

SONG ANATOMY: preparing the role (MT, OPERETTA, OPERA)

DUE TWO WEEKS AFTER THE SONG/ARIA IS ASSIGNED

Hard copy or email is acceptable

*Song/Aria Title _____ *Character _____

*Composer _____ *Work _____

*Premiere (where and when) _____ *Librettist (book and lyrics) _____

1. Give a brief summary of the plot.
2. On what is the work based? A play, novel, historical figure?
3. Explain the origin or the story, noting the differences and similarities between it and the musical/opera.
4. Give a brief description of the composer's historical background.
5. Describe the composer's style. What does that require of the singer? How does that relate to you?
6. How does the accompaniment/orchestra relate to the vocal line?
7. Describe the character. Give a complete description including age, personality, occupation, nationality, marital status, education level, economic and social status, condition of health, relationship to other characters and basic physical traits.
8. Discuss the character's perceived posture. Relate it to your own.
9. What journey does the character take in the story? How different is he/she at the end of the story as compared to the beginning?
10. Describe the location of the story in general.
11. Research and describe the social customs of the place and time in which the musical/opera is set. Assume you are in a traditional production.

12. List famous authors/poets and visual artists from the time period in which the work was composed and that are native or close to the composer's country of origin. What conclusions can you draw about other art forms being created when this work is created? Are there any similarities?

13. What was happening in history when the work was being written? Wars, philosophical movements, religious movements, etc... (What is really happening in the world outside the walls in which the COMPOSER lives and works?)

14. Answer the same question again and relate it to the time period in which the piece is set if it is different from the time period of the composer. (What is really happening in the world outside the walls in which the CHARACTER lives and works?)

15. Describe the situation of the character in each scene. (You will need to understand the entire story to accurately answer this question.)

16. What is the character's main goal/purpose/objective in each scene? In other words, what does the character want? Take some time to think about this one. Does the character get what he/she wants? What new objective is created for the scene following?

*Write out all all lines of your song, leaving an extra line under each printed line. Underneath each printed line, write the subtext. What is the character really saying? For example, someone saying "Your hair looks good today" could mean a variety of things: "You look like you need a compliment" "Wow, what an improvement" "I wish I had the nerve to ask you out" "Your hairdo is really a hair don't"

Line 1 Original Text

Line 2 Subtext: What the character really means

(Note that if the song is in a foreign language, you will have three lines for this exercise. The first line will be the original text; the second the translation of the text; and the third line being the subtext or deeper meaning of the poetry)

Be sure to consult the Voice Literature Research form for scholarly web sources. Notice that wikipedia is not one of them.

At the end of each song anatomy, list the sources from which you found your information.

I may go back to them and check for accuracy. Be sure to write information in your own

words and use your own thoughts. What you think matters. I am interested in those thoughts, assuming they are in harmony with the factual reality of the work.

Have fun.