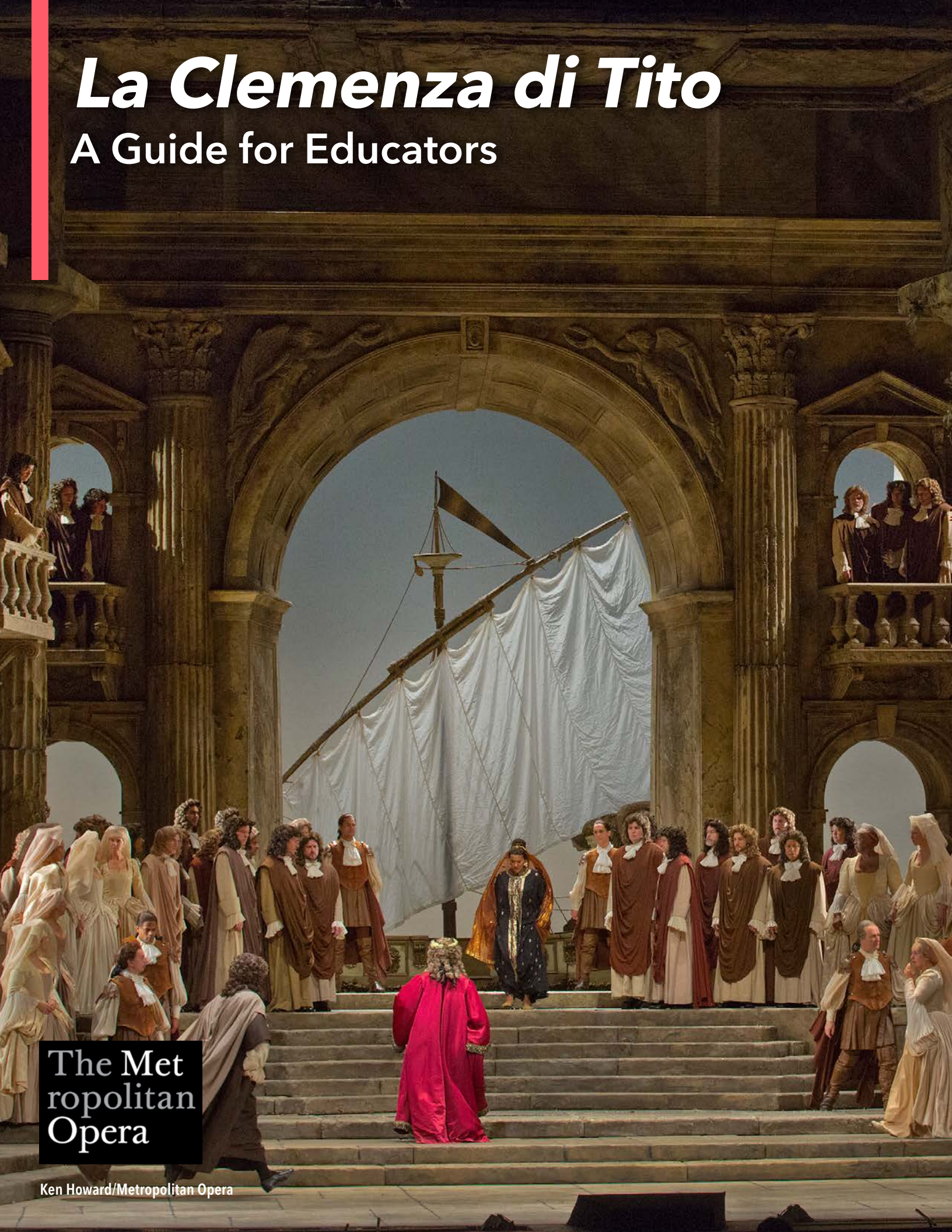


La Clemenza di Tito

A Guide for Educators



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Opera

Ken Howard/Metropolitan Opera

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM *LA CLEMENZA DI TITO*

WHAT ARE THE LIMITS OF FORGIVENESS? IS THERE A CRIME SO GRIEVOUS AND PERSONAL

that it cannot be pardoned? This central question overshadows the whole of *La Clemenza di Tito*. Composed for the Prague coronation festivities for the Hapsburg emperor Leopold II, the work portrays a young man's participation in a plot to incite rebellion and assassinate his ruler, whom he loves like a brother. But this ruler possesses a mercy so profligate that he overrides the condemnation of his own Senate and forgives all.

In 1791, the question of a ruler's response to rebellion was not merely an idle thought experiment for Leopold II, whose sister Marie Antoinette was at that moment under house arrest in revolution-era Paris. In the idealized world of the opera, the emperor Tito is god-like in his wisdom and kindness and conquers rebellion not through force but through leniency. Whereas other characters are drawn by their passions into deceit and insurrection, Tito prioritizes the needs of the state over his own well-being—a model of benevolent monarchical absolutism only possible in the Enlightenment-era imagination. Mozart's vehicle for such lofty displays of imperial virtue was *opera seria*, an operatic genre marked by its dignity, elegance, and thematic focus on the triumph of human morality.

This guide is intended to help your students appreciate *La Clemenza di Tito* and its involvement in the long history of *opera seria*. They will explore how Mozart adapted the genre's format to allow for a freer representation of the drama at stake in matters of love and rebellion. The resources on the following pages are designed to provide context, deepen background knowledge, and enrich the overall experience of this final dress rehearsal performance, equipping students to respond to the opera with confidence, familiarity, and joy.

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THE WORK:

LA CLEMENZA DI TITO

An opera in two acts, sung in Italian
Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Libretto by Caterino Mazzola
Adapted from a libretto by
Pietro Metastasio

First performed September 6, 1791
at the National Theater (now Estates
Theater), Prague, Hapsburg Empire
(now Czech Republic)

PRODUCTION

Lothar Koenigs, Conductor
Jean-Pierre Ponnelle, Production
Jean-Pierre Ponnelle, Set and Costume
Designer
Gil Wechsler, Lighting Designer
Peter McClintock, Revival Stage
Director

STARRING

Ying Fang
SERVILIA (soprano)

Elza van den Heever
VITELLIA (soprano)

Joyce DiDonato
SESTO (mezzo-soprano)

Emily D'Angelo
ANNIO (mezzo-soprano)

Matthew Polenzani
TITO (tenor)

Christian Van Horn
PUBLIO (bass)

Production a gift of the Lila Acheson
and DeWitt Wallace Fund, established
by the founders of The Reader's Digest
Association, Inc.



Photo: Johnathan Tichler/
Metropolitan Opera

The Metropolitan Opera is a vibrant home for the most creative and talented singers, conductors, composers, musicians, stage directors, designers, visual artists, choreographers, and dancers from around the world.

The Metropolitan Opera was founded in 1883, with its first opera house built on Broadway and 39th Street by a group of wealthy businessmen who wanted their own theater. In the company's early years, the management changed course several times, first performing everything in Italian (even *Carmen* and *Lohengrin*), then everything in German (even *Aida* and *Faust*), before finally settling into a policy of performing most works in their original language.

