

A Study Guide for

Gaetano Donizetti's

La Fille du Régiment

(The Daughter of the Regiment)

*Opera Guild of San Antonio
Opera in the Schools*



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The Purpose of this guide:

This study guide is intended to aid you, the teacher, in increasing your students' understanding and appreciation of opera. As this may be many of your students' first opera, providing this information before attending the performance will increase their familiarity with the material and therefore produce a positive experience.

Through this guide we will provide you with background on the composer, history of the source material for the opera, a synopsis of the story, and activities that can be incorporated into your curriculum. If you have a limited amount of time we suggest that you concentrate on the cast of characters, the plot synopsis, and some of the musical and dramatic highlights of the opera.

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Background Information:

Information for teachers and middle and high school students

What is *OPERA*?

When most people think about opera they picture someone wearing horns, and singing in a loud voice. And, someone must also die at the end of the opera, right? Well we are here to tell you that opera is much more than that. First, **Opera is a story told through music**. The music can be accompanied by an orchestra and opera singers train for years to be heard over the orchestra. To sing like this, an opera singer must be in incredible physical shape and in fact, many opera singers supplement their vocal training with physical training such as yoga, tai chi, and dance.

Opera began in Italy when a group of artists and great thinkers of the time formed a group called the *Florentine Camerata*. The Camerata wanted to recreate the ancient Greek form of theatre – which they believed was sung. Opera quickly caught on and became a popular form of theatre throughout Europe. Its popularity is probably due to the fact that it combines visual art (sets, costumes), drama (the story, acting), dance (sometimes even a full ballet) and music (the orchestra, the singing). Operas are based on myths, folktales, great works of literature, biblical stories, fantasy, as well as real-life stories. Operas are written in many languages. Recently opera houses began to use **supertitles (or surtitles)**, which are like captions for opera. Even if you don't speak the language of the opera, you will know what is going on by watching the super titles above the stage.

Opera is special because it takes so many people to make it work. Several elements put together make opera a spectacle for your eyes AND ears. First, singers who perform in operas have different voice types. Women singers are designated as **Soprano** (high), **Mezzo-soprano** (medium), and **Contralto** (low). Men are categorized as, **Tenor** (high), **Baritone** (medium), and **Bass** (low). **Principals** are the singers who have "named" roles such as Pamina in *The Magic Flute* or Mimì in *La bohème*. The group of singers who assist the action are called the **Chorus**. Sometimes, a children's chorus helps to tell the story (*Carmen*, *Turandot*, *Hansel and Gretel*). Most operas also use **Supernumeraries** or "supers". These actors do not sing but serve an important role on stage by participating in the story as extras in the opera (just like in a movie).

The **stage director** helps the singers by telling them where and how to move on the stage. The **conductor** helps the singers with the music and leads the orchestra and singers during the performance. A **costume designer** creates and builds the costumes that the singers, dancers and supernumeraries will wear. The **set designer** creates what the set will look like and the **lighting designer** helps create the desired mood or effect using special lights. All of the designers work as a team to help to create an opera.

