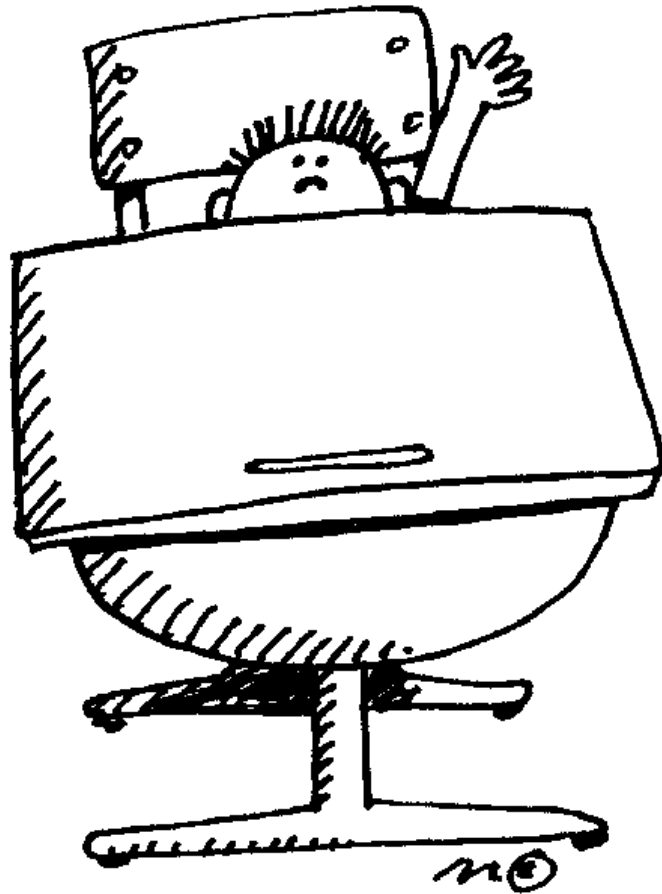


# How Andy Found His Voice

## Study Guide



**San Francisco Opera Guild**

# THE STORY

Meet **Andy**. He's struggling through school, trying to fit in—and not having a very successful time. He's one of those kids that the other kids pick on. Pressured by those around him, **Andy** is reluctant to make a fuss, and self-conscious about admitting that he knows the right answers. One day, after the usual morning of teasing and bullying, **Andy** is accused of cheating on a test, even though he wasn't. He is too timid to contradict, completely unable to defend himself. He gets detention. He is grounded. **Andy** is miserable.

Enter **Terpsichoria** and **Cleo**, two muses that decide to help him. With the aid of spirits from the world of opera and music, **Andy** learns about the power and potential of using one's voice.

**Papageno**, the clever and lovable bird-figure from Mozart's **The Magic Flute** appears to demonstrate the power of the voice and the importance of using it truthfully. Then **Giuseppe Verdi**, the most popular Italian opera composer of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, pops in to show how he was able to influence the cultural and political movements of a nation with his voice, as we sing a section of his famous chorus, **Va Pensiero** from his opera, **Nabucco**. Along the way we meet **Violetta**, one of the most famous operatic heroines from **La Traviata**.

Finally we meet **Cio-Cio-San**, the tragic central figure in Giacomo Puccini's **Madame Butterfly**. **Andy** is so moved by her plight, that he convinces her to save her own life and use her voice to work through her frustrations. Through helping and advising **Cio-Cio-San**, **Andy** manages to change his own point of view and is able to come into his own voice; he learns that he can stand up for himself, and does not have to accept poor treatment from his peers. He realizes he is not alone and that if he respects himself and has the power to express his opinion, he can start to change the way others view him and act towards him.

