccio* when deciding between the composer Flamand and the poet Olivier. "*Deciding on either-losing the other! Are we not the losers whenever we gain?*" (English translation by Maria Massey). Think of a time when you had a difficult choice to make and how it made you feel.

**An Opera in One Act:** Strauss was 78 when *Capriccio* premiered on October 28, 1942, in Munich Germany, in the midst of World War II. As the premiere approached, the problem of nightly air raids had to be considered. Since raids usually occurred between 10 and 11 pm, the performance ran in a single extended act without an intermission so the audience could, with luck, find their way home. How do you think our culture (government, current events, etc) play into our creation of our art today? Do you think art is affected by culture?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Capriccio Characters Word Find

F W W  
G N P W C T J R R  
D N R N Q L T W X E N U K  
X X B C B C O I I N G M F L N I H  
G P J N D I D A R D N Q F P G I M L U  
I T W P V M C X G G I K P F I W G A K S Z  
J L H J D O O F H S L A X O X C M R R T E  
M D L K H L N E J P N M V L I M S V N W K B Z  
V R Z P I Y S A L U S V D Y C H L A I A P K W  
H E A G V T U I A X Y Q J V P C I O R D K B Z P G  
Z J I I I I I E T P D W X C P I U B Q L P L U M H  
W J E Q D O B U J A Q O R S E R V A N T S W J Z N  
Z A R Y K F N I R W N L X D Z H P L N O I T P X D U O  
E H Z E L V V J J K N B I L A M A E I R B W J N F C A  
Y U C F E L A E J P I H S A O J C N X E S Z A L G D A  
U X X P F L U A S Q X R E N F Q L N X G M N Q B N  
Z V O C H T N U O C F Z B Q E Z V A Q A P I R E K  
T P G W L J T H R W J J O U S G G X L W I F O Z F  
X B E A K I S P O A L M X P V Q F N Q M M C A  
C S Y F D D K A Q E N I E L E D A M T O P H R  
P M N I X S J P P I A J P V G N K D M D E  
O F L M B I S S L M V V V L V T R Z H D F  
Z E P U A T Y A H P L G S E O T A Z U  
Y C R I X Y S W O L B J J B A R X  
C R P I V B T E A A H T Y  
P K M G U D M Z R  
D U G

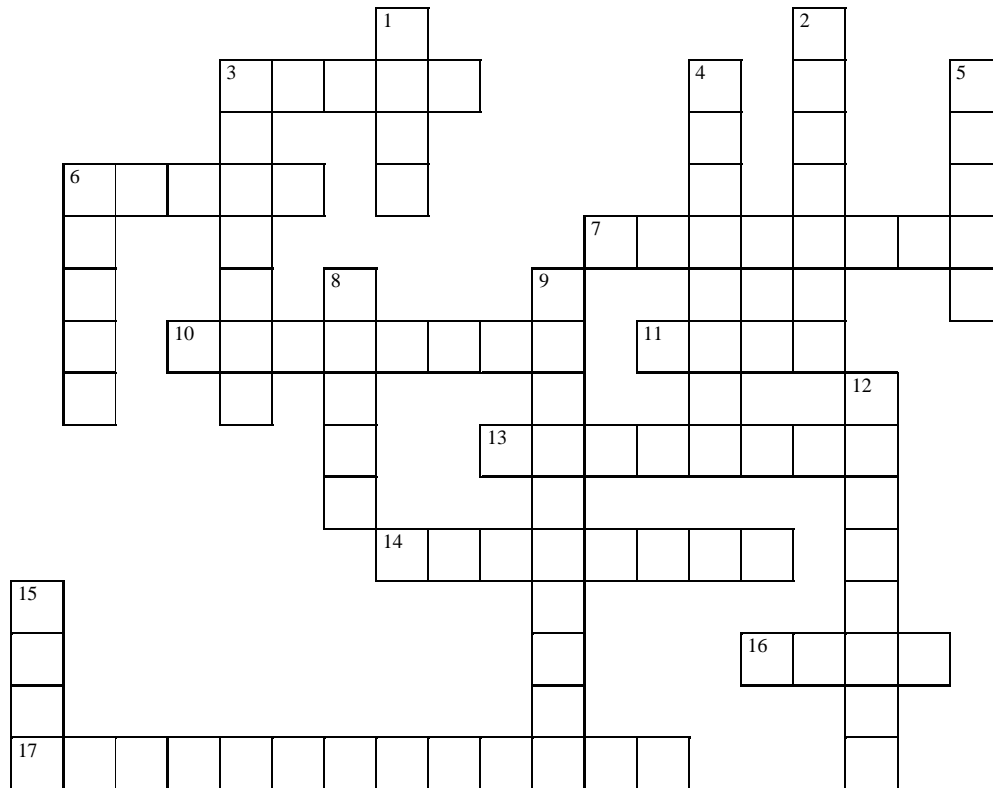
MADELEINE  
FLAMAND  
OLIVIER  
LA ROCHE  
ITALIAN  
SINGER  
COUNT  
CLAIRON  
MONSIEUR  
TAUPE  
MAJOR DOMO  
SERVANTS  
CAPRICCIO

Be the first to send in the following word find, and you will win two free tickets to the next student dress rehearsal!