Almost from the beginning, it was clear that the opera house on 39th Street did not have adequate stage facilities. But it was not until the Met joined with other New York institutions in forming Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts that a new home became possible. The new Metropolitan Opera House, which opened at Lincoln Center in September of 1966, was equipped with the finest technical facilities of the day.

Each season the Met stages more than 200 opera performances in New York. More than 800,000 people attend the performances in the opera house during the season, and millions more experience the Met through new media distribution initiatives and state-of-the-art technology.

This guide includes several sections with a variety of background material on *La Clemenza di Tito*.

- **The Source, The Story, and Who's Who in *La Clemenza di Tito***
- **A Timeline:** The historical context of the opera's story and composition
- **A Closer Look:** A brief article highlighting an important aspect of Mozart's *La Clemenza di Tito*
- **Guided Listening:** A series of musical excerpts with questions and a roadmap to possible student responses
- **Student Critique:** A performance activity highlighting specific aspects of this production, and topics for a wrap-up discussion following students' attendance
- **Further Resources:** Recommendations for additional study, both online and in print
- **Glossary:** Common musical terms found in this guide and in the concert hall

The materials in this guide will focus on several aspects of *La Clemenza di Tito*:

- The history and structure of the *opera seria* genre
- The characteristics of Mozart's musical style
- Creative choices made by the artists of the Metropolitan Opera for this production
- The opera as a unified work of art, involving the efforts of composer, librettist, and Met artists

This guide is intended to cultivate students' interest in *La Clemenza di Tito*, whether or not they have any prior acquaintance with opera. It includes materials for students with a wide range of musical backgrounds and seeks to encourage them to think about opera—and the performing arts as a whole—as a medium of both entertainment and creative expression.



Ken Howard/
Metropolitan Opera

SUMMARY

Vitellia, the daughter of the previous emperor of Rome, resents the fact that she is not empress. Offended that the newly appointed emperor, Tito, has not asked her to marry him, Vitellia uses her influence over Sesto, who loves her, to convince him to kill Tito. Sesto's friend Annio is in love with Servilia, Sesto's sister. But when Tito decides to marry Servilia, Annio is ready to give her up for the sake of Rome. Vitellia hears of Tito's engagement and is furious that he has not chosen her. She asks Sesto to set their plot in motion and assassinate Tito. Meanwhile, Servilia has confessed to Tito that she loves Annio. Tito agrees that Servilia should marry the man she loves, and he breaks off their engagement. Vitellia learns that Servilia will not be empress—which means she still has a chance to become Tito's wife. But it is too late; Sesto's conspirators have already set Rome on fire and are planning to kill Tito.

Fortunately, Tito survives the attack, but Sesto is nevertheless consumed with shame. Soon, Sesto is arrested. Vitellia convinces him not to reveal her role in the plot. Tito is deeply saddened when he learns he was betrayed by his friend, and he struggles with how to punish Sesto fairly. Sesto is brought before Tito in chains, and his grief and remorse are clear. Tito decides that he wishes to be remembered for his mercy rather than his vengeance. When he appears before the people of Rome to make his pronouncement, Vitellia suddenly confesses her part in the plot. Tito is dismayed to learn of another betrayal, but he absolves everyone, and his people praise his generous forgiveness.



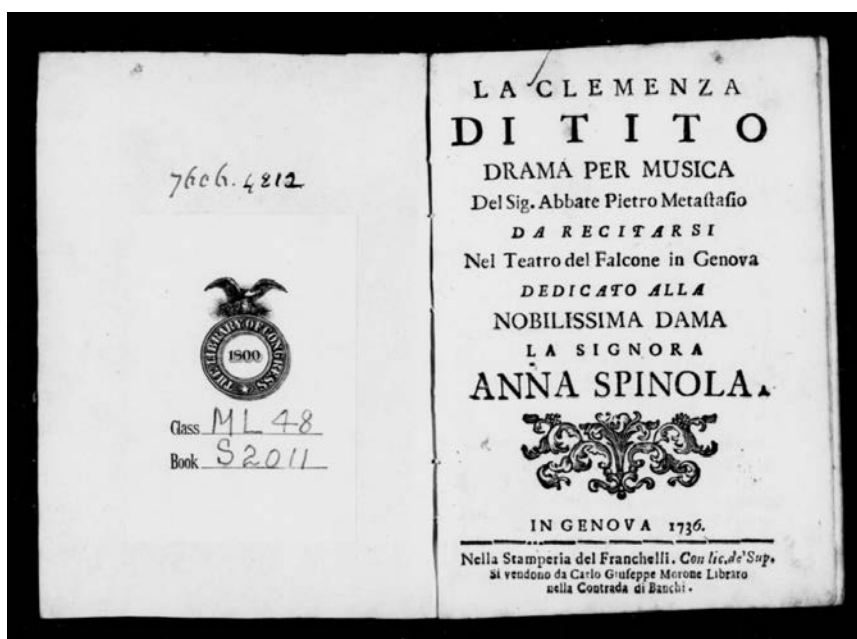
Ken Howard/
Metropolitan Opera

THE SOURCE: A LIBRETTO BY PIETRO METASTASIO, ADAPTED BY CATERINO MAZZOLÀ

In the eighteenth century and beyond, no literary figure had more influence over the course of operatic history than Pietro Metastasio (1698–1782). Having inherited the classicizing Arcadian reforms of the previous generation, he internalized their aesthetic of simple elegance. To this he added Enlightenment-tinged characters who display the ability to conquer their base passions and achieve true nobility of spirit. Metastasio's stories span the grand histories of the ancient world and the Bible, but they also invariably revolve around romantic love. Metastasio wrote only 27 libretti, all *opera seria*, but they would be set by over 400 composers and become the operatic model—whether through emulation or rejection—for more than a hundred years.

Metastasio's *La Clemenza di Tito* (1734) was originally written in honor of the Hapsburg Emperor Charles VI. Its chief literary model is *Cinna, ou La Clemence d'Auguste* by the French dramatist Pierre Corneille (1606–1684), in which the titular character Cinna, goaded by his vindictive lover Emilia, participates in a conspiracy against the Roman emperor Augustus. Corneille, in turn, was inspired by the Roman philosopher Seneca, whose treatise *On Clemency* valorizes the prerogative of mercy in a strong ruler.

Before Mozart accepted a commission to compose an opera based on Metastasio's paean to enlightened despotism, the libretto had been set by approximately 40 other composers, all of whom used it as a platform to praise various rulers across Europe. For the coronation festivities in Prague in honor of Leopold II, the National Theater enlisted Caterino Mazzolà, the court poet in Dresden, to alter Metastasio's text as necessary. Mazzolà reduced the original libretto from three acts to two, shortened the recitatives considerably, and added ensembles and a first act finale. The result is a work that preserves Metastasio's celebrated balance of oppositions (between duty and love, justice and mercy, etc.) while including more contemporary numbers suited to Mozart's mastery of ensemble singing and narrative development.



A 1736 publication of Metastasio's *La Clemenza di Tito*.