## WHAT ARE THEY SINGING??

*Most of the musical selections you will hear are arias or ensemble pieces from various operas. Though the words have been changed to fit our story line, the spirit of the pieces remains in tact. See if you can find examples of each of these songs in their original context. Samples are readily available through your preferred online search engine...*

1. *Una Voce Poco Fa* from the opera, *The Barber of Seville*, by Gioacchino Rossini. Premiered in Rome, Italy in 1816.
2. *Three Little Maids from School* from the operetta, *The Mikado*, by Gilbert and Sullivan. Premiered in London, England in 1885.
3. *Nel Cor Piu Non Mi Sento* from the opera, *La Molinara*, by Giovanni Paisiello. Premiered in Naples, Italy in 1790.
4. *The Flower Duet* from the opera, *Lakme*, by Leo Delibes. Premiered in Paris, France in 1883.
5. *Der Vogelfanger* from the opera, *The Magic Flute*, by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Premiered in Vienna, Austria in 1791.
6. *Quintet* from the opera, *The Magic Flute*, by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Premiered in Vienna, Austria in 1791.
7. *È Strano...Sempre Libera* from the opera, *La Traviata*, by Giuseppe Verdi. Premiered in Venice, Italy in 1853.
8. *Va Pensiero* from the opera, *Nabucco*, by Giuseppe Verdi. Premiered in Milan, Italy in 1842.
9. *Un Bel Di'* from the opera, *Madama Butterfly* by Giacomo Puccini. Premiered in Milan, Italy in 1904.
- 10 *Nessun Dorma* from the opera, *Turandot*, by Giacomo Puccini. Premiered in Milan, Italy in 1926.

# So...who are these people?

## *A brief and painless character breakdown*

### Terpsichoria and Cleo from...

#### The Nine Muses

The Nine Muses were Greek goddesses who ruled over the arts and sciences and offered inspiration in those subjects. They were the daughters of Zeus, lord of all gods, and Mnemosyne, who represented memory. Memory was important for the Muses because in ancient times, when there were no books, poets had to carry their work in their memories.

**Calliope** was the muse of epic poetry.

**Clio** was the muse of history.

**Erato** was the muse of love poetry.

**Euterpe** was the muse of music.

**Melpomene** was the muse of tragedy.

**Polyhymnia** was the muse of sacred poetry.

**Terpsichore** was the muse of dance.

**Thalia** was the muse of comedy.

**Urania** was the muse of astronomy.



SOURCE: ARTTODAY.COM

*-courtesy Pearson Education*

### Papageno...

From Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, becomes Prince Tamino's companion in his search for the lovely princess Pamina. At the beginning of the opera, Papageno, a colorful bird-catcher, takes credit for killing a dangerous dragon/snake/serpent creature and is cursed for lying by the three ladies of the powerful Queen of the Night. His punishment takes the form of a padlock on his mouth which keeps him from speaking until he can tell the truth.

### Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901)

Is probably the most well-known and important Italian opera composer of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He is most famous for three operas he wrote in the early 1850's: *La Traviata*, *Rigoletto*, and *Il Trovatore*. He also transformed several of Shakespeare's plays into opera with his later compositions of *Macbeth*, *Otello*, and *Falstaff*. In addition to his artistic contributions, Verdi was an important National figure in Italian history. His popularity with both peasants and nobility allowed him to create art that told the stories important to both classes. Often politically controversial in its representation of government, his work was sometimes censored or banned by the court. Often he had to move to a different town in order for his work to be produced. One of his operas, *Nabucco*, tells the biblical story of the Israelites and their exile from their homeland by the Babylonians. At the time, the national Risorgimento (resurgence of Nationalism) was underway in Italy, and the people took to the streets singing the homeland chorus, *Va Pensiero*, from the opera. This song was also sung by the crowds at Verdi's funeral.