Opera Definitions

- **Aria** – a song in an opera
- **Baritone** – the mid-range male voice
- **Bass** – the lowest male voice
- **Bel Canto** – Beautiful Singing
- **Bravissimo** – a word used in praising an opera performer
- **Choreography** – dancing
- **Coloratura Soprano** – a soprano who specializes in music that is distinguished by agile runs and leaps
- **Composer** – one who writes music
- **Conductor** – the leader of the orchestra and performance
- **Costume Designer** – the artist who designs the clothing worn by the performers
- **Curtain Call** – occurs at the end of the performance when all the cast members and the conductor take bows. This can occur in front of the curtain or on the open stage
- **Diva** – literally, “goddess” in Italian. An important female opera star. The masculine form is divo
- **Duet** – a song for two people to sing together
- **Intermission** – a break between acts of an opera. The lights go on and the audience is free to move around. *Così fan tutte* has one 15 minute intermission
- **Librettist** – the person who writes the text of the opera. This can be an original story – like *Così Fan Tutte* – or an adaptation from an existing work – like Verdi’s *Otello* adapted from Shakespeare’s *Othello*
- **Libretto** – the text or words of an opera
- **Melody** – a group of notes organized to make up a musical phrase – like a sentence
- **Mezzo-Soprano** – the mid-range female voice
- **Opera** – a dramatic presentation which is set to music. Almost all of it is sung, and the orchestra is an equal partner with the singers. Like a play, an opera is acted on stage with costumes, scenery, makeup, etc. Opera is the plural form of the Latin word *opus*, which means “work.”
- **Opera Buffa** (Italian) – an opera about ordinary people, usually, but not always comic. First developed in the eighteenth century
- **Opéra Comique** - is a genre of opera that contains spoken dialogue, arias, and occasionally recitatives. It emerged out of the popular *opéra comiques en vaudevilles* of the Fair Theatres of St Germain and St Laurent (and to a lesser extent the Comédie-Italienne), which combined existing popular tunes with spoken sections. Associated with the same name Paris theatre, Opéra-Comique, *opéra comique* is, despite its name, not always comic or light in nature – Bizet’s *Carmen*, likely the most famous *opéra comique*, is a tragedy. It is sometimes confused with 18th-century French version of the Italian *opera buffa*, in French known as *opéra bouffon*.
- **Orchestra pit** – sunken area in front of the stage where the orchestra sits
- **Properties** (props) – objects that are used or carried by a singer or performer on stage
- **Recitative** – the sung dialogue in an opera which is not as melodic as an aria
- **Scenic Designer** – the artist who designs the elements on stage
- **Set** – walls, furniture, etc. that create space or location
- **Soprano** – the highest female voice
- **Stage Director** – the person who oversees stage movement, scenery, costumes, etc.
- **Stage Manager** – the person who coordinates and manages elements of the performance
- **Supertitles (or surtitles)** – the English translations of the opera’s language, in this production Italian, that are projected above the stage during a performance to help the audience follow the story. Much like subtitles in a foreign film
- **Synopsis** – a summary of the story of an opera
- **Tenor** – the highest male voice

La Fille du Régiment

Music by Gaetano Donizetti

Libretto by Jules-Henri Vernoy de Saint-Georges and Jean-François Bayard

About the composer...

"I am obliged to write an opera in fourteen days. I give you a week to do your share...But I warn you, we have a German prima donna, a tenor who stutters, a buffo with a voice like a goat, and a worthless French basso. Still, we must cover ourselves with glory."

- Donizetti to his librettist, Felice Romani, about L'Elisir d'amore

Gaetano Donizetti (1797-1848) Donizetti, Bellini and Rossini are considered the three great masters of the opera style known as *bel canto*. Bel canto operas had set numbers of separate arias and ensembles that featured florid vocal writing designed to show off the human voice to maximum effect. These works demanded great virtuosity from the singers and served as star vehicles for leading operatic performers.

Donizetti was an astoundingly prolific composer. In a little over twenty-five years he produced more than seventy operas, twelve string quartets, seven masses, songs, piano music, motets, cantatas, and psalms. The speed with which he worked was legendary: *L'Elisir d'Amore*, for example, was composed in the incredibly short period of eight days.

Donizetti also played an invaluable role in the development of Italian opera, planting the seeds that enabled opera to flourish in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Donizetti, to a much greater extent than Rossini and Bellini, was to exert a tremendous influence on the operas of Giuseppe Verdi. The composer, though, will always be best remembered for the rich musical catalogue of his own works; *L'Elisir d'Amore*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *La Fille du Régiment*, and *Don Pasquale* have never left the opera house, and the recently renewed interest in music of the *bel canto* period has led opera companies to bring new life to many of his other stage works.



Websites:

Donizetti Society: <http://www.donizettisociety.com/index.html>

Humanities Web: Donizetti <http://www.humanitiesweb.org/human.php?s=c&p=c&a=i&ID=142>