Image from the Library of Congress

SYNOPSIS

Act I: *Rome, first century CE*

The Roman emperor Tito is in love with Berenice, daughter of the king of Judea. Vitellia, the daughter of the former emperor, feels that she should hold the throne herself and asks her young admirer Sesto to assassinate Tito. Though he is a close friend of the emperor, Sesto will do anything to please Vitellia, so he agrees. When Sesto's friend Annio tells him that Tito, for various political reasons, will not marry Berenice after all, Vitellia becomes hopeful again and asks Sesto to put off the assassination plot. Annio reminds Sesto of his own wish to marry Sesto's sister Servilia.

At the forum, the Romans praise Tito. The emperor tells Annio and Sesto that since he has to take a Roman wife he intends to marry Servilia. Diplomatically, Annio assures Tito that he welcomes his decision. Tito declares that the only joy of power lies in the opportunity to help others. When Annio tells Servilia of the emperor's intentions, she is distraught and reaffirms her love for him alone.

In the imperial palace, Tito explains his philosophy of forgiveness to Publio, the captain of the guard. Servilia enters and confesses to the emperor that she loves Annio. Tito thanks her for her honesty and says he will not marry her against her wishes. Vitellia, unaware that Tito has changed his mind, furiously insults Servilia and asks Sesto to kill the emperor at once. He assures her that her wish is his command. After he has left, Publio and Annio tell Vitellia that Tito has decided to choose her as his wife. Vitellia desperately tries to stop Sesto from carrying out their plan, but she realizes it is already too late.

Sesto has launched the conspiracy and set fire to the Capitol. Full of shame, he runs into Annio, evades his questions, and rushes off. Servilia appears, then Publio, and finally Vitellia. They are all searching for Sesto and believe that Tito has died. Sesto returns, looking for a place to hide. He is about to confess his crime but is silenced by Vitellia.

Act II

In the palace, Annio tells Sesto that the emperor is still alive. When Sesto confesses his assassination attempt but refuses to give any reason, Annio advises him to admit everything to Tito and hope for forgiveness. Vitellia rushes in, begging Sesto to flee,

but she is too late: a fellow conspirator has betrayed Sesto, and Publio enters with soldiers to arrest him. Sesto asks Vitellia to remember his love.

The Roman people are thankful that the emperor has survived. Tito struggles to understand the conspirators' motives and doubts Sesto's disloyalty. Publio warns him against being too trusting. When it is announced that Sesto has confessed and been sentenced to death by the Senate, Annio asks Tito to consider the case compassionately. The emperor will not sign the death decree until he has had the chance to question Sesto himself. Alone with Tito, Sesto assures him that he did not want the throne for himself, but he hesitates to implicate Vitellia. Tito, not satisfied with this explanation, dismisses him. Sesto asks Tito to remember their friendship and is led off. The emperor signs the decree, then tears it up: he cannot become a tyrant and execute a friend. He cries out to the gods, saying that if they want a cruel ruler, they have to take away his human heart. Servilia and Annio beg Vitellia to help save Sesto. She realizes that she must confess her crime rather than accept the throne at the price of Sesto's life.

In a public square, Tito is about to pronounce Sesto's sentence when Vitellia appears and admits that she alone is responsible for the assassination attempt. The bewildered emperor explains that his intention was to forgive Sesto anyway. He finally decides to pardon all the conspirators. The Roman people praise Tito for his kindness and ask the gods to grant him a long life.

VOICE TYPE

Since the early 19th century, singing voices have usually been classified in six basic types, three male and three female, according to their range:

SOPRANO

the highest-pitched type of human voice, normally possessed only by women and boys

MEZZO-SOPRANO

the female voice whose range lies between the soprano and the contralto (Italian "mezzo"=middle, medium)

CONTRALTO

the lowest female voice, also called an alto

TENOR

the highest naturally occurring voice type in adult males

BARITONE

the male voice lying below the tenor and above the bass

BASS

the lowest male voice

WHO'S WHO IN *LA CLEMENZA DI TITO*

Character		Pronunciation Guide	Voice Type	The Lowdown
Tito Vespasiano	The emperor of Rome	TEE-toe	tenor	Venerated by his people, Tito is an ideal and god-like ruler. In weighing the various betrayals he must withstand, he seeks a higher form of justice.
Vitellia	Daughter of the previous Roman emperor	vee-TELL-ya	soprano	Vitellia's thirst for power drives her manipulation of Sesto.
Sesto	A friend of Tito, in love with Vitellia	SES-toe	mezzo-soprano (originally soprano castrato)	Sesto loves Vitellia and through her is driven to betray his friend, his emperor, and Rome itself.
Annio	A friend of Sesto, in love with Servilia	AHN-yo	mezzo-soprano	A faithful Roman citizen, Annio is ready to subjugate his own wishes to those of his emperor.
Servilia	Sister of Sesto, in love with Annio	ser-VEEL-yah	soprano	Servilia is willing to give up power and prestige for the sake of her love for Annio.
Publio	Leader of the Praetorian guard, charged with protecting Tito	POOB-lee-oh	bass	Publio looks out for Tito's safety and implements Roman justice.

- **ca. 1690** A group of reform-minded intellectuals establishes the Arcadian Academy in Rome, dedicated to the “purification” of poetry. Their related work in returning opera libretti to an ideal of classical simplicity effectively establishes the genre of *opera seria*, which is modeled on the principles of Greek drama.

- **1730** Pietro Trapassi, who writes under the name of Metastasio, joins the Hapsburg imperial court in Vienna as ‘Cesarean Poet.’ In this role, he creates opera libretti as well as the texts for oratorios and other occasional pieces glorifying the Hapsburg family. Metastasio’s 27 *opera seria* libretti uphold the ideals of the Arcadian Academy, presenting a perfected vision of human virtue and self-sacrifice.

- **1756** Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart is born on January 27, one of two surviving children of Leopold Mozart, a composer in the service of the Prince-Archbishop of Salzburg.

- **1762** At the age of six, Mozart performs for the Empress Maria Theresa in Vienna as a keyboard prodigy and composer. Over the next 11 years, the Mozart family tours throughout Europe, performing at royal courts and garnering great acclaim.

- **1767** Mozart completes his first full-length dramatic work, *Apollo et Hyacinthus*, based on a Latin text drawn from Ovid. It is first performed in Salzburg on May 13.

- **1776** Emperor Joseph II dismisses the impresario of the Burgtheater, one of the two imperial court theaters in Vienna, and re-opens it as the “Nationaltheater,” the home of German drama. Two years later, Joseph founds the National-Singspiel, intended to encourage the composition of music dramas in German. Mozart’s *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (1782) is the most successful of the Singspiels created for the theater before the failure of the National-Singspiel in 1788.



Mozart wearing clothes he received during his visit to the imperial court in Vienna in 1762.

Painting in the collection of the Mozarteum, Salzburg

— **1781** Mozart relocates to Vienna, seeking to make his living as an independent composer and performer in the culturally rich Hapsburg capital, rather than being tied to a contract with a single wealthy patron or the church.

— **1786** Mozart completes *Le Nozze di Figaro*, the first of his collaborations with the librettist Lorenzo Da Ponte (followed by *Don Giovanni* in 1787 and *Così fan tutte* in 1790). The three works, masterpieces of dramatic structure and musical expression, number among the pinnacles of the opera buffa genre.