## Violetta

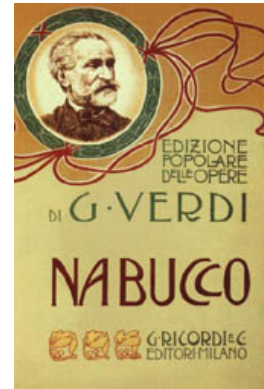
Is the spirited, yet tragic heroine from Verdi's opera, *La Traviata*. Her voice type is coloratura soprano, characterized by a lyrical sweetness capable of intricate vocal acrobatics high in her vocal range. This character is a party girl who falls in love with a decent man and wonders if she can give up her free life and finally settle down. This drama is further complicated by the fact that she is poor and dying of tuberculosis. Let's just say, it does not end well for our Violetta...

## Alfredo

Is Violetta's love interest in *La Traviata*. Her voice type is lyric and heroic tenor, singing with passion and great Italian feeling.



Giuseppe Verdi



## Cio-Cio-San

Is the ill-fated heroine from Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*. She lives in Nagasaki, Japan where she meets and marries a U.S. Naval Officer, Lieutenant Pinkerton. Soon after their marriage he returns to the United States leaving her with their son, Trouble. She waits and waits for him to return, and when he finally does, we learn that he has taken an American wife and has only come back to get his son; he has no intention of honoring his marriage vows to Cio-Cio-San. After faithfully waiting and watching the harbor for the return of Pinkerton's ship, Cio-Cio-San cannot imagine a life without her son and husband and commits suicide at the end of the opera.

## Suzuki

Is the lady in waiting and companion to Cio-Cio-San. She is extremely distraught by the turn of events and tries to help Cio-Cio-San in her plight.



# A Short Introduction to Opera

Opera consists of many dimensions that are combined to make it a unique whole: the human voice, orchestral music, the visual arts (scenery, costumes, and special effects), drama (tragedy or comedy), and occasionally dance. The melding of these elements can make you cry tears of joy or sadness, produce laughter or anger, but most importantly transport you to a magical land of music and song.

Opera originated in Florence, Italy, in the late 1500's, with a small group of men who were members of a Camerata (Italian for society). They called themselves the Camerati Bardi or Camerati Fiorentini. The intellectuals, poets, and musicians of the Camerata decided they wanted words to be a featured aspect of music to coordinate thought with emotion. They used ancient Greek drama as their inspiration, including the use of a chorus to comment on the action. The Camerata laid down three principles for their new art form:

1. The text must be understood; the accompaniment must be very simple and should not distract from the words.
2. The words must be sung with correct and natural declamation, as if they were spoken and not rhyme like songs.
3. The melody must interpret the feeling of the text.

The first significant composer to fully develop the ideas of the Camerata was Jacopo Peri (1561-1633), whose opera *Dafne* was performed in 1594 and was regarded as the first opera. *L'Orfeo*, written in 1607 by Claudio Monteverdi is the oldest opera that is still widely produced today.

Operas are divided into scenes and acts that contain different types of vocal pieces for one or many singers. An *aria* is a vocal solo that focuses on a character's emotions rather than actions. A *recitative* is sung dialogue or speech that occurs between arias and ensembles. Composers write the score or the music for the opera. Sometimes the composer will also write the text for the opera, but most often they work with a librettist. The story of the opera is written as a libretto, a text that is easily set to music. In the past, the libretto was also bound and sold to the audience. Today, the audience can easily follow the plot with the use of supertitles. Supertitles are the English translation of the libretto, which are projected on the screen above the stage.

Many question the difference between an opera and a musical like *Les Miserables* or *Phantom of the Opera*. There are many differences. One, most operas are through-composed, meaning there is no spoken dialogue while musicals tend to alternate between spoken scenes and songs, using the music to comment upon and augment the dialogue and emotional content of the scene. There are exceptions. Many present day musicals are indeed through-composed and are often referred to as "rock operas." Examples include *Rent* and *Jesus Christ Superstar*. There are musical differences between the two as well. Operas require classically trained singers who must be able to sing in a distinct style, typically without amplification, while there is more variety in the voice of a musical theatre performer and they often use amplification. The use of microphones is a relatively new convention for Musical Theatre, however. Prior to 1969, and the emergence of *Hair*, the tribal Rock Musical, musical theatre singers sang without amplification and the orchestration was arranged to support and enhance the natural voice.

