

PASSION IN A PANDEMIC

Making Opera at Hanover High School

A documentary film by Nora Jacobson
Produced by Jennifer Chambers and Nora Jacobson



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Survey

We appreciate your feedback! Please fill out [this brief survey](#) to share how you have used this lesson plan.

Lesson plans can also be accessed at vermont.pbslearningmedia.org by searching "Passion a Pandemic"

LESSON PLAN #1: COVID - 19

Grades: 7-12

Students will be introduced to the COVID-19 pandemic that forced the global community into a complete lock down in 2020, killing almost 7 million people. Students will watch video clips from the documentary *Passion in a Pandemic: Making Opera at Hanover High School*, explore supporting informational texts and videos, create a timeline, and familiarize themselves with other pandemics generations before them have experienced. Students will answer discussion questions along the way as they watch video clips, and will compare and contrast past pandemics with the present-day COVID-19 pandemic. After watching the video clips, students will complete 1 of 4 activities of their choice to showcase what they've learned. There will be options for extending the learning by having students listen to the *Throughline* podcast.

About the Film

Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic a New Hampshire music teacher, Dartmouth professor and 11 local Hanover teenagers found creative ways of making music.

Suggested Time Allotment

Day 1: Ask baseline questions, read background article, watch the video clips, and begin learning activity

Day 2: Finish learning activity and participate in the culminating activity with students sharing in small groups

Learning Objectives

At the completion of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Understand the timeline of events leading up to the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- Compare and contrast past pandemics (the black death, cholera) and the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Explain how the COVID-19 pandemic impacted history in regards to access to the arts.
- Explain some of the safety protocols in place for safe singing amidst an international, aerosol borne disease.
- Articulate the social, emotional, and intellectual impact on humans during the COVID-19 pandemic.

LESSON PLAN #1: COVID - 19

Subject Areas/Standards

- MU:Cn11.0.T.IIIa – Demonstrate understanding of relationships between music and the other arts, other disciplines, varied contexts, and daily life.
- MU:Cr3.1.C.IIIa – Research, identify, explain, and apply personally-developed criteria to assess and refine the technical and expressive aspects of evolving drafts leading to final versions.
- MU:Pr4.2.8c – Identify how cultural and historical context inform performances and result in different musical effects.

Prep for Teachers

Read the article, [How Humans Have Reacted to Pandemics Through History](#), for background information on the documentary and then preview the video clips. Print out the Baseline Questions for yourself, or project them for the class. Decide if you would like to assign students a Learning Activity, or have them select their own (student choice is recommended for optimal engagement). Students can also complete the Learning Activities alone or in groups as you see fit.

Supplies

- Computers or tablets with internet access
- Access to PBS LearningMedia
- Student headphones



The plague of Justinian, which has been linked to the decline of the Roman empire, has been a renewed area of research in recent years. Credit: Alamy

LESSON PLAN #1: COVID - 19

LESSON PLAN PROCEDURE

Introductory Activity

Baseline Questions

Print these baseline questions, or put them up on the board/project them for the class. Ask students these questions before getting started with the lesson. You could have them write their answers down, share in small groups, or share in an open classroom style.

- When did the COVID-19 Pandemic begin? How did it impact you and your learning?
- How might you see the pandemic impacting musical art forms that release aerosols?
- What precautions did you see the students and faculty taking to protect themselves from contracting COVID-19?
- How did the students respond to going into lockdown from the pandemic? Were you surprised?
- As Hanover High School re-opens from the pandemic what were joys that the students and teachers shared? What things do we take for granted in a “non-pandemic” school year?
- What were accommodations made in the performance space to allow for an audience?

Background Information

- After asking the baseline questions, have students read the article, [How pandemics have inspired art, music and literature](#), for background information.
- Then ask these follow up questions:
- Name a few artistic accomplishments that came out of a pandemic time period in our world.
- What themes does the article [How pandemics have inspired art, music and literature](#), refer to as emerging in the art world during pandemics?

Timeline

Next, review the timeline with the students to provide context for the video clips they will watch. Share this on your smartboard, or have students pull them up on their devices to review on their own time.

LESSON PLAN #1: COVID - 19

Video Clips

Watch the video clips in order. Students can watch as a large group, small group, or individually. Then, students will complete one of the Learning Activities.

1. [Opera Lab Origins](#)

- 00:00 – 4:19
- An introduction to the Opera Lab project.

2. [The COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

- 0-1:57
- Students reflect on their response to going into lockdown at the height of the pandemic.

3. [Unforeseen Events](#)

- 0-3:36
- There is a change of plans as the performance date approaches. The students pivot to accommodate that change.

4. [Pulling Together](#)

- 0-1:47
- Students and faculty pivot quickly due to an unfortunate circumstance.

5. [Anxiety, Being Different, Depression](#)

- 0-4:03
- Students discuss the impact of the pandemic on their mental health and how music has supported their overall wellbeing.

LESSON PLAN #1: COVID - 19

Learning Activities

After students have finished viewing the video clips, have them select one of the following Learning Activities. You may also decide to assign a Learning Activity (student choice is recommended for optimal engagement). Students can complete the Learning Activities alone or in groups as you see fit.