— **1790** Emperor Joseph II dies on February 20. A devoted patron of opera, he had exercised considerable influence over Vienna's musical life, creating the environment that Mozart found so fertile, and his death forces Mozart to adapt to a new ruler with thoroughly different musical tastes.

Mozart hopes for an advancement at the court of the new emperor Leopold II—even going so far as to travel to Frankfurt in September for Leopold's coronation with the aim of garnering public performances and imperial notice—but no such official recognition arrives.

— **1791** In mid-July, while Mozart is already at work composing *Die Zauberflöte*, he receives a commission from the impresario Domenico Guardasoni at the Prague National Theater to compose an opera to glorify the coronation of Leopold II as King of Bohemia in Prague. The designated text is a libretto by Metastasio celebrating the famously beloved Roman emperor Titus—chosen as a transparently fawning homage to the new Holy Roman Emperor.

La Clemenza di Tito premieres on September 6 at the National Theater, less than six weeks after Mozart accepted the commission. Mozart leaves Prague on September 15 to return to Vienna for his final work on *Die Zauberflöte*. It will premiere on September 30 at the Theater auf der Wieden.

In late November, Mozart falls ill. He dies on December 5, likely from rheumatic fever.



The National Theater (now known as the Estates Theater) in Prague, where both *La Clemenza di Tito* and Mozart's earlier opera *Don Giovanni* premiered.

Image from the website of the Estates Theater,
www.narodni-divadlo.cz

WHY SO *SERIA*-OUS?

According to some critics, by the time the operatic art form was about 100 years old, it had seriously gone off the rails. Its stories were neither purely tragic nor purely comic, it was populated with licentious characters from Greek mythology, its arias and recitatives ran into one another, and it sometimes required elaborate stage machinery to effect its absurd plot conclusions. This sorry state of affairs spurred a group of literary intellectuals in 1690s Rome to establish a society dedicated to the reform of operatic texts. These 'Arcadians' (named after an area in Greece revered in the Renaissance as an idyllic world of pastoral bliss) effected a number of changes, all aimed at returning the opera libretto to an ideal of Greek elegance. The result is an operatic form that is known today as *opera seria*.

According to these ideals, a plot should adhere to an Aristotelian unity of time, place, and action—meaning that a story should take place over no more than 24 hours, with all of the action occurring in the same general location and with a plot that has a clear narrative trajectory. Moreover, stories drawn from ancient history were preferred to those drawn from myth, and tragic endings were seen as indecorous and less desirable than a happy and harmonious close. Any death that couldn't be avoided should occur offstage, and visits to the Underworld were strictly off-limits.

In musical terms, these *opere serie* (the plural of *opera seria*) were organized with a clearer distinction between recitative and aria than had been the norm in earlier operas. All of the action and plot development occurred during sections of recitative, with occasional breaks for introspection or review in arias. Most commonly, arias appeared at the ends of scenes, after which the character who just sang the show-stopping number left the stage. The most important characters had the greatest number of arias, while fewer arias were assigned to characters of lesser rank and importance. Throughout the eighteenth century, the male lead was sung by a castrato, a virtuosic male singer whose high range was produced through castration prior to puberty.

Although *opera seria* may feel unnaturally stilted to contemporary listeners familiar with 19th century opera (or even Mozart's *opere buffe* or *Singspiels*), the form grew out of a desire to make opera more naturalistic and dignified. And while its stories of grand personal sacrifice and towering affairs of the state are likewise weightier than what we're used to, they also tell us much about what Enlightenment-era audiences found virtuous and just, and what they viewed as worthy subjects for entertainment.



Queen Christina of Sweden, an honorary patron of the Arcadian Academy in Rome.

Image from the National Portrait Gallery, London.

The Guided Listening Activities are designed to introduce students to a selection of memorable moments from the opera. They include information on what is happening dramatically, a description of the musical style, and a roadmap of musical features to listen for. Guided Listening Activities can be used by students and teachers of varying levels of musical experience.

IN PREPARATION

For this activity, teachers will need access to a recording of *La Clemenza di Tito* and the libretto.

"PARTO, PARTO, MA TU BEN MIO - GUARDAMI E TUTTO OBLIO"

Vitellia put her plans to have Tito assassinated on hold after learning he had dismissed his previous lover, Berenice. But now that she has learned that Servilia is his intended bride. Enraged, Vitellia summons Sesto and prods him to action, declaring she will withhold her affection until he enacts her conspiracy to set Rome on fire and kill the emperor. Sesto agrees and responds with this aria, displaying both his resolve and his inner conflict.

What to listen for:

- The three contrasting sections of the aria
- Mozart's affective use of solo clarinet
- How Mozart musically demonstrates Sesto's wavering conscience

- (00:00) Unison strings set the tone for the aria, which begins with a noble dotted figure. Sesto enters at (00:09) and emphatically proclaims "I shall go," repeating the words for emphasis.
- (00:16) But almost as soon as the words are out of his mouth, his resolution seems to waver. "But, oh my dearest ..." he sings, shifting into a much more supple, legato style as he entreats Vitellia, "return to me in peace."
- (00:43) Just as Sesto finishes that thought, a solo clarinet enters with a sinuous new melody. Sesto continues singing. "I shall be whoever you want me to be," he tells Vitellia, and the clarinet proceeds in tandem, almost as if it is performing a duet with Sesto. As Sesto sings "I will do whatever you want" at (01:06), he briefly returns to the emphatic style he used at the start of the aria.
- (01:18) In this section, Sesto repeats his previous text in its entirety. But there is hardly a trace of the emphatic style of the aria's opening. The clarinet continues weaving its melody alongside and through Sesto's speech, punctuating Sesto's lines as he repeatedly states that he will be whoever Vitellia wants and do whatever she says.
- (02:52) The tempo suddenly changes, and a new section of the aria begins. In a snappy allegro, the orchestra sets the stage with an introductory flourish. But just when you'd expect the voice to enter (02:56), it is once again the clarinet that takes center stage.
- (03:04) Sesto starts singing again. "Look at me," he tells Vitellia, "and I will forget everything and rush to avenge you." Musically, he seems to have regained some resolve. The orchestra punctuates his cadence with a *forte* gesture.
- (03:19) But he begins to waver again. The clarinet introduces a vacillating line before Sesto fixates on the one thing that will enable him to complete his awful task: the glance of his beloved Vitellia. "That glance alone is all I shall think of," he declares.
- (03:51) Sesto repeats the whole of his text (beginning at "I shall go") with new music. As he moves through the text, have students listen for the participation of the clarinet, as well as whether Sesto seems to be resolute or wavering.
- (05:24) The tempo speeds up considerably as the strings erupt in rapid scales. "Look at me, and I will forget everything and rush to avenge you," Sesto bursts out again, all of his uncertainty apparently forgotten.
- (05:36) The clarinet returns with a series of virtuosic arpeggios. Sesto proclaims his final line: "Ah, ye gods! What power you have given to beauty!" Sesto at last finds the determination to proceed with his task, and he punctuates his resolve with virtuosic melismas and trills.

"DEH CONSERVATE, OH DEI!"