## Musical Time Periods

### Medieval (500-1400)

Perotin/Leonin  
Guillame de Machaut  
Francesco Landini  
Jacapo da Bologna

### Renaissance (1400-1600) *counterpoint, suspension, and texture*

Josquin des Prez  
G.P. Palestrina  
Thomas Tallis  
William Byrd

### Baroque (1600-1760) *“misshapen pearl”*

Claudio Monteverdi  
Antonio Vivaldi  
George Fredrich Handel  
Johann Sebastian Bach

### Classical (1730- 1829) *structural clarity*

Joseph Haydn  
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart  
Ludwig van Beethoven  
Christopher Willibald Gluck

### Romantic (1815-1910) *expressive, intimate, lyrical*

Vincenzo Bellini  
Giuseppe Verdi  
Richard Wagner  
Charles Gounod  
Jacques Offenbach  
Leo Delibes  
Georges Bizet  
Giacomo Puccini

### 20<sup>th</sup> Century Classical (1900-2000) *Impressionist, neoclassical, experimental*

Benjamin Britten  
Aaron Copeland  
Claude Debussy  
Gustav Mahler  
Gian-Carlo Menotti  
Sergei Rachmaninoff  
Arnold Shoenberg  
Igor Stravinsky  
Kurt Weill

### Contemporary Classical (1975-present) *New objectivity and social realism*

John Adams  
John Cage  
Ned Rorem  
Philip Glass  
Olivier Messiaen  
Stewart Wallace

# Operatic Voices



Operatic singing developed in Europe during the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The vocal demands are far greater on an opera singer than on any other singer. Opera singers rarely use microphones and therefore must develop their voices to make a sound that will project and be heard above an orchestra in a large theatre.

## How do they do it?

After years of practice and study, an opera singer learns to use his or her body as an amplification device. By controlling the muscles of the diaphragm (a balloon-like muscle beneath the lungs and above the stomach) the singer can regulate the amount of breath used. By tightening the diaphragm the singer can push out the right amount of air to make the vocal cords vibrate. The speed at which the chord vibrates determines the pitch. As the sound passes through the mouth it resonates in the upper chest cavities and the sinus cavities of the face and head. These cavities act as small echo chambers and help amplify the sound. The shape of the mouth and the placement of the tongue near the lips contribute to the tone and sound of the words.

Many singers begin their operatic training in university or before. Opera students study singing, music history, composition, acting, movement, and theory. In addition to performance skills, they study diction and at least one foreign language. The most popular opera languages are Italian, German, and French. After university, singers begin to work in the professional world. Their first roles are usually small parts, but if they continue to study and train, they may move on the bigger principal roles.

Professional singers develop a number of roles in their repertoire. Since the principal artists are required to have their parts memorized before rehearsals begin, singers must prepare well in advance of each contract. Singers have voice teachers who help them refine their singing techniques and many will also have an acting coach. Even a well-established singer will have a vocal coach for specific roles.

Each person's vocal mechanism is constructed differently. The roles that a singer performs are dependent mostly upon their vocal range, but within the vocal ranges there are many colors and weights of voice that determine which roles he or she can sing

safely and artistically. Vocal color refers to the richness of the sound while vocal weight refers to how powerful a voice sounds.

After the role has been studied intensely and the singer is hired to perform, the singer arrives at the opera company for the rehearsals. This time is spent refining the music with the conductor and staging the action with the stage director. Each director has a different idea of how the character should be played, and each conductor has a different idea of how the character should sound, therefore the singer must modify his or her techniques to reach the desired result.