Learning Activity 1: Understand the timeline of events leading up to The COVID-19 Pandemic and what came before. Use this simple timeline to create your own in-depth timeline. Then add illustrations to bring the history to life.

Circa 541 to mid-eighth century The Plague of Justinian

Mid-14th century The Black Death

Early 19th century The Second Cholera Pandemic

1918-1919 The Spanish Flu

1981-Present day HIV/AIDS

2009-2010 The Swine Flu

2020 The Coronavirus

Learning Activity 2: Compare and contrast how YOU felt during the lockdown period in our country with how the Hanover High School students felt.

- Using your own electronic device or a tablet/computer provided by your teacher videotape your own testimonial reflecting on your own reaction to the pandemic in comparison with the students. Did you agree with any of their feelings? Disagree? Did anything surprise you?

Learning Activity 3: Compare the COVID 19 pandemic with a past or present pandemic (HIV/AIDS)

- Journal Writing: What similarities do you find with both pandemics? What differences? Was one pandemic easier to contain than the other? How were both forms of transmission? Did they eventually create an immunization for one of the illnesses? If you had to pick one of them to live through which would you choose?

Learning Activity 4: How does music provide joy in your life during times of isolation or loneliness?

- You are tasked with providing a musical experience to a group of students to improve their overall mental well-being. What style of music would you choose? How would you structure the activity?

LESSON PLAN #1: COVID - 19

Culminating Activity

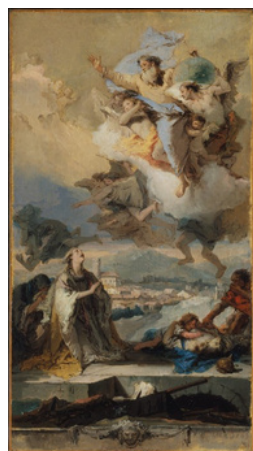
Once students have finished their Learning Activity, have them gather in small groups for the Culminating Activity. You may choose to have students who completed the same activity meet in small groups, OR have the groups composed of students who all completed different activities. Students will then share their completed Learning Activity within their small group.

After everyone has shared, pose these questions to the small groups:

- Critically analyze how the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the lives of students socially, emotionally, and intellectually.
- What were different responses students had to being forced to stay home and not go to school in person in the spring of 2020?
- How do you feel about some schools returning to in-person instruction shortly after masked and distanced? Was that the right choice?
- Do you feel we will find a cure to the COVID 19 virus in this lifetime?
- The teachers were very grateful to be able to work in person with students during the making of this film. What do you think it must have been like for singing teachers to live through the lockdown period teaching chorus from their homes? Did you experience chorus in the spring of 2020?
- What do you think the long-term impact on musical ensembles who release aerosols will be? Were your music ensembles impacted by the COVID-19 19 pandemic? Have the numbers of students involved returned to the pre-COVID-19 “normal.”



Smallpox Demon
image courtesy of Wikipedia



Saint Thecla Praying for the
Plague-Stricken; Giovanni
Battista Tiepolo, 1758–59



The Triumph of Death, image courtesy of Wikipedia

LESSON PLAN #1: COVID - 19

Extensions

Interested in extending the learning? If you have more time, have students who finish early, or would like students to explore more about the topic at home, have them complete one or all of these extension activities.

[How Humans Have Reacted to Pandemics Through History: A Visual Guide](#)

[What Can We Learn From the Art of Pandemics Past?](#)

[Depictions of Global Pandemic Throughout Art History](#)

[Art in the Time of Pandemic](#)

[How Artistic Depictions of Past Epidemics Illuminate Thematic and Structural Responses to COVID-19 Today](#)

[The Value of Art History in a Pandemic: Teaching as a Healing Force](#)

[How Pandemics Have Inspired Art, Music, and Literature](#)

[9 Songs That Show How People of the Past Coped with Pandemics](#)

[The 1918 Pandemic's Impact on Music? Surprisingly Little](#)

[The Boccaccio Project: Musical Storytelling in Response to a Global Pandemic](#)

[Functions of Music Making Under Lockdown: A Trans-Historical Perspective Across Two Pandemics](#)

[Creativity in lockdown: Understanding how music and the arts supported mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic by age group](#)

Audio:

['Throughline': The 1918 Flu Pandemic Differs From Coronavirus Crisis](#) (7 min)

[1918 Flu](#) (38 Min Full Throughline episode)

LESSON PLAN #1: COVID - 19

Acknowledgements

This project was made possible in part with support from New Hampshire Humanities, in partnership with the National Endowment for the Humanities. Learn more at: nhhumanities.org.



Funding was also provided by Denise and Tom Frawley and Upper Valley Arts.

Survey

We appreciate your feedback! Please fill out [this brief survey](#) to share how you have used this lesson plan. You can also access the survey through this QR code:



This study guide is a project of Upper Valley Arts, New England School of the Arts (NESA) and New Hampshire PBS.



nesarts.org



nhpbs.org

Off The Grid Productions

offthegridproductions.com

LESSON PLAN #2:

MUSIC AS A CAREER

Grades: 7-12

Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, 11 teenagers from Hanover NH took part in an Opera Lab project with esteemed Dartmouth professor Filippo Ciabatti and Choral Director Jennifer Chambers. The lesson examines their career aspirations as they go through the rehearsal and performance process for several operatic pieces.