In this finale to Act I, Sesto has put his desperate plan into action, and the Capitol is on fire. He is wracked with guilt and torn by his conflicting love for Rome and his promise to Vitellia to kill Tito. As the scene progresses, Annio, Servilia, Publio, and even Vitellia, along with the people of Rome, join in to express their horror at the situation.

What to listen for:

- The increase of dramatic and musical tension through the addition of new characters onstage
- Mozart's use of an offstage chorus
- The accents and dissonant chords that punctuate moments of horror

- (00:00) Sesto is alone outside the burning Capitol, and he already regrets what he has done. As he watches the flames rise into the sky, he erupts in an overwrought cry: "Oh gods, preserve the splendor of Rome!" Or if this isn't possible, Sesto wishes to have his days cut short as well, begging the gods to let him die alongside his beloved city.
- (00:36) As soon as Sesto finishes his statement, a walking pattern in the violins signals the entrance of Annio. He sees Sesto leaving and asks where he is going. In his response, Sesto hurtles towards the minor mode and uses chromatic accents to demonstrate his turmoil. "Oh gods, you will know my shame!" he exclaims. He closes in the harmonically distant key of G-Flat Major and rushes back into the Capitol.
- (01:06) A tentative, falling chromatic line accompanies Servilia's entrance. Annio wants her to flee the danger, but she brings dire news: It is feared that the fire was no accident. Her pronouncement is accompanied by rapid notes in the strings, sudden accents, and syncopations.
- (01:43) An offstage chorus sings an expression of horror on an accented diminished 7th chord just as Publio enters. Against a tense orchestral background, he shares the news that there is a conspiracy in Rome and admits that he fears for Tito's safety. His melody is a version of the line just sung by Servilia. As the orchestra continues to ratchet up the tension, the offstage chorus again interjects with "Ah!" on new, jarring diminished 7th chords.
- (02:10) Vitellia enters, also wracked with fear. She knows Sesto has gone to enact her plan and now, having learned that Tito will not marry Servilia after all, is deeply repentant. Using the same melodic gesture from Servilia and Publio's entrance, she pleads, "Oh gods, for pity's sake! Who can tell me where Sesto is?" The chorus continues its terrified exclamations, and Servilia, Annio, and Publio respond with fear, wondering who could have caused this horror.
- (02:47) Sesto returns to the scene, wondering where he can hide himself. He seems to have killed Tito offstage (a typical treatment of death in the *opera seria* genre). Sesto draws on the same melody sung by the other characters at their entrances, but he veers away as he implores the earth to swallow him whole. At (03:01), on the words "*tuo sen profondo*" ("your deep breast"), Sesto descends into his lowest vocal range.
- (03:22) The steadily increasing drama comes to a sudden halt with a section of recitative. Vitellia inquires why Sesto looks so terrified, and Sesto responds that Tito's soul has left his pierced breast.
- (03:52) Servilia, Annio, and Publio lament together and wonder who could have done such an evil thing. Just as Sesto is about to reveal himself as "the most wicked of men," at (04:20), Vitellia silences him.
- (04:28) In halting lines, the entire ensemble joins together in mourning the death of their emperor.
- (04:48) The offstage chorus slowly intones the horror of the whole Roman people at this base treachery: "O black betrayal! O day of sorrow!" The onstage ensemble joins in, and the act closes with a soaring lamentation at the destruction of Rome and its emperor, Tito.

"SE ALL'IMPERO"

Tito has heard his friend Sesto confess to plotting to kill him and incite rebellion. After wrestling with the conflict between his responsibilities and the recommendation of his own Senate—and even going so far as to sign Sesto's death warrant—Tito resolves to be remembered for his mercy rather than for his vengeance. At the end of this scene, having made his decision to be forgiving, Tito reflects on this philosophy. "Se all'impero" is the only da capo aria in the entire opera, a fittingly noble structure for the emperor Tito's statement of belief.

What to listen for:

- The aria's structure as a da capo aria (following an ABA format)
- The differences in tempo and affect in the B section
- Ornaments and larger-scale changes within the repeat of the A section

(00:00)	The orchestra sets the tone for the aria, with a lively theme that, from (00:15) onwards, drives towards its cadence with a series of running 16th-note arpeggios.
(00:20)	Tito enters on a melody drawn from the orchestral introduction. "If it's necessary, o benevolent gods, for a ruler to have a hard heart ..." Tito sings, repeating the second line for emphasis before coming to rest on a cadence. The orchestra finishes out this opening statement with a repeat of their 16th-note arpeggios.
(00:50)	Tito continues with a contrasting phrase as he sings the next two lines of text: "... then either take the empire from me, or give me a different heart." In contrast to the previous section, this new phrase is more harmonically exploratory.
(01:05)	Tito repeats the text from the top, now with the first two lines set to a repeating melodic snippet. He repeats the final line of the stanza, " <i>o a me date un altro cor</i> " ("or give to me a new heart"), several times and even includes a florid melisma for added emphasis. Following his cadence, the orchestra closes out this section with a repeat of their 16th-note arpeggio figures.
(01:56)	The music continues with a large shift to a much slower tempo, new melodies, and new text. This is the contrasting "B" section of the da capo aria. "Even if I cannot secure my realm's loyalty through love..." Tito begins, singing the first two lines of the stanza in a more legato style. He finishes this thought on a cadence.
(02:16)	As the text continues, "... I still have no desire for a loyalty born of fear," the music moves into the minor mode, modulates through different key areas, and includes some affective chromaticism. Tito repeats these two lines again before resting on a brief fermata.
(03:05)	With a sudden return to the tempo, key, melody, and text of the beginning of the aria, we arrive at the second A section of the da capo aria. Have students listen carefully to find the differences between this setting and the first A section. (Hint: There is a contrasting melody for the second two lines of text: " <i>O togliete a me l'impero, o a me date un altro cor</i> "; "Either take the empire from me, or give me a different heart.") In this section, the virtuosity required of Tito is extreme, and the aria closes with a triumphant demonstration of Tito's imperial power.

IN PREPARATION

For this activity, students will need the *My Highs & Lows* reproducible handout found in the back of this guide.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS AND *LA CLEMENZA DI TITO*

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-12.1
Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-12.1d
Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

ENCOURAGING STUDENT RESPONSE IN ATTENDING THE FINAL DRESS REHEARSAL

Watching and listening to a performance is a unique experience that takes students beyond the printed page to an immersion in images, sound, interpretation, technology, drama, skill, and craft. Performance activities help students analyze different aspects of the experience and engage critically with the performance. They will consider the creative choices that have been made for the particular production they are watching and examine different aspects of the performance.

The Student Critique activity incorporates a reproducible sheet. Students should bring this activity sheet to the final dress rehearsal and fill it out during intermission and/or after the final curtain. The activity directs attention to details of the production that might otherwise go unnoticed.

The activity sheet is called *My Highs & Lows*. It serves to guide students toward a consistent set of objective observations, as well as to help them articulate their own opinions. It is designed to enrich the students' understanding of the art form as a whole. The ratings system encourages students to express their critique: use these ratings to spark discussions that require careful, critical thinking.