Donizetti Timeline

Donizetti Events	Year	World Events
Domenico Gaetano Maria Donizetti is born.	1797	Napoleon's invasion and partition of the Republic of Venice ended over 1,000 years of independence for the Serene Republic.
Begins studying at Palazzo della Misericordi	1806	Holy Roman Empire dissolved as a consequence of the Treaty of Pressburg.
Travels to Bologna to further his studies	1815	Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo brings a conclusion to the Napoleonic Wars.
Writes his first opera, a one-act comedy	1816	Indiana is the 19th state to be admitted to the Union.
Donizetti's first opera <i>Enrico di Borgogna</i> is staged.	1818	Austrian schoolteacher F.X. Huber puts music to Father Josef Mohr's lyrics <i>Stille Nacht - Silent Night</i> .
Marianna Pezzoli-Grattaroli, a woman who believed in supporting promising young musicians, helps Donizetti avoid military service by paying for his exemption Margherita to attend Milan Conservatory.	1820	Missouri Compromise is passed in the U.S. Congress
His first major success, <i>Zoraida di Granata</i> is performed in Rome, raising Donizetti from obscurity.	1822	Hungarian pianist Franz Liszt makes his debut at age 11; he will grow up to be one of the century's great Romantic composers.
Composes <i>Anna Bolena</i> for Milan, marking the first of his international successes.	1830	The French Revolution of 1830.
<i>L'elisir d'amore (The Elixir of Love)</i> premieres in Milan.	1832	German poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, one of the originators of <i>Sturm und Drang</i> , meaning storm and stress finishes <i>Faust</i> , and dies.
Donizetti signs a contract to produce three operas in Naples	1834	French teacher Louis Braille invents a system of raised point writing, which will be used by the blind throughout the world.
Donizetti begins to suffer difficulties with censors over choice of storylines; composes <i>Lucia di Lammermoor</i> .	1835	A poverty-stricken failed actor, Hans Christian Andersen, publishes a volume of his <i>Fairy Tales</i> .
	1836	The Battle of the Alamo
Donizetti's wife dies; to escape depression and censorship, he accepts an invitation to Paris by Gioacchino Rossini.	1837	Queen Victoria;s reign is considered the apex of the British Empire and is referred to as the Victorian era.
He composes <i>La Fille du Régiment</i> for the Paris Opéra Comique.	1840	
He composes comic opera <i>Don Pasquale</i>	1843	
Donizetti is confined to a mental institution near Paris with violent headaches and depression.	1846	Charles Dickens writes <i>A Christmas Carol</i> , surely shaming many real-life Scrooges into being kinder to their employees come Christmas.
Donizetti dies on April 8 in Bergamo, Italy	1848	

Donizetti's Operas

The dates and locations are those of the premieres; when there was a substantial delay between composition and performance, the estimated year of completion is also given. Revisions are listed separately.