Students will be introduced to 11 students who have grown up in Hanover, New Hampshire and participated in operatic vocal coaching's-culminating in a physically distanced final performance. Students will watch video clips from the documentary *Passion in a Pandemic: Making Opera at Hanover High School*, explore supporting informational texts and videos and familiarize themselves with other individuals who have gone on to careers in music. Students will answer discussion questions along the way as they watch video clips, and will compare and contrast past pandemics with the present-day COVID-19 pandemic. After watching the video clips, students will complete 1 of 4 activities of their choice to showcase what they've learned. There will be options for extending the learning by having students watch Zack Ballinger's [Life is Short: Develop Your Passion](#).

About the Film

Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic a New Hampshire music teacher, Dartmouth professor and 11 local Hanover teenagers found creative ways of making music.

Suggested Time Allotment

Day 1: Ask baseline questions, read background article, watch the video clips, and begin learning activity

Day 2: Finish learning activity and participate in the culminating activity with students sharing in small groups

Learning Objectives

At the completion of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Explore their own passions in life and how to actualize them.
- Examine potential career paths for themselves.
- Establish 4 goals for themselves to further their path toward an enriching and meaningful career.
- Explore the qualities that make each student in the opera documentary who they are and how that has helped to shape their career aspirations.
- Capture the biographies of each of the clear players in the documentary *Passion in a Pandemic: Making Opera at Hanover High School*.

LESSON PLAN #2: MUSIC AS A CAREER

Subject Areas/Standards

- MU:Cn11.0.T.IIIa Demonstrate understanding of relationships between music and the other arts, other disciplines, varied contexts, and daily life.
- MU:Re8.1.E.IIIa Justify interpretations of the expressive intent and meaning of musical works by comparing and synthesizing varied researched sources, including reference to other art forms.
- MU:Re9.1.E.IIIa Develop and justify evaluations of music, programs of music, and performances based on criteria, personal decision-making, research, and understanding of contexts.

Prep for Teachers

Read the article, [How Your Artistic Passions Can Fuel Your Professional Success](#) for background information on the documentary and then preview the video clips. Print out the Baseline Questions for yourself, or project them for the class. Decide if you would like to assign students a Learning Activity, or have them select their own (student choice is recommended for optimal engagement). Students can also complete the Learning Activities alone or in groups as you see fit.

Supplies

- Computers or tablets with internet access
- Access to PBS LearningMedia
- Student headphones



Photo Credit: Rick Read



Photo Credit: Kata Sasvari

LESSON PLAN #2: MUSIC AS A CAREER

LESSON PLAN PROCEDURE

Introductory Activity

Baseline Questions

Print these baseline questions, or put them up on the board/project them for the class. Ask students these questions before getting started with the lesson. You could have them write their answers down, share in small groups, or share in an open classroom style.

- What career do you feel you are headed for? Why?
- What are your passions in life? What makes you happy and excited to be alive?
- What do you feel are the hardest careers to pursue? Easiest?
- What do you feel are the most important things to consider when deciding the direction you want to go in for a career?

Background Information

After asking the baseline questions, have students read the article, [Music Career as a Choice](#), for background information. Then ask these follow up questions:

- What is one of the biggest things to remember when choosing music as a career?
- What are the most lucrative ways of performing?
- What is your final takeaway on choosing music as a career?

Timeline

Next, review the timeline with the students to provide context for the video clips they will watch. Share this on your smartboard, or have students pull them up on their devices to review on their own time.

LESSON PLAN #2:

MUSIC AS A CAREER

Video Clips

Watch the video clips in order. Students can watch as a large group, small group, or individually. Then, students will complete one of the Learning Activities.

1. [Opera Lab Origins](#)

- 00:00 – 4:19
- An introduction to the Opera Lab project.

2. [Stigma About Opera](#)

- 00:00 – 1:08
- Preconceptions about Opera

3. [How conductor Filippo Ciabatti chose his career](#)

- 00:00 – 4:03
- The instruments are added to the ensemble and Filippo explains his connection to music and his career as a musician.

4. [Careers in the Performing Arts](#)

- 0-2:25
- Students explore their plans for the future.

5. [Final Performance and Dreams for the Future](#)

- 0-11:20
- Students complete their final performance and discuss what they hope to do after high school.

LESSON PLAN #2:

MUSIC AS A CAREER

Learning Activities

After students have finished viewing the video clips, have them select one of the following Learning Activities. You may also decide to assign a Learning Activity (student choice is recommended for optimal engagement). Students can complete the Learning Activities alone or in groups as you see fit.

Learning Activity 1: What career do your personality traits make you more inclined to succeed at?

- Take this [personality test](#) based on Carl Jung's and Isabel Briggs Myers' personality type theory. What did you learn about yourself? Were you surprised? Did the results encourage you to consider a different career path you may not have thought of before?