The *My Highs & Lows* handout can be found at the back of this guide.

FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSION

Start the class with an open discussion of the Met performance. What did students like? What didn't they? Did anything surprise them? What would they like to see or hear again? What would they have done differently? The discussion offers an opportunity to apply the notes on students' *My Highs and Lows* sheet, as well as their thoughts about the visual design of the Met production—in short, to see themselves as *La Clemenza di Tito* experts.

Given the title of this opera, the ultimate fate of its conspirators is never in question: We know from the start that Tito will be forgiving. But this foreknowledge does not render its ending any less shocking. Tito grants this forgiveness in the face of grave crimes and personal betrayals. To contemporary observers, his clemency seems more like absurd prodigality, or even foolishness. But our ways are not Tito's ways, and it's important to remember that our modern understanding of laws, justice, and rulers differs greatly from that of the eighteenth century. To help your students explore the differences between our age and the era of *La Clemenza di Tito*, you may ask the following questions:

- How is Tito depicted in the opera? How do the costumes and staging support the fact that he is set apart from the other characters?
- How does Tito view his responsibilities as a ruler?
- We learn in Act II that the Roman Senate has condemned Sesto for his crimes, and yet Tito is able to ignore their ruling. How does this system of government differ from our own? What are the checks and balances between the branches of the American political system?
- Has Tito enacted justice? What is justice? Who are the injured parties that might not be satisfied with Sesto's complete pardon?
- Do you think it is possible to set *La Clemenza di Tito* in a modern setting? Would the story still make sense? Why or why not?

To conclude the discussion, remind students that the opera was written in honor of the new emperor, Leopold II, and was intended as a work of praise, even unadulterated flattery. What might the people of the time have hoped to achieve by honoring their new ruler with an artwork that valorizes a lenient approach to punishment?

IN PRINT

Cairns, David. *Mozart and His Operas*. Berkley: University of California Press, 2006.

Cairns traces the development of Mozart's style through his operas, providing many details on the circumstances surrounding their composition, as well as their stylistic connection to Mozart's instrumental works.

Gay, Peter. *Mozart: A Life*. New York: Penguin Books, 1999.

A brief and entertaining biography of Mozart. Gay, a historian, provides insight into the changing social and cultural context of Mozart's age.

Rice, John A. *La Clemenza di Tito*. Cambridge Opera Handbooks. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

The Cambridge Opera Handbooks series provides a scholarly investigation of text, compositional process, musical style, and interpretation. Rice's volume provides the only book-length exploration of Mozart's opera in the English language.

ONLINE

The Metropolitan Opera. "La Clemenza di Tito: 'Parto, parto' — Elīna Garanča."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GMX-s0L2wLo>

Elīna Garanča sings an excerpt from Sesto's Act I aria "Parto, parto." Production: Jean-Pierre Ponnelle. Conductor: Harry Bickett. November 13, 2012.

The Metropolitan Opera. "La Clemenza di Tito: 'Se all'impero' — Giuseppe Filianoti."

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rPs8O_2W8UA

Giuseppe Filianoti sings an excerpt from Tito's Act II aria "Se all'impero." Production: Jean-Pierre Ponnelle. Conductor: Harry Bickett. November 13, 2012.

Deutsche Grammophon. "Yannick Nézet-Séguin's and Rollando Villazon's Mozart Cycle: La Clemenza di Tito"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=196&v=nvLpNk_OW54

An interview with the Metropolitan Opera's new music director, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, and tenor Rollando Villazón about the character of Tito. Includes musical excerpts. Produced in connection with a new recording of the opera on the Deutsche Grammophon label, featuring Villazón as Tito and Joyce DiDonato as Sesto, as well as Nézet-Séguin conducting the Chamber Orchestra of Europe.

Pietro Metastasio: Drammi per musica

<http://www.progettometastasio.it/public/>

A project of the University of Padua, this scholarly site reproduces Metastasio's 27 libretti as found in specific publications from the era. In Italian. You can find an alphabetized list by clicking on "Testi" in the upper right corner, then clicking on "In ordine alfabetico" on the drop-down menu.

act/scene

Acts and scenes are ways of categorizing sections of operas. An act is a large-scale division of an opera, and each opera will typically include from two to five acts. Acts can be subdivided into scenes, which are often differentiated by a change in setting or characters.

adagio

Literally “at ease,” adagio is a tempo marking that indicates a slow speed. An adagio tempo marking indicates that the performer should play in a slow and leisurely style.

allegro

Italian for “cheerful” or “joyful,” allegro is the most common tempo marking in Western music, indicating a moderately fast to quick speed.

aria

A song for solo voice accompanied by orchestra. In opera, arias mostly appear during a pause in dramatic action when a character is reflecting musically on his or her emotions. Most arias are lyrical, with a tune that can be hummed, and many arias include musical repetition. For example, the earliest arias in opera consist of music sung with different stanzas of text (strophic arias). Another type of aria, da capo arias, became common by the eighteenth century and features the return of the opening music and text after a contrasting middle section. Nineteenth-century Italian arias often feature a two-part form that showcases an intensification of emotion from the first section (the cantabile) to the second section (the cabaletta).

articulation

The smoothness or hardness with which a note is begun and ended. Articulation is a way of indicating the degree to which each note connects to the next, and can be seen while watching the bow of a stringed instrument player. A note can be attacked sharply and made short, or it can flow smoothly into the next note.

baritone

Literally “deep sounding,” a baritone is what a typical male voice sounds like—the term refers to a male singer with a low but not extremely low vocal range. A baritone will sing notes that are higher than those sung by a bass and lower than those sung by a tenor. Uncommon until the nineteenth century, baritone roles have grown in popularity in opera since the works of Verdi, who often reserved the voice type for villains.

baroque

A period of music history lasting from approximately 1600 to 1750. The beginning of the Baroque period coincides with the invention of opera as a genre, and its end coincides with the death of the composer Johann Sebastian Bach. The Baroque period saw the rise of modern tonality, an expansion of performing forces, and increased ornamentation. The term “baroque” means bizarre or exaggerated, and was used by critics in the Eighteenth century critics who preferred a simpler and less-ornamented style.

bass

The lowest sounding line in music. Bass also refers to the lowest singing range for the male voice. Opera composers often choose a bass voice to sing one of two opposite types of roles: comic characters or dramatic and serious characters. For example, Mozart and Rossini wrote comic parts for bass voice, using musical repetition and low register for comic effect. Wagner and Mozart wrote serious parts for bass voice, focusing on the gravity that a low register can contribute to the overall musical texture.

bel canto

Referring to the Italian vocal style of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, bel canto singing emphasizes lyricism and ornamentation in order to showcase the beauty of the singer's voice. Its focus on lyrical embellishment directly contrasts with a contemporary Germanic focus on a weighty, dramatic style. Bel canto singing is most closely associated with the music of Gioachino Rossini, Vincenzo Bellini, and Gaetano Donizetti.

cadenza

An ornamented musical elaboration played in a free style by a soloist to display his or her virtuosity. Cadenzas are typically improvised—that is, created by a performer on the spot—though they can also be written out in advance. They most frequently occur near the end of a piece, at a point of harmonic tension when the piece is about to conclude.

chorus

A section of an opera in which a large group of singers performs together, typically with orchestral accompaniment. Most choruses include at least four different vocal lines, in registers from low to high, with multiple singers per part. The singers are typically from a particular group of people who play a certain role on stage—soldiers, peasants, prisoners, and so on. Choruses may offer a moral or commentary on the plot, or participate in the dramatic action.