Physical health is a major priority to a singer. Contrary to popular belief, not all opera singers are overweight. Conventional wisdom used to state that excessive weight gave added volume and richness to the voice. However, in recent years, people have discovered that physical fitness can give similar benefits to a voice.

## Six Basic Vocal Categories

### Women:

**Soprano:** The highest female voice, similar to a flute or violin in range and tone color. Usually plays the heroine in the opera since a high, bright sound can easily suggest youth and innocence.

**Mezzo-soprano:** The middle-range female voice, similar to an oboe in range and tone color. Called an alto in choral arrangements, can play a wide variety of characters including gypsies, mothers, nurses, and even the part of a young man (also called a *trousers role*).

**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.

### Men:

**Tenor:** The highest male voice similar to a trumpet in range, tone color and acoustical "ring". Usually plays the hero or the romantic lead in the opera. A **Countertenor** sings even higher, usually in his falsetto range.

**Baritone:** The middle-range male voice similar to a French horn in tone color. Often plays the leader of mischief in comic opera, or the villain in tragic opera. Is occasionally the hero.

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

# Opera Glossary

**Accompaniment** - An instrumental or vocal part designed to support or complement a principal voice, instrument, or group of voices or instruments. In an aria, the voice is the primary focus and the orchestra is the accompaniment.

**Acoustics** - The science of sound. The qualities of sound in an enclosed space.

**Aria** - An extended musical passage performed by one singer. It is used to express feelings or comment on the action and is accompanied by the orchestra. The action usually stops while an aria is sung.

**Ballet** - A form of dance that tells a story.

**Banda** - A small group of instrumentalists who play either on the stage or backstage, not in the pit.

**Bel Canto** - Literally “beautiful singing,” bel canto passages are lyrical, and often very florid.

**Bravo** - Literally “brave, courageous.” A form of applause when shouted by members of the audience at the end of an especially pleasing performance. Strictly speaking, *bravo* is for a single man, *brava* for a woman, and *bravi* for more than one performer.

**Cabaletta** - The final section of an extended aria or duet, generally short and brilliant, to display the voice and rouse applause.

**Cadenza** - An elaborate unaccompanied passage near the end of an aria designed to show off the voice. Originally used to close a number and improvised on the spot.

**Choreographer** - The person who designs the steps of a dance.

**Choreography** - A dance or the making of a dance.

**Chorus** - A group of mixed voices, or the musical passage sung by such a group.

**Claque** - A group of people hired to sit in the audience and either applaud enthusiastically to ensure success or whistle or boo to create a disaster. In past years, leading singers were sometimes blackmailed to pay a claque to insure they would not create a disturbance. Even now, one is sometimes used but rarely acknowledged.

**Coloratura** - A kind of vocal music that requires the singer to execute a variety of technically brilliant and difficult passages. These may be fast runs (scales), trills (rapid alternation of two notes), or other devices that embellish the vocal line.

**Composer** - The person who writes the music of an opera or other musical work.

**Comprimario** - A secondary role in an opera.

**Concertmaster** - The “first chair” violinist who plays occasional solos and is responsible for coordinating all of the stringed instruments. The concertmaster decides on the bowing so that all of the bows move in unison.

**Conductor** - The person who leads the orchestra and singers.

**Cover** - A replacement for a role in case of illness, as with an understudy in theater.

**Cue** - Signal to a singer or orchestra member to start.

**Curtain Call** - At the end of a performance all of the members of the cast and the conductor take bows. Sometimes this is done in front of the main curtain, hence the name. Often, however, the bows are taken on the full stage with the curtain open.

**Diva** - Literally “goddess,” it refers to an important female opera star. The masculine form is *divo*.

**Dress (a wig)** - To prepare a wig for wear.

**Dresser** - A member of the backstage staff who helps the artists dress in their costumes. While each of the principal singers usually has his or her own dresser, supers and chorus members share dressers.

**Dress Rehearsal** - The final rehearsal(s), using all of the costumes, lights, etc. While sometimes it is necessary to stop for corrections, an attempt is made to make it as much like a final performance as possible.

