



PERFORM A SCENE FROM *Cinderella* IN CLASS

Objective: Students will use movement, music, and visual art to create a dramatic presentation in class. Students will be prepared for a City Opera teaching artist to visit their class shortly after this lesson is completed and build on its activities and content. Through this lesson and the subsequent artist visit, students will:

- Perform a scene of dialogue in class using the **VERSE PLAY**, *Cenerentola*.
- Sing the songs from *Cinderella* taught at the workshops
- Create costume pieces and/or decorated props
- Work cooperatively to design and perform the scene
- Demonstrate appropriate audience behavior when peers are performing

Materials: *Cenerentola* (**VERSE PLAY**)

Procedure: Select a scene or a portion of the *Cenerentola* **VERSE PLAY** to dramatize in class.

Scenes might include:

- Opening scenes
 - Cinderella meets her fairy godmother and goes to the ball.
 - The ball
 - Cinderella gets her Prince, and everyone lives happily ever after (except the step-sisters and mother)
1. Make connections between the characters and their physical characteristics as a basis for creating dramatic action. Pose each of the following questions to students and write their responses on the board:
 - "Let's talk about what each character (in the scene you have selected) is like. What kind of posture would they have? How would they walk? What would they wear? What is their personality like? What is important to them in life? What are they thinking in this scene? Are they worried about anything? In what tone of voice would they talk?"
 2. Have all the students get on their feet. Select one character and have all students physicalize the character. After the above discussion, most students will do this intuitively. Teachers can help them trust their instincts and make poses more pronounced. If you find that you need to demonstrate, pick one of the following examples:
 - a) Cinderella might sweep and clean
 - b) The fairy godmother might wave her wand
 - c) The wicked stepmother might wag her finger angrily at Cinderella
 - d) The Prince might find the shoe

e) Cinderella might be transformed

3. Ask selected students to demonstrate their impersonation for the class. Guide them to try to walk in character. Again, students will do this intuitively: you don't need to show them how, just make the suggestion. Don't prohibit others from joining in. If you end up with a whole class of students walking around like the Cinderella that's great.
4. Set the stage in the class' imagination. Ask students what buildings, elements of nature or furniture would be in each scene, and then work with them to designate one area as the house, one as the palace/ballroom, etc. Strive for fun enhancements like "here are the steps on which Cinderella lost her glass slipper".
5. Have students put on relevant costume pieces. (optional)
6. Direct students to strike a pose like their character. You may want to take a photograph.
7. Give a copy of the verse play to each student who will play a speaking part. Have them read through the scene with everyone in their places. Encourage them to use their voices and make gestures in character. Encourage the non-speaking actors react to the dialogue, nod to each other, etc.
8. Have everyone sing along with the tape at the appropriate point in the scene using the songs on the tape. Take as many volunteers as you can fit in the open space to dance with Cinderella and the Prince. Use the entire class for "The Finale" of the show.

Summary:

- Characters act in ways that express their personalities and concerns.
- Everybody onstage has a character, even members of the chorus or supernumeraries (see [GLOSSARY](#)).
- Soon (tomorrow?) an artist from City Opera will come to help us stage then entire scene.

Follow-up with Artist:

- Be sure City Opera Education knows that you want support for this Lesson Plan.
- When the artist comes to your class, she will pick up where you left off. She will have students get into their places and ask them to describe the scene to her, what's what and who's who. She will stage both leading actors and the Chorus for the complete scene and lead them through rehearsal to a final completed "once-through." She will also help polish the music and dance elements as time allows.
- Although this approach is focused on classroom process rather than performance for an audience, you may find it valuable to your students' self-esteem to invite another class, parents, the principal, arts specialists, etc. to attend a celebratory performance after the artist visit.

Extenders:

- Write a short play or scene based on *Cinderella* incorporating character interaction, subtext, and sustained conflict; use student-written scene as basis for this lesson rather than the verse play.

- Choose a different setting for your in-class performance, e.g., a different folk culture (Latin American, Jamaican, Korean...). The verse play may need to be adapted or you can add culturally specific vocabulary.