Classical

A period of music history lasting from approximately 1750 to 1830, bordered by the earlier Baroque period and the later Romantic period. Contrasting with the ornamentation common to the preceding Baroque period, Classical music is characterized by simple and elegant melodies, regular harmonic accompaniment, and contrasts between melodic themes. The composers most closely associated with the Classical period include Joseph Haydn, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, and Ludwig van Beethoven.

coloratura

A rapid and elaborate ornamentation by a solo singer, particularly common in operas of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Requiring vocal agility and a wide and high range, coloratura showcases the virtuosity of a singer by featuring repeating melodic figures, rapid scales, trills, and other embellishments.

conductor

The person who directs the orchestra, setting the tempo, giving interpretive directions to the musicians, and generally holding all the musical elements of a performance together. In orchestra performance, the conductor typically stands on a podium in front of the players and uses a baton to communicate the meter and tempo and his or her non-baton hand to indicate dynamics, phrasing, and articulation to the musicians. The gestures of a conductor can be likened to a non-verbal language that the musicians understand.

contralto

A deep female voice, with a vocal range that extends lower than that of a mezzo-soprano. Contraltos are known for having a very wide range and for the power and depth of sound with which they can sing. As is the case for roles for basses, many of the earliest roles in opera for contraltos are comic roles, though nineteenth-century composers also wrote dramatic roles for female singers with a lower range.

crescendo

A gradual raising of volume in music achieved by increasing the dynamic level. When music crescendos, the performers begin at a softer dynamic level and become incrementally louder. One of the most famous types of crescendos in opera, the Rossini crescendo, includes an increase in volume together with repeating melodic and rhythmic phrases, higher instrumental registers, and the gradual addition of instruments in order to create a particularly dramatic effect.

diminuendo

A gradual lowering of volume in music achieved by decreasing the dynamic level. During a diminuendo, the performers begin at a louder dynamic level and become incrementally softer.

dynamics

A musical trait pertaining to loudness and softness. During the eighteenth century, composers began indicating their desired intensity of volume in music by writing words such as *piano* (soft) and *forte* (loud) into the musical score. Dynamics encompass a spectrum from *pianissimo* (very soft) to *piano* (soft) to *mezzo piano* (moderately soft), all the way up to *fortissimo* (very loud). Music can shift to another dynamic level either suddenly or gradually, through a crescendo or diminuendo.

ensemble

A musical piece for two or more soloists, accompanied by orchestra. Types of ensembles include duets (for two soloists), trios (for three soloists), and quartets (for four soloists). Sometimes singers will respond directly to one another during an ensemble. At other times, singers will each sing to themselves as if the other singers were not on stage. In ensembles, multiple characters may simultaneously express very different emotions from one another.

finale

The last portion of an act, a finale consists of several musical sections that accompany escalating dramatic tension. Finales frequently consist of multiple ensembles with different numbers of characters. When it occurs at the end of an early act in the opera, a finale may create a messy situation—and the resolution of this situation will only happen in subsequent acts. One type of finale common in comic operas, a chain finale, features characters entering or exiting from the stage to create unexpected combinations of characters, in turn increasing the opera's dramatic tension.

forte

Meaning “loud” or “strong” in Italian, forte is a dynamic level in music that indicates a loud volume. Adding the suffix “-issimo” to a word serves as an intensifier—since forte means “loud,” fortissimo means “very loud.”

harmony

The simultaneous sounding of pitches to produce chords, and the relationship between different chords as they succeed one another. Throughout much of Western music, systems of rules govern these progressions to help create our sense of musical tension, expectation, and conclusion. Tonal harmony is based on progressions of chords in relationship to a tonic (or home) key. In the 19th century, as composers sought novel sounds to reflect the originality of their invention, they began to employ chords and progressions of greater dissonance and greater distance from the home key. As such dissonances moved beyond mere sound effects into the musical structure itself, the traditional theory of tonal harmony began to become insufficient as a way to understand and describe musical structure.

intermission

A break between acts of an opera. At the beginning of an intermission, the curtain will fall (that is, close) on stage, and the lights in the auditorium, called the house lights, will become brighter. Intermissions provide audiences with a chance to walk around, talk with one another, and reflect on what they have seen and what could happen next. The break in the performance may also correspond with a change of time or scene in the story of the opera—the next act may take place hours or months later, or be set in a different location. Usually lights will dim and a bell may sound to indicate that the intermission is drawing to a close and the opera is about to resume.

legato

A type of articulation in which a melody is played with smooth connection between the notes. A legato passage should not include any pauses between notes or any accents at the beginnings of notes, as the notes blend into one another without a break. In contrast, a passage that is played staccato features notes played in a separated manner.

Leitmotif

From the German for “leading motive,” a Leitmotif is a recurring musical idea, or motive that represents a particular person, object, idea, emotion, or place. This musical idea is usually a few seconds in length and can occur in the music’s melody, harmony, rhythm, or a combination of the three. Leitmotifs are most closely associated with the operas of Richard Wagner, where they are used repeatedly throughout the opera to provide unity; they also less frequently appear in operas of other composers, including Giuseppe Verdi and Richard Strauss.

libretto

The text of an opera, including all the words that are said or sung by performers. Until the early eighteenth century, a composer would frequently set music to a pre-existing libretto, and any given libretto could thus be set to music multiple times by different composers. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, collaboration between the author of the libretto, known as the librettist, and the composer became more frequent. Some opera composers, most notably Richard Wagner, are known for writing their own text.

maestro

A title of respect used to address a conductor. The term is often applied to conductors with several decades of experience. However, performers often use this honorific when addressing the conductor.

melody

A succession of pitches that form an understandable unit. The melody of a piece consists of the tune that a listener can hum or sing. During arias, the singer will usually sing the main melody, though other instruments may play parts of the melody. Sometimes, such as during ensembles, multiple melodies can occur simultaneously.

mezzo-soprano

A female voice with a range between that of a contralto and soprano. A mezzo-soprano's voice is slightly deeper than that of a soprano, so mezzo-sopranos are often cast in supporting roles as older women, including nurses, confidantes, or maids.

opera buffa

A term applied to Italian comic operas from the mid-eighteenth through mid-nineteenth centuries. The plot of an opera buffa often features scenes and characters from everyday life and addresses a light or sentimental subject, concluding with a happy ending.

opera seria

An eighteenth- or nineteenth-century Italian opera employing a noble and serious style. The plot of an opera seria often upholds morality by presenting conflicting emotions such as love versus duty, or by modeling enlightened rulers.

operetta

Featuring spoken dialogue, songs, and dances, an operetta is a short theatrical piece. Shorter in duration than operas, operettas typically feature a light subject matter, incorporate melodies composed in a popular style, and feature spoken dialogue. Most popular from the mid-nineteenth century to the early twentieth century, the genre is the precursor of the American musical.