Andrew Snyder  
Education and Outreach Coordinator  
1815 Blanshard Street, Suite 500, Victoria, BC, V8T 5A4

# Opera Crossword

The characters in Capriccio sure knew and understood music! Test your knowledge of opera and music in this challenging crossword!



## ACROSS

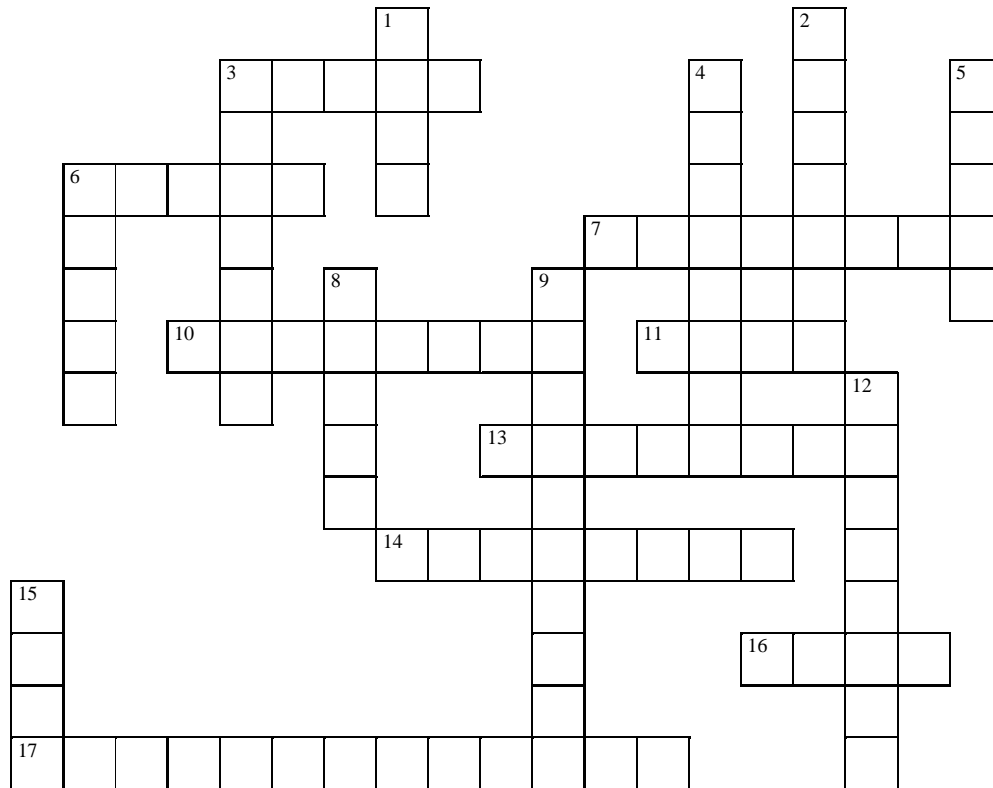
- 3 Music in written form.
- 6 The speed at which the music is played.
- 7 A medium-low male voice.
- 10 A piece performed by a group of singers or players
- 11 A two person ensemble
- 13 The text of an opera
- 14 Words the composer uses to tell whether a piece should be soft or loud.
- 16 The lowest male voice.
- 17 An instrumental or vocal part that supports a solo.

## DOWN

- 1 A three person ensemble
- 2 A four person ensemble
- 3 A high female voice.
- 4 An introductory piece played by the orchestra
- 5 An eight person ensemble
- 6 A high male voice.
- 8 A medium-high female voice
- 9 A style of dialogue delivery in opera.
- 12 The artist who writes the music
- 15 A vocal solo or song.

# Opera Crossword Key

The characters in Capriccio sure knew and understood music! Test your knowledge of opera and music in this challenging crossword! Use the internet to help with your research!



## ACROSS

- 3 Music in written form.
- 6 The speed at which the music is played.
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## Teacher's Comments

Your comments and suggestions are greatly appreciated. Please take a few minutes to fill out this questionnaire and return it to the address below. Thank you for your comments and suggestions.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade(s) you teach: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Subjects: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you attended other arts events with your students in the past year?  Yes  No

If yes, what were they? \_\_\_\_\_

Were you able to use the Teacher's Study Guide and Activity Guide in your classroom activities before attending the opera?  Yes  No

If not, please elaborate: \_\_\_\_\_

If so, which sections of the Study Guide and Activity Guide did you find most useful?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How appropriate was the information provided in the Guides? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What would you add/delete?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Did you spend classroom time discussing the performance after your students attended the opera?  
 Yes  No

Do you have any comments about the performance itself?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to receive information on our future Student Dress Rehearsals?  Yes  No

How would you like to receive information?  Fax  Email  Letters  Other \_\_\_\_\_

Further comments and suggestions \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form to:

**Pacific Opera, 1815 Blanshard Street, Suite 500, Victoria, BC V8T 5A4 Fax: 250.382.4944**

Or scan and email to [asnyder@pov.bc.ca](mailto:asnyder@pov.bc.ca)