- ❖ **Il Pigmaliione** (1816; 13.10.1960 Teatro Donizetti, Bergamo)
- ❖ **Enrico di Borgogna** (14.11.1818 Teatro San Luca, Venice)
- ❖ **Una follia** (17.12.1818 Teatro San Luca, Venice) (*lost*)
- ❖ **Le nozze in villa** (1821? Teatro Vecchio, Mantua)
- ❖ **Il falegname di Livonia**, ossia **Pietro il grande** (26.12.1819 Teatro San Samuele, Venice)
- ❖ **Zoraïda di Granata** (28.1.1822 Teatro Argentino, Rome)
- ❖ **La zingara** (12.5.1822 Teatro Nuovo, Naples)
- ❖ **La lettera anonima** (29.6.1822 Teatro del Fondo, Naples)
- ❖ **Chiara e Serafina**, ossia **I pirati** (26.10.1822 Teatro alla Scala Milan)
- ❖ **Alfredo il grande** (2.7.1823 Teatro San Carlo, Naples)
- ❖ **Il fortunato inganno** (3.9.1823 Teatro Nuovo, Naples)
- ❖ **Zoraïda di Granata [rev]** (7.1.1824 Teatro Argentino, Rome)
- ❖ **L'ajo nell'imbarazzo** (4.2.1824 Teatro Valle, Rome)
- ❖ **Emilia di Liverpool** (28.7.1824 Teatro Nuovo, Naples) (**L'eremitaggio di Liverpool**)
- ❖ **Alahor in Granata** (7.1.1826 Teatro Carolino, Palermo)
- ❖ **Don Gregorio [rev of L'ajo nell'imbarazzo]** (11.6.1826 Teatro Nuovo, Naples)
- ❖ **Elvida** (6.7.1826 Teatro San Carlo, Naples)
- ❖ **Gabriella di Vergy** (1826; 29.11.1869 Teatro San Carlo, Naples) (**Gabriella**)
- ❖ **Olivo e Pasquale** (7.1.1827 Teatro Valle, Rome)
- ❖ **Olivo e Pasquale [rev]** (1.9.1827 Teatro Nuovo, Naples)
- ❖ **Otto mesi in due ore** (13.5.1827 Teatro Nuovo, Naples) (**Gli esiliati in Siberia**)
- ❖ **Il borgomastro di Saardam** (19.8.1827 Teatro del Fondo, Naples)
- ❖ **Le convenienze teatrali** (21.11.1827 Teatro Nuovo, Naples)
- ❖ **L'esule di Roma**, ossia **Il proscritto** (1.1.1828 Teatro San Carlo, Naples)
- ❖ **Emilia di Liverpool [rev]** (8.3.1828 Teatro Nuovo, Naples)
- ❖ **Alina, regina di Golconda** (12.5.1828 Teatro Carlo Felice, Genoa)
- ❖ **Gianni di Calais** (2.8.1828 Teatro del Fondo, Naples)
- ❖ **Il paria** (12.1.1829 Teatro San Carlo, Naples)
- ❖ **Il giovedì grasso** (26.2.1829? Teatro del Fondo, Naples) (**Il nuovo Pourceaugnac**)
- ❖ **Il castello di Kenilworth** (6.7.1829 Teatro San Carlo, Naples)
- ❖ **Alina, regina di Golconda [rev]** (10.10.1829 Teatro Valle, Rome)
- ❖ **I pazzi per progetto** (6.2.1830 Teatro San Carlo, Naples)
- ❖ **Il diluvio universale** (28.2.1830 Teatro San Carlo, Naples)
- ❖ **Imelda de' Lambertazzi** (5.9.1830 Teatro San Carlo, Naples)
- ❖ **Anna Bolena** (26.12.1830 Teatro Carcano, Milan)
- ❖ **Le convenienze ed inconvenienze teatrali [rev of Le convenienze teatrali]** (20.4.1831 Teatro Canobbiana, Milan)
- ❖ **Gianni di Parigi** (1831; 10.9.1839 Teatro alla Scala Milan)
- ❖ **Francesca di Foix** (30.5.1831 Teatro San Carlo, Naples)
- ❖ **La romanziera e l'uomo nero** (18.6.1831 Teatro del Fondo, Naples) (*libretto lost*)
- ❖ **Fausta** (12.1.1832 Teatro San Carlo, Naples)
- ❖ **Ugo, conte di Parigi** (13.3.1832 Teatro alla Scala Milan)
- ❖ **L'elisir d'amore** (12.5.1832 Teatro Canobbiana, Milan)
- ❖ **Sancia di Castiglia** (4.11.1832 Teatro San Carlo, Naples)
- ❖ **Il furioso all'isola di San Domingo** (2.1.1833 Teatro Valle, Rome)
- ❖ **Otto mesi in due ore [rev]** (1833, Livorno)
- ❖ **Parisina** (17.3.1833 Teatro della Pergola, Florence)
- ❖ **Torquato Tasso** (9.9.1833 Teatro Valle, Rome)
- ❖ **Lucrezia Borgia** (26.12.1833 Teatro alla Scala Milan)
- ❖ **Il diluvio universale [rev]** (17.1.1834 Teatro Carlo Felice, Genoa)

Donizetti's Operas (continued)