ornamentation

An embellishment to the melody, rhythm, or harmony of music, intended to make a melody more expressive or ornate. Ornamentation can be either indicated through symbols written into the music or improvised by the performer.

overture

An instrumental piece that occurs before the first act as an introduction to an opera. After the conductor enters the orchestra pit and takes a bow, the music for the overture begins. Most overtures are a few minutes in duration, and set the mood for the opera—even featuring musical themes that will occur later in the opera.

piano

Abbreviated *p* in a musical score, piano indicates a soft dynamic level. Musicians may achieve a piano sound by using less bow, less air, or less force. In opera, soft music will often correspond with emotions of sadness or moments in the plot when a character is reflecting on a course of action or emotional state. Pianissimo is “very soft,” and can be so quiet that an audience may need to listen carefully in order to discern its melody and harmony.

pitch

The quality of a musical sound corresponding to its perceived highness or lowness. Scientifically, pitch can be measured as the number of vibrations (or repetitions) of a sound wave per second, which is called its frequency. A sound with a low frequency, like a bass drum, will sound low and have a low pitch, while a sound with a high frequency, like a siren, will sound high.

prima donna

Meaning “first lady” in Italian, the prima donna is the leading female role in an opera. The term may apply to the role or to the singer herself, who usually sings in the soprano register and is the star of the show. Since the nineteenth century, the term has also been applied to a singer of any gender with a self-centered and demanding personality.

recitative

A type of vocal writing between speech and song that imitates the accents and inflections of natural speech. Composers often employ recitative for passages of text that involve quick dialogue and the advancement of plot, since the style allows singers to move rapidly through a large amount of text. Recitative may be accompanied either by keyboard or by the whole orchestra.

rhythm

Rhythm refers to the way music unfolds over time; it is a series of durations in a range from long to short. Along with pitch, it is a basic and indispensable parameter of music. Rhythm is perceived in relation to an underlying beat and within the context of a meter. Western musical notation indicates to the performer the exact duration of each note or rest.

Romantic

A period of music history lasting from approximately 1830 to 1900. Beginning in literature and later adopted by composers, romanticism reflected a newfound focus on individuality, nature, and emotional extremes. Music from the Romantic period often explores music’s redemptive power, focusing on the sublimity of nature, love, and the mysterious. Composers began to experiment with shortening and lengthening the standard forms and durations of musical works, and also added more expressive harmonies to convey the originality of their musical vision.

score

The complete musical notation for a piece, the score includes notated lines for all of the different instrumental and vocal parts that unite to constitute a musical composition. In an opera orchestra, the conductor follows the score during rehearsals and performances, while each performer follows his or her individual part.

Singspiel

Literally “sung play,” a Singspiel is an opera with spoken dialogue. Singspiels are typically in German and are from the Classical or early Romantic eras. The plot of a Singspiel is usually comic in nature, and its music may include songs, choruses, and instrumental numbers that are separated by spoken dialogue.

solo

A piece, musical passage, or line for a lone singer or other performer, with or without instrumental accompaniment. The most common type of solo in opera is the aria, which is composed for a single voice with orchestral accompaniment.

soprano

The highest singing range for the female voice. Roles composed for soprano singers are typically among the leading roles in the opera and require soprano singers to show off their virtuosic flexibility and range.

tempo

Literally “time” in Italian, tempo refers to the speed of a piece of music. Tempo is indicated in a score by a variety of conventional (often Italian) words—such as *allegro*, *adagio*, *vivace*, *moderato*, *grave*, and many more—that not only provide direction on the composer’s desired rate of speed, but also carry associations of gesture and character. For instance, *vivace* indicates not only a brisk speed but also a lively spirit. Additional tempo markings may indicate when a composer asks for a section of music to be sped up (such as “*accelerando*”) or slowed down (such as “*rallentando*”).

tenor

The highest natural male vocal range. By the nineteenth century, the tenor had become the most common vocal range for male leading roles in operas. Tenor roles often feature high-pitched notes for male voice in order to showcase the singer’s range and power. A related voice type is the countertenor, with a range above that of a tenor and similar to that of a contralto.

theme/motive

Themes are the melodic ideas that are musical building blocks for a piece. A theme is often recognizable as a distinct tune and may reappear in its original form or in altered form throughout the piece. A motif (or motive) is a brief musical idea that recurs throughout a musical work. Motives can be based on a melodic, rhythmic, or harmonic component, and their repetition makes them recognizable to the listener. In opera, musical motives are often symbolically associated with specific characters or dramatic ideas.

timbre

Pronounced TAM-bruh, a French word that means “sound color.” It refers to the complex combination of characteristics that give each instrument or voice its unique sound. Just as we can recognize each other by the differences in our speaking voices, operatic singing voices are distinguishable by their unique timbres. Listeners can also identify orchestral instruments by their timbre without being able to see them. The creative combination of different instrumental timbres is one of the artistic aspects of orchestration.

trill

A rapid alternation between two pitches that are adjacent to one another. Trills are a type of ornamentation, serving to embellish the melodic line, and appear regularly within coloratura passages. Trills also may appear near the end of a piece in order to prolong the musical tension before the music concludes.

verismo

A movement in Italian theater and opera in the late 19th century that embraced realism and explored areas of society previously ignored on the stage: the poor, the lower-class, and the criminal. Its characters are driven by passion to defy reason, morality, and the law. In order to reflect these emotional extremes, composers of verismo opera developed a musical style that communicates raw and unfiltered passions. Musically, verismo operas react against the forced ornamentation of the *bel canto* style and instead emphasize a more natural setting of the text to music. Before its exploration on the operatic stage, the verismo aesthetic first developed within the realm of literature.

LA CLEMENZA DI TITO: MY HIGHS & LOWS

March 26, 2019

Conducted by Lothar Koenigs

Reviewed by _____

THE STARS:	STAR POWER	MY COMMENTS
Matthew Polenzani as Tito	*****	
Joyce DiDonato as Sesto	*****	
Elza van den Heever as Vitellia	*****	
Emily D'Angelo as Annio	*****	
Ying Fang as Servilia	*****	
Christian Van Horn as Publio	*****	

THE SHOW, SCENE BY SCENE	ACTION	MUSIC	SET DESIGN/STAGING
Vitellia enlists Sesto in her plot			
My opinion of this scene:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
Annio and Sesto affirm their friendship			
My opinion of this scene:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
Tito plans to marry Servilia			
My opinion of this scene:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
Servilia's confession			
My opinion of this scene:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
Vitellia extracts a painful promise...			
My opinion of this scene:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
But realizes her mistake too late			
My opinion of this scene:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5

THE SHOW, SCENE BY SCENE	ACTION	MUSIC	SET DESIGN/STAGING
Rome ablaze			
My opinion of this scene	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
Sesto confesses his guilt			
My opinion of this scene:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
Tito is besieged by internal conflict			
My opinion of this scene:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
Servilia and Annio appeal to Vitellia			
My opinion of this scene:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
Vitellia's confession			
My opinion of this scene:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
The final clemency			
My opinion of this scene:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5