Learning Activity 2: Many famous artists found success in spite of great adversity on their pathway to success. This activity will take a closer look at 2 artists who had grit and determination along the way.

- Read this [article](#) on violinist Lindsey Stirling or this [article](#) on Billy Porter. Take a few minutes to answer these questions journaling. What road blocks did this artist come up against in their own career? What did they do to overcome those roadblocks? What advice do they have for budding artists?

Learning Activity 3: There is a stigma surrounding opera that it is snobby and outdated.

- Watch the Ted Talk [Why Opera is Worth Fighting For](#). Why are opera companies losing money regardless of ticket sales for the performances? What does opera director Lotte de Beer stress as the main reason she feels audiences aren't coming out for performances? Why does she say music reaches our soul? After watching this video did you feel any preconceptions you had surrounding opera changed? She discusses racism that presents itself in the Magic Flute. How does she approach that as a director?

Learning Activity 4: The pathway to a professional musician requires training and determination.

- How does grit and determination play in to whether an artist is successful or gives up on the pathway to becoming a professional performer? Read Colin Robertson's article [Grit: the Factor that Distinguishes the World's Top Performers](#). What are the takeaways from this article? Did any themes come up that were present in the opera documentary clips? Do you feel you have grit and determination as a person? If yes, why? If no, why?

LESSON PLAN #2: MUSIC AS A CAREER

Culminating Activity

Once students have finished their Learning Activity, have them gather in small groups for the Culminating Activity. You may choose to have students who completed the same activity meet in small groups, OR have the groups composed of students who all completed different activities. Students will then share their completed Learning Activity within their small group.

After everyone has shared, pose these questions to the small groups.

- Why do certain performers find success in their career trajectories?
- After watching the clips from the documentary, what careers did the students say they wanted to go on to? What was the career pathway for the teachers? Did any of their comments surprise you?
- What is one of the most important elements to succeeding in a career pursuit?
- Why are educators working to bring back opera into the classrooms? What did you think of opera before we began this lesson plan?
- Have you ever seen an opera? If yes, what were your takeaways?
- What are some ways you feel opera could be included in the educational setting? Would you be interested in participating in a project such as the Opera Lab?



Why Opera is Worth Fighting For | Lotte de Beer | TEDxAUCollege



Billy Porter Runway | Barbara Nitke/Bravo

LESSON PLAN #2: MUSIC AS A CAREER

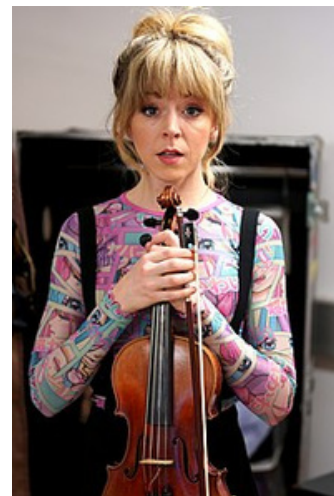
Extensions

Interested in extending the learning? If you have more time, have students who finish early, or would like students to explore more about the topic at home, have them complete one or all of these extension activities.

1. [Career Test](#): Where might you be headed for a career after high school?
2. Creative Writing
 - Imagine you have lived to 100 years old. What would your biography say? Write your own biography. After you are done seal it in an envelope and save it to open when you are in your golden years!
3. Watch this [Rigoletto](#) Episode from the 1972 series "Who's Afraid of Opera?"
 - If you were to remake the series for today's youth, how would you do it? Is there a way to make the idea current, yet still applicable?



Joan Sutherland - Verdi: Rigoletto (Who's Afraid of Opera?)



Stirling in Vienna, Austria on the 2019 Artemis Tour | Photo Credit: Wikipedia

LESSON PLAN #2: MUSIC AS A CAREER

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Survey

We appreciate your feedback! Please fill out [this brief survey](#) to share how you have used this lesson plan. You can also access the survey through this QR code:



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nesarts.org



nhpbs.org

Off The Grid
Productions

offthegridproductions.com

LESSON PLAN #3:

HOW MUSIC SUPPORTS SEL

Grades: 7-12

Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, 11 teenagers from Hanover NH took part in an Opera Lab project with esteemed Dartmouth professor Filippo Ciabatti and Choral Director Jennifer Chambers. This lesson examines the therapeutic nature of singing, the mental health of young adults and teachers as they live through a pandemic and other techniques used to support the overall emotional

Students will be introduced to 11 students who have grown up in Hanover, New Hampshire and participated in operatic vocal coaching's-culminating in a physically distanced final performance. Students will watch video clips from the documentary *Passion in a Pandemic: Making Opera at Hanover High School*, explore supporting informational texts and videos and familiarize themselves with the mental health crisis in our country. Students will hear personal testimonials from the Hanover students and struggles they have faced in their own lives. They will also hear the role music has played in their lives with regard to social/emotional wellbeing. After watching the video clips, students will complete 1 of 4 activities of their choice to showcase what they've learned. There will be options for extending the learning by having students listen to [Beyond the Practice Room: Episode 6: Addressing Musicians' Mental Health with Heidi Schaul-Yoder](#).

