WHAT IS OPERA?

Have you seen……
A play?
An orchestra concert?
A band concert?
A painting?
A singer?
A fancy costume?
A big theater?

Opera is special because it has ALL of these things! Today we will learn about all of the things that go into an OPERA SOUP!!!!
See if you can think of some things that go into “opera soup!” This is a picture from a famous opera called *La Cenerentola*. What do you see? Does it remind you of anything?
What do we need.....


to make an opera?

Keep reading to see the ingredients for OPERA SOUP!

Did you guess some of them?
We need an ORCHESTRA!

Who is this, and what do you think they do?
The woman or man who leads the orchestra is called a *maestro* or a *conductor*. They show the orchestra how to play the music with a *baton* (you can see this maestro’s baton in his left hand).

Why do you think an orchestra might need a conductor? What would happen if everyone played the music at a different speed?
An opera always needs amazing singers!!! Opera singers don’t need microphones! They use their vocal chords to make the sound travel very far, often to the back of a huge concert hall like the one in the next picture.

Here is a picture of how the vocal cords make sound:
Opera can be performed in all sorts of places, but it is usually performed in a concert hall or theater. These theaters seat thousands of people, but the voices of the singers can still reach the very back!

How would you describe the scene in this picture? Why are the people dressed like this?
Backstage at the Opera

LOTS of things happen “behind the scenes” at the opera.

What do you think is happening in this picture?
Many people work backstage at the opera to create the magic on stage. This includes:

- Lighting designers
- Set designers
- Costume designers
- Stage managers
- Rehearsal pianists
  ....and many more!

Which job would YOU like to do?

Go to the next page to see what these designers can create!
Costumes tell us lots about the characters in an opera. What do these costumes say about these characters? Think of some *adjectives* to describe them:
A very important part of an opera is......

A Story!
Any story can become an opera! Here is a fun activity that you can do to create your own “mini-opera:”

1. Pick your favorite story.
2. Write two sentences that tell us what happens in this story.
3. Draw a picture of what you think the set should look like for one of the scenes from your story, if it was an opera.
4. Draw a picture of your favorite character in the costume that they might wear for this opera.
This is a scene from a famous opera that is based on a fairy tale. What story is this?
What can you tell about this story by looking at the scenery and costumes?
Here are two pictures from another opera based on a famous fairy tale. Can you guess what it is?
Operas can be *comedies* or *tragedies*, just like plays. A comedy is a funny story, and a tragedy is a sad one. What type of opera do you think this one is? Why?
This lighting designer created three different times of day with the stage lights! Do you think this is a comedy or a tragedy?