**Duet** - A song for two voices.

**Dynamics** - The degree of loudness or softness in the music.

**Encore** - Literally means “again.” It used to be the custom for a singer to repeat a particularly popular aria if the audience called *Encore* loud enough. While this is still done in countries like Italy, it is rare elsewhere.

**Ensemble** - Any extended musical passage performed by more than one player. Very often they are all singing different words and different musical lines. *Duets*, *trios*, and *choruses* are all ensembles.

**Finale** - Literally “the end.” The ending segment/song of an act or scene. It usually involves many singers and is very dramatic.

**Fly, or Fly Tower** - Sufficient space above the stage, i.e., if there is a *fly tower*, pieces of the set are often raised up or *flown* when they are not in use.

**Forte** - Literally “strong.” A dynamic marking meaning loud.

**Impresario** - The general director of an opera company.

**Interlude** - An orchestral selection played between scenes in an opera. It is used to set a mood and even advance the story.

**Intermission** - A break between acts of an opera. The lights go on and the audience is free to move around. Intermissions usually last up to twenty minutes.

**Leitmotiv or motif** - A short musical phrase associated with a particular character or event.

**Libretto** - Literally “little book.” The text of an opera. The libretto is always shorter than a normal play because it takes so much longer to sing a line than to say it. The action is often interrupted for an aria which limits the length of the text even more.

**Librettist** - The person who writes the libretto, often a poet or playwright.

**Maestro** - Literally “master.” Used as a courtesy title for the conductor, whether a man or woman.

**Mark** - To sing very softly or not at full voice. A full-length opera is very hard on a singer’s voice so most mark during rehearsals.

**Melody** - The tune of a piece of music.

**Opera** - A drama set with music. Different than a play or musical for the orchestra is an equal partner with the singers. Literally the word *opera* is the plural of the Latin word *opus*, which means “work.” Like a play, an opera is acted on a stage, with costumes, wigs, scenery, etc. Almost all of it is sung, in contrast to an operetta or musical, where a great deal of the text is spoken.

**Opera Buffa** - A comic opera first developed in the eighteenth century. Each act usually ends with a large ensemble finale.

**Orchestra** - The group of musicians who are led by the conductor and accompany the singers.

**Orchestra Pit** - The sunken area in front of the stage where the orchestra plays.

**Overture** - An orchestral piece several minutes in length played before the beginning of an opera. Usually, but not always, it contains some themes from the music of the opera.

**Patter Song** - A song or aria in which the character sings as many words as possible in the shortest length of time.

**Piano** - Literally “plane.” A dynamic marking meaning soft.

**Prelude** - Usually short in duration and without an ending, a *prelude* leads into an act without pause, as opposed to an *overture* which is longer and can be played as a separate piece.

**Principal** - A leading role or character in the opera.

**Prima Donna** - Literally “first lady.” The leading woman singer in an opera. Because of the way some of them behaved in the past, it often refers to someone who is acting in a superior, demanding and difficult fashion.

**Production** - The combination of sets, costumes, props, lights, etc.

**Prompt** - To help a singer who has forgotten a line. In some opera houses, the *prompter* sits in a box at the very front of the stage. It is not customary for opera houses in America to use a prompter.

**Props (properties)** - Small items carried or used by singers during a performance, such as fans, letters or a rope.

**Proscenium** - The front opening of the stage which frames the action.

**Recitative** - Sung dialogue that moves the action along by providing information. A recitative (or recit) usually has no recognizable melody and the singing is generally faster with a rhythm more like normal speech. *Recitativo secco* is accompanied only by a keyboard instrument such as a harpsichord, sometimes with added cello or bass.

**Roulade or Run** - A quick succession of notes sung to one syllable.

**Score** - The written music for a piece or group of pieces with separate lines for each instrument and each singer's voice.