About the Film

Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic a New Hampshire music teacher, Dartmouth professor and 11 local Hanover teenagers found creative ways of making music.

Suggested Time Allotment

Day 1: Ask baseline questions, read background article, watch the video clips, and begin learning activity

Day 2: Finish learning activity and participate in the culminating activity with students sharing in small groups

Learning Objectives

At the completion of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Reflect on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on students and teachers as well as reflect on their own experience living through the international lock-down.
- Have a deeper understanding of how music can provide a therapeutic role in our lives as humans.
- Begin brainstorming on activities that make them feel happy and coping tools for anxiety and depression.
- Experience the culture of a different school than their own and compare/contrast those differences.

LESSON PLAN #3:

HOW MUSIC SUPPORTS SEL

Subject Areas/Standards

- *MU:Cn11.0.T.IIIa Demonstrate understanding of relationships between music and the other arts, other disciplines, varied contexts, and daily life.*
- *MU:Cr1.1.C.IIIa Describe and demonstrate multiple ways in which sounds and musical ideas can be used to represent extended sonic experiences or abstract ideas.*
- *MU:Pr4.1.C.IIIa Identify and select specific sections, movements, or entire works that express personal experiences and interests, moods, visual images, concepts, texts, or storylines in moderately complex or complex forms.*
- *MU:Pr4.2.8c Identify how cultural and historical context inform performances and result in different musical effects.*
- *MU:Re7.1.C.IIIa Apply researched or personally-developed criteria to select music that expresses personal experiences and interests, visual images, concepts, texts, or storylines in moderately complex or complex forms, and describe and justify the choice as models for composition.*
- *MU:Re7.2.C.IIIa Analyze aurally and/or by reading the scores of musical works the elements of music (including form), compositional techniques and procedures, relating them to aesthetic effectiveness, style, mood, and context; and explain how the analysis provides models for personal growth as composer, performer, and/or listener.*

Prep for Teachers

Read the article, [How Classical and Instrumental Music Affect Mental Health](#) for background information on the documentary and then preview the video clips. Print out the Baseline Questions for yourself, or project them for the class. Decide if you would like to assign students a Learning Activity, or have them select their own (student choice is recommended for optimal engagement). Students can also complete the Learning Activities alone or in groups as you see fit.

Supplies

- Computers or tablets with internet access
- Access to PBS LearningMedia
- Student headphones

LESSON PLAN #3: HOW MUSIC SUPPORTS SEL

LESSON PLAN PROCEDURE

Introductory Activity: Baseline Questions

Print these baseline questions, or put them up on the board/project them for the class. Ask students these questions before getting started with the lesson. You could have them write their answers down, share in small groups, or share in an open classroom style.

- When did the COVID-19 Pandemic begin? How did it impact you and your learning?
- Do you have any activities you choose to do when you are feeling sad or isolated?
- Why do you think the lockdown from COVID-19 is said to have been hardest on tweens and teenagers?
- Besides living through an international pandemic, what other elements could be playing into the struggle with mental health in our country and the world?
- If you could make one change in your school to support the mental well-being of your peer group and teachers what would it be?

Background Information

After asking the baseline questions, have students read the article [Finding Joy During Difficult Times](#) for background information. Then ask these follow up questions:

- What stresses do you negotiate on a daily basis?
- Do you consciously think of joyful activities you can plan that will relieve some of that stress?
- Why might cardio activity support mental wellbeing?
- Name a few of the suggestions Dr. Stephanie Mihalas suggests in her article for supporting mental wellbeing and finding joy.

Timeline

Next, review the timeline with the students to provide context for the video clips they will watch. Share this on your smartboard, or have students pull them up on their devices to review on their own time.

1. Students auditioned for the operatic pieces.
2. Vocal Coaching's took place with Dartmouth College professor Filippo Ciabatti.
3. Rehearsals with the student chamber ensemble began.
4. Costuming and concert logistics for the performance were handled.
5. Performances began!

LESSON PLAN #3:

HOW MUSIC SUPPORTS SEL

Video Clips

Watch the video clips in order. Students can watch as a large group, small group, or individually. Then, students will complete one of the Learning Activities.

1. [Opera Lab Origins](#)

- 00:00 – 4:19
- An introduction to the Opera Lab project.

2. [The COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

- 0-1:57
- Students reflect on their response to going into lockdown at the height of the pandemic.

3. [Stories with Words](#)

- 0-5:19
- Students describe the context of their opera pieces and Mrs. Chambers reflects on how it feels to work on this project amidst an ongoing pandemic.

4. [Unforeseen Events](#)

- 0-3:36
- There is a change of plans as the performance date approaches. The students pivot to accommodate that change.

5. [Getting Ready for the Performance](#)

- 0-5:17
- The dresses arrive! Students get ready for the performance-“Something is re-starting.”

6. [Pulling Together](#)

- 0-1:47
- Students and faculty pivot quickly due to an unfortunate circumstance.

7. [Anxiety, Being Different, Depression](#)

- 0-4:03
- Students discuss the impact of the pandemic on their mental health and how music has supported their overall wellbeing.