- ❖ **Rosmonda d'Inghilterra** (27.2.1834 Teatro della Pergola, Florence)
- ❖ **Maria Stuarda** [rev] (18.10.1834 Teatro San Carlo, Naples) (*Buondelmonte*)
- ❖ **Gemma di Vergy** (26.10.1834 Teatro alla Scala Milan)
- ❖ **Maria Stuarda** (30.12.1835 Teatro alla Scala Milan)
- ❖ **Marin Faliero** (12.3.1835 Théâtre-Italien, Paris)
- ❖ **Lucia di Lammermoor** (26.9.1835 Teatro San Carlo, Naples)
- ❖ **Belisario** (4.2.1836 Teatro La Fenice, Venice)
- ❖ **Il campanello di notte** (1.6.1836 Teatro Nuovo, Naples)
- ❖ **Betly**, o **La capanna svizzera** (21.8.1836 Teatro Nuovo, Naples)
- ❖ **L'assedio di Calais** (19.11.1836 Teatro San Carlo, Naples)
- ❖ **Pia de' Tolomei** (18.2.1837 Teatro Apollo, Venice)
- ❖ **Pia de' Tolomei** [rev] (31.7.1837, Sinigaglia)
- ❖ **Betly** [rev] ((?) 29.9.1837 Teatro del Fondo, Naples)
- ❖ **Roberto Devereux** (28.10.1837 Teatro San Carlo, Naples)
- ❖ **Maria de Rudenz** (30.1.1838 Teatro La Fenice, Venice)
- ❖ **Gabriella di Vergy** [rev] (1838; 8.1978 recording, London)
- ❖ **Poliuto** (1838; 30.11.1848 Teatro San Carlo, Naples)
- ❖ **Pia de' Tolomei** [rev 2] (30.9.1838 Teatro San Carlo, Naples)
- ❖ **Lucie de Lammermoor** [rev of **Lucia di Lammermoor**] (6.8.1839 Théâtre de la Renaissance, Paris)
- ❖ **Le duc d'Albe** (1839; 22.3.1882 Teatro Apollo, Rome) (*Il duca d'Alba*)
- ❖ **Lucrezia Borgia** [rev] (11.1.1840 Teatro alla Scala Milan)
- ❖ **Poliuto** [rev] (10.4.1840 Opéra, Paris) (*Les martyrs*)
- ❖ **La fille du régiment** (11.2.1840 Opéra-Comique, Paris)
- ❖ **L'ange de Nisida** (1839; ?)
- ❖ **Lucrezia Borgia** [rev 2] (31.10.1840 Théâtre-Italien, Paris)
- ❖ **La favorite** [rev of **L'ange de Nisida**] (2.12.1840 Opéra, Paris)
- ❖ **Adelia** (11.2.1841 Teatro Apollo, Rome)
- ❖ **Rita**, ou **Le mari battu** (1841; 7.5.1860 Opéra-Comique, Paris) (*Deux hommes et une femme*)
- ❖ **Maria Padilla** (26.12.1841 Teatro alla Scala Milan)
- ❖ **Linda di Chamounix** (19.5.1842 Kärntnertortheater, Vienna)
- ❖ **Linda di Chamounix** [rev] (17.11.1842 Théâtre-Italien, Paris)
- ❖ **Caterina Cornaro** (18.1.1844 Teatro San Carlo, Naples)
- ❖ **Don Pasquale** (3.1.1843 Théâtre-Italien, Paris)
- ❖ **Maria di Rohan** (5.6.1843 Kärntnertortheater, Vienna)
- ❖ **Dom Sébastien** (13.11.1843 Opéra, Paris)
- ❖ **Dom Sébastien** [rev] (6.2.1845 Kärntnertortheater, Vienna)

About the Librettists...

Jules-Henri Vernoy de Saint-Georges (1799-1875) was one of the most prolific librettists of the 19th century, often working in collaboration with others. His first work, *Saint-Louis ou les deux dîners* (1823), a vaudeville written in collaboration with Alexandre Tardif, was followed by a series of operas and ballets. In 1829 he became manager of the Opéra-Comique at Paris. Among his more famous libretti are the ballet *Giselle* (with Théophile Gautier, 1841), the opera *L'éclair* (1835) for Halévy, the opera *La fille du régiment* (with Jean-François Bayard, 1840) for Donizetti, and the opera *La jolie fille de Perth* for Georges Bizet. Virtually all his opera libretti are for opéras comiques, although *La reine de Chypre* (1841), for Halévy, was a grand opera. In all Saint-Georges wrote over seventy stage pieces in collaboration with Eugène Scribe and other authors. He also wrote novels, including *Un Mariage de prince*. Saint-Georges was notably old-fashioned in his approach, typically depending on highly improbable coincidences and twists with little attempt at convincing characterization. His tastes were reflected in his personal affectation of 18th-century costume and manners in his everyday life.

Jean-François Bayard (1796-1853) was one of the most fertile-minded and skilful vaudeville writers of his era. Close friends with Eugène Scribe, the two often collaborated on plays. He wrote with extreme ease, producing more than 200 plays for several theatres, sometimes alone, sometimes in collaboration. Many of his plays were remarked upon for their witty cheerfulness, and sensitivity. He most often wrote vaudevilles, though he also had success with drama and even high comedy. In 1840, he collaborated with Georges Henri Vernoy de Saint-Georges on the libretto for Gaetano Donizetti's opéra comique *La fille du régiment*.

About the story...