**Set** - The decoration on stage that indicates the place and overall world of the opera.

**Sitzprobe** - Literally "sitting rehearsal." It is the first rehearsal of the singers with the orchestra, with the former seated, and no acting.

**Solo** - A piece or portion of music where only one performer has the melody.

**Stage Director** - The person responsible for directing the movement of the characters and creating the story on stage.

**Supernumerary or Super** - An "extra." Someone who is part of a group on stage but does not sing.

**Supertitles** - Translations into English of the original words, projected on a screen above the stage.

**Synopsis** - A short version of the story of the opera, usually one or two pages.

**Tempo** - Literally "time." The speed at which the music is played.

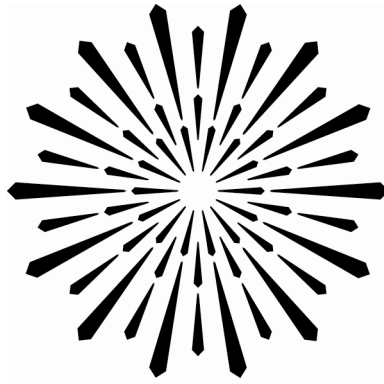
**Trouser role** - A role which depicts a young man or boy, but sung by a woman. Also called a *Pants Role*

**Verismo** - Describes the realistic style of opera that started in Italy at the end of the nineteenth century.



## How Andy Found His Voice Prompts for Discussion

1. Why do the other kids choose to pick on Andy? What is it that makes someone a target for bullying or teasing in school?
2. Do you know anyone like Andy? How would you advise or help him or her?
3. Have you ever joined in a crowd who is teasing or making fun of someone else? If so, what made you join in and how did you feel afterwards?
4. What are the rewards for speaking up and defending yourself?
5. What are the possible consequences of speaking up and defending yourself?
6. In the beginning of the story Mrs. Grout gets frustrated when her students aren't taking her or the lesson seriously. What does she do and why?
7. Is Papageno a good role model for Andy? How would you describe his character?
8. Giuseppe Verdi wrote many operas expressing the experiences and opinions of many different characters. What effect do you think he had on his community?
9. What contemporary artists have contributed to cultural or behavioral change in people? What makes artists influential?
10. Why is it important to find your own voice? Where will it help you in life?
11. How often do you express your opinion when it counts? How does it effect the things that happen in your life?
12. Andy learns the importance of recognizing his own value which allows his self-esteem to grow. What happens as we grow up if we never value ourselves?
13. What can you do today to bring about change in your world by using your voice?
14. How does opera differ from other art or music forms in your life?
15. What happens when you choose to tell a story through music?
16. How would you describe the singing that you heard in the show?
17. Do artists have the power to influence social and political change?



## SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD

*Giving Voice to Potential*

Back in 1939 when Arts Education and Outreach was merely a glimmer in the eye of most artistic Institutions, San Francisco Opera Guild was bringing children to the Opera. 72 years later we reach over 54,000 students a year in over 200 schools. Our 8 programs engage students through experiential learning in both the classroom and the theatre giving them an opportunity to participate, observe, reflect, and create. These programs stand firmly on common ground with the educators of our community, ready and able to help them deliver on their objectives: to nurture the expressive nature in each student, to inspire him or her to make positive choices and grow to be a conscientious, intelligent, sensitive and culturally aware adult.

### Our Programs

Sing a Story, Opera á la Carte, Book to Bravo, Voices for Social Justice, Creative Opera Workshop, Summer Opera Camp, Student Dress Rehearsals, Opera House Tours

Contact us:

[www.sfopera.com](http://www.sfopera.com)

[guildeducation@sfopera.com](mailto:guildeducation@sfopera.com)

415-565-3238

### How Andy Found His Voice

By Caroline Altman, Director of Education

Cast: soprano, mezzo-soprano, tenor, baritone, pianist.  
*Available for production in a school/theater near you!*