LESSON PLAN #3:

HOW MUSIC SUPPORTS SEL

Learning Activities

After students have finished viewing the video clips, have them select one of the following Learning Activities. You may also decide to assign a Learning Activity (student choice is recommended for optimal engagement). Students can complete the Learning Activities alone or in groups as you see fit.

Learning Activity 1: Create your own music playlist

- Go to YouTube, Apple Music, Spotify or a similar platform and make yourself playlist of songs that make you happy. Explore different genres of music you don't typically listen to. Were you surprised by a style of music that appealed to you that you don't usually listen to?

Learning Activity 2: Why Singing Makes People Happy

- Watch this Ted Talk "[Why Singing is Good For You](#)" with Alexandra Anderson from Lake Forest High School. What does she stress as the physical benefits of singing?
- Were you surprised to see a student as young as her doing a Ted Talk? Have you considered making your own Ted Talk on a topic you feel passionate about? If so, what would your topic be and why?

Learning Activity 3: Examining the Data on Mental Health

- Read the article [The Implications of COVID-19 for Mental Health and Substance Use](#) and examine the graphs outlining the data on mental health over the past 5 years.
- What trends do you see in the brief provided, and, how can we as a society work to improve these outcomes? How do the charts and graphs effect your understanding of the data? Did the authors increase your understanding of the data presented in the article by creating visual representations of it? Are there supports that can be put in place in advance of a future pandemic?

Learning Activity 4: Writing with Purpose

- Music advocacy is an essential part of preserving the music programming in our country's schools. For this activity you will write a letter to one of your local school board members on why music is essential for our countries youth and why funding these programs has a direct correlation with the mental well-being of all human beings.
- When writing the letter remember T.A.P. (Topic, Audience, and Purpose). Begin with a strong topic sentence, be professional and consider multiple drafts with teacher feedback, and don't lose sight of the purpose for the letter.

LESSON PLAN #3: HOW MUSIC SUPPORTS SEL

Culminating Activity

Once students have finished their Learning Activity, have them gather in small groups for the Culminating Activity. You may choose to have students who completed the same activity meet in small groups, OR have the groups composed of students who all completed different activities. Students will then share their completed Learning Activity within their small group.

After everyone has shared, pose these questions to the small groups:

Music is an essential and enduring element in a person's life.

- What would your life be like without music in it?
- In what ways do you utilize music to improve your mood and state of mind?
- How could you use music in a therapeutic capacity for yourself or others?
- Do you currently experience music in a way other than singing? How?
- How does singing impact us physically? Why would participating in a virtual choir be an extremely different experience than singing with an ensemble in person?
- Reflect on the different emotional responses the Hanover High School students had to the pandemic. How was Una's response different from Riley's? What does that say about their personalities and differences that can be seen in human nature?



LESSON PLAN #3: HOW MUSIC SUPPORTS SEL

Extensions

Interested in extending the learning? If you have more time, have students who finish early, or would like students to explore more about the topic at home, have them complete one or all of these extension activities.

Lesson Plans

[Lesson Plans available on having a Healthy Body](#)

[Mental Health Workbook](#)

Articles to Read

[Why Happiness is a Choice](#)

[Impact of Opera on Mental Health Stigma: Pilot of Provider/Community Workshop](#)

Videos to Watch

[Make your Bed-Navy Seal Speech](#)

[Why I Sing for Wellbeing](#)



University of Texas at Austin 2014 Commencement Address By Admiral McRaven ("Make Your Bed Navy Seal Speech")



Why I Sing for Wellbeing | Jude Taylor | TEDxRoyalCentralSchool

LESSON PLAN #3: HOW MUSIC SUPPORTS SEL

Acknowledgements

This project was made possible in part with support from New Hampshire Humanities, in partnership with the National Endowment for the Humanities. Learn more at: nhhumanities.org.



Funding was also provided by Denise and Tom Frawley and Upper Valley Arts.

Survey

We appreciate your feedback! Please fill out [this brief survey](#) to share how you have used this lesson plan. You can also access the survey through this QR code:



This study guide is a project of Upper Valley Arts, New England School of the Arts (NESAs) and New Hampshire PBS.



nesarts.org



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LESSON PLAN #4:

THE STUDY OF MUSIC

Grades: 7-12

Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, 11 teenagers from Hanover NH took part in an Opera Lab project with esteemed Dartmouth professor Filippo Ciabatti and Choral Director Jennifer Chambers. The lesson examines their study as musicians and progress musically over the course of the Opera Lab project.

Students will be introduced to 11 students who have grown up in Hanover, New Hampshire and participated in operatic vocal coaching's-culminating in a physically distanced final performance. Students will watch video clips from the documentary *Passion in a Pandemic: Making Opera at Hanover High School*, explore supporting informational texts and videos and familiarize themselves with other individuals who have taken on the rigorous study of learning classical music, in this case opera, and the discipline required. There will be options for extending the learning by having students watch [How to Build an Opera Singer](#).

About the Film

Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic a New Hampshire music teacher, Dartmouth professor and 11 local Hanover teenagers found creative ways of making music.

Suggested Time Allotment

Day 1: Ask baseline questions, read background article, watch the video clips, and begin learning activity

Day 2: Finish learning activity and participate in the culminating activity with students sharing in small groups

Learning Objectives

At the completion of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Have a greater understanding of the skills required to sing opera.
- Have a greater understanding of the skills required to play an instrument.
- Have a broader perspective on classical music in general and why it is not just “for the elite.”
- Understand many of the words used in the “singers vocabulary,” such as “diaphragm,” “breath support,” “vowel placement,” and “appoggiatura” among others.

LESSON PLAN #4:

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Subject Areas/Standards

- *MU:Cr1.1.E.IIIa Compose and improvise musical ideas for a variety of purposes and contexts.*
- *MU:Cn11.0.T.IIIa Demonstrate understanding of relationships between music and the other arts, other disciplines, varied contexts, and daily life.*
- *MU:Pr4.1.E.IIIa Develop and apply criteria to select varied programs to study and perform based on an understanding of theoretical and structural characteristics and expressive challenges in the music, the technical skill of the individual or ensemble, and the purpose and context of the performance.*
- *MU:Pr5.3.E.IIIa Develop, apply, and refine appropriate rehearsal strategies to address individual and ensemble challenges in a varied repertoire of music.*
- *MU:Cr6.1.E.IIIa Demonstrate an understanding and mastery of the technical demands and expressive qualities of the music through prepared and improvised performances of a varied repertoire representing diverse cultures, styles, genres, and historical periods in multiple types of ensembles.*
- *MU:Re8.1.C.IIIa Develop, justify and defend interpretations of varied works, demonstrating an understanding of the composers' intent by citing the use of elements of music (including form), compositional techniques, and the style/genre and context of each work.*
- *MU:Re9.1.C.IIIa Evaluate the effectiveness of the technical and expressive aspects of selected music and performances, demonstrating understanding of theoretical concepts and complex compositional techniques and procedures.*
- *MU:Re9.1.C.IIIb Describe and evaluate ways in which critiquing others' work and receiving feedback from others have been specifically applied in the personal creative process.*

Prep for Teachers

Read the article by Filippo Ciabatti, "[Who's Afraid of Opera](#)" on page 11 of NH Music Educators Quarter Notes publication. Provide background information on the documentary and then preview the video clips. Print out the Baseline Questions for yourself, or project them for the class. Decide if you would like to assign students a Learning Activity, or have them select their own (student choice is recommended for optimal engagement). Students can also complete the Learning Activities alone or in groups as you see fit.

Supplies

- Computers or tablets with internet access
- Access to PBS LearningMedia
- Student headphones

LESSON PLAN #4: THE STUDY OF MUSIC

LESSON PLAN PROCEDURE

Introductory Activity

Baseline Questions

Print these baseline questions, or put them up on the board/project them for the class. Ask students these questions before getting started with the lesson. You could have them write their answers down, share in small groups, or share in an open classroom style.

- What is the process for learning a new instrument?
- Who were the various coaches the students worked with throughout the learning process for the opera documentary?
- Can you name some of the musical techniques they applied to their performing?
- Was there one opera song that appealed to you the most? Why?
- What myths about opera did this dispel for you?
- When the students spoke about the characters in their opera pieces Alicia Sanyal had some pointed comments to make about the male characters in Soave Sia il vento-what was her response?
- How did each of the students approach the opera lab differently? Did they all demonstrate the same level of commitment and passion for the experience?

Background Information

After asking the baseline questions, have students read the article [What Does an Opera Singer Do?](#) by Berklee College for background information. Then ask these follow up questions:

- Were you surprised about the amount of training that goes into singing opera?
- What other careers require the same level of discipline?
- What was one point made in the article that surprised you?
- What is an unavoidable quality in an opera singer that is necessary to make it professionally that was not addressed in this article?
- Have you made a commitment to a passion in your life that has required training, practicing, and a culminating experience?

LESSON PLAN #4: THE STUDY OF MUSIC

Video Clips

Watch the video clips in order. Students can watch as a large group, small group, or individually. Then, students will complete one of the Learning Activities.

1. [Opera Lab Origins](#)

- 00:00 – 4:19
- An introduction to the Opera Lab project.

2. [Opera as Storytelling](#)

- 00:00 – 5:20
- The emphasis on the storytelling behind opera performances.

3. [Stigma About Opera](#)

- 00:00 – 1:08
- Preconceptions about Opera

4. [Learning to Sing Opera](#)

- 00:00 – 3:49
- Specific operatic techniques are discussed such as appoggiatura and Italian diction is addressed.

5. [The Chamber Ensemble is Added](#)

- 00:00 – 4:03
- The instruments are added to the ensemble and Filippo explains his connection to music and his career as a musician.

6. [Opera Takes Work](#)

- 00:00 – 1:55
- Music Teacher Jennifer Chambers emphasizes the discipline required for learning operatic vocal and instrumental music.

7. [Careers in the Performing Arts](#)

- 0-2:25
- Students explore their plans for the future.

LESSON PLAN #4: THE STUDY OF MUSIC

Video Clips, continued

8. [Anxiety, Being Different, Depression](#)

- 0-4:03
- Students discuss the discipline required for pursuing their musical craft as well as the impact the pandemic had on their mental health.

9. [Getting Ready for the Performance](#)

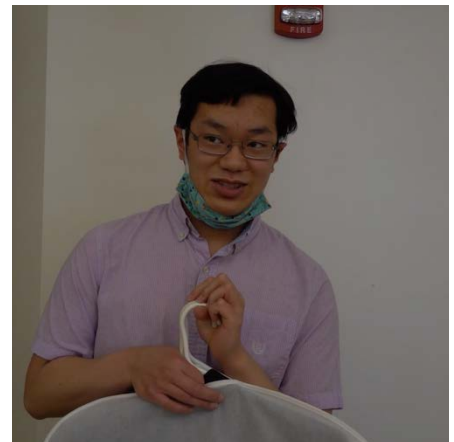
- 0-5:17
- Orchestral reductions are finalized for the score and concert logistics are solidified.

10. [Unforeseen Events](#)

- 0-3:32
- The Opera Lab team makes a last minute change for the performance. Students discuss stage fright and how they negotiate that feeling.

11. [Final Performance and Dreams for the Future](#)

- 0-11:20
- Students complete their final performance and discuss what they hope to do after high school.



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Learning Activities

After students have finished viewing the video clips, have them select one of the following Learning Activities. You may also decide to assign a Learning Activity (student choice is recommended for optimal engagement). Students can complete the Learning Activities alone or in groups as you see fit.

Learning Activity 1: Reflections of a Freelance Opera Singer

- Listen to this Podcast "[Confessions of life as an opera singer](#)." Avi and Ash are recent alumni from the Royal Academy of Music who are embarking on their own journeys as professional singers. Hear the highs and lows as they navigate opera life.
- In the article perspective is discussed whether it is the performer's perspective or the audience perspective. What do YOU like about performances? What do YOU find dull? Have you ever performed a role you have never seen performed before?

Learning Activity 2: The Life, Career, and Accomplishments of Cellist Yo-Yo Ma

- Read [this article](#) on Yo-Yo Ma and his pathway to success.
- How old was Yo-Yo Ma when he began playing? Who encouraged his pursuit of music? How old was he when he performed at Carnegie Hall? Was discipline required in his life? What do you do in your own life that requires this level of discipline?

Learning Activity 3: The Great American Soprano: Renee Fleming

- Watch the [Opera Legends Documentary](#) on Renee Fleming.
- What quality in her voice is lauded in the documentary? What other vocal style did she have to decide between for a career? What was her first big break professionally? What was her Metropolitan Opera debut? Had you heard of Renee Fleming prior to watching this documentary? Did you hear her sing the [National Anthem](#) at the Superbowl in 2014?

Learning Activity 4: Applying to College on Voice

- Go to Carnegie Mellon's undergraduate [portfolio requirements](#) page for voice and examine what high school students are required to submit for their application to the program.
- Were you surprised by the number of songs required by the program? When do you think the training begins for a student who wants to seriously be considered for this university? How does Carnegie Mellon's requirements compare to your local in-state college? Are they similar? Are they vastly different? Why?

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Culminating Activity

Once students have finished their Learning Activity, have them gather in small groups for the Culminating Activity. You may choose to have students who completed the same activity meet in small groups, OR have the groups composed of students who all completed different activities. Students will then share their completed Learning Activity within their small group.

After everyone has shared, pose these questions to the small groups.

What training is required to be able to perform classical music well and is it just for the elite?

- After watching the opera documentary, *Passion in a Pandemic*, what skills were required of the students to be able to have a successful experience from start to finish in singing opera?
- Is the timeline for training different for singers than instrumentalists? If yes, why? Do you sing or play an instrument?
- What did Filippo stress in his interview regarding the “who” of who opera should be accessible to?
- What preconceptions of opera that you took into the film were changed after watching it?
- Have you ever had stage-fright? In what situation did you experience it and what were your tools to manage it?
- Taking instrumental or vocal lessons can be expensive. What ideas do you have for providing greater access to the arts for underserved communities who may not have the resources to afford lessons?



Yo-Yo Ma | Paul Morigi/Getty Images for Ovation



Renee Fleming Super Bowl Performance | Fox Sports

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Extensions

Interested in extending the learning? If you have more time, have students who finish early, or would like students to explore more about the topic at home, have them complete one or all of these extension activities.

Articles to Read:

[Is Classical Music Elitist](#)

[Music Teaches Discipline and Hard Work](#)

[How Young People Can Get Interested in Opera](#)

Podcasts to Listen to:

[Piano Puzzler](#)

[The Unstarving Musician](#)

[Female Entrepreneur Musician Podcast](#)

Videos to Watch:

[1000 Reasons Not to Become a Musician](#) a Ted Talk with Panos Gourgiotis.

[Your Brain on Music](#) a Ted Talk with Alan Harvey

[Music as a Language](#) a Ted Talk with Victor Wooten

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