La Fille du Régiment, or *The Daughter of the Regiment* as it is known in English, premiered at the Paris [Opéra Comique](#) on February 11, 1840 to moderate success. Several critics, among them Hector Berlioz, accused Donizetti of having inserted into a supposedly new opera, music which had already been heard in Italy. Donizetti denied this charge and proclaimed, truthfully, that the score of *La Fille du Régiment* was entirely new, having been composed expressly for the Opera-Comique. Over the months, *La Fille du Régiment* began to attract Parisian audiences. By the beginning of the following year it had achieved fifty performances, and in due course it became highly popular throughout France. Although Donizetti, was Italian, he spent many of the last years of his short life in Paris, where he was a favorite at both the Opera and the Opera-Comique. *La Fille du Régiment* became so popular that it was considered a patriotic French opera, in spite of the composer's nationality.



Cast of Characters and vocal range:

The Marguise of Berkenfield
Marie, the young *vivandière*
The Duchess of Krackenthorp
Sulpice, a sergeant
Tonio, a young peasant
Hortensius, the steward of the Marquise
A Corporal

Mezzo-Soprano
Soprano
Speaking Role
Bass
Tenor
Bass
Baritone

French soldiers, Tyrolean peasants, ladies and gentleman,
and the servants of the Marquise.

Synopsis

The action takes place in the Tyrolean Alps, Switzerland, about 1805

ACT I. The Tyrolean mountains. On their way to Austria, the terrified Marquise of Berkenfield and her butler, Hortensius, have paused in their journey because a skirmish has broken out. When the Marquise hears from the villagers that the French troops have retreated, she comments on the rude manners of the French people ("Pour une femme de mon nom"). Sulpice, sergeant of the 21st regiment, assures everyone that his men will restore peace and order. He is joined by Marie, the mascot, or "daughter," of the regiment, which adopted her as an orphaned child. When Sulpice questions her about a young man she has been seen with, she explains that he is a local Tyrolean who once saved her life. Troops of the 21st arrive with a prisoner: this same Tonio, who says he has been looking for Marie. She steps in to save him, and while he toasts his new friends, Marie sings the regimental song ("Chacun le sait"). Tonio is ordered to follow the soldiers, but he escapes and returns to declare his love to Marie. Sulpice surprises them, and Marie must admit to Tonio that she can marry only a soldier from the 21st.

The Marquise of Berkenfield asks Sulpice for an escort to return her to her castle. When he hears the name Berkenfield, Sulpice remembers a letter he found near the young Marie on the battlefield. The Marquise soon admits that she knew the girl's father and says that Marie is the long-lost daughter of her sister. The child had been left in the care of the Marquise, but was lost. Shocked by the girl's rough manners, the Marquise is determined to give her niece a proper education and to take her to her castle. Tonio has enlisted so that he can marry her ("Ah, mes amis"). But Marie has to leave both her regiment and the man she loves ("Il faut partir").

ACT II. The Berkenfield castle. The Marquise has arranged a marriage between Marie and the Duke of Krakenthorp. Sulpice is also at the castle, recovering from an injury, and is supposed to be helping the Marquise with her plans. The Marquise gives Marie a singing lesson, accompanying her at the piano. Encouraged by Sulpice, Marie slips in phrases of the regimental song, and the Marquise loses her temper (Trio: "Le jour naissait dans la bocage"). Left alone, Marie thinks about the meaninglessness of money and position ("Par le rang et l'opulence"). She hears soldiers marching in the distance and is delighted when the whole regiment files into the hall. Tonio, Marie, and Sulpice are reunited. Tonio asks for Marie's hand. The Marquise is unmoved by the young man's declaration that Marie is his whole life ("Pour me rapprocher de Marie"). She declares her niece engaged to another man and dismisses Tonio. Alone with Sulpice, the Marquise confesses the truth: Marie is her own illegitimate daughter whom she abandoned, fearing social disgrace.

Hortensius announces the arrival of the wedding party, headed by the groom's mother, the Duchess of Krakenthorp. Marie refuses to leave her room, but when Sulpice tells her that the Marquise is her mother, the surprised girl declares that she cannot go against her mother's wishes and agrees to marry a man that she does not love. As she is about to sign the marriage contract, the soldiers of the 21st regiment, led by Tonio, storm in to rescue their "daughter." The guests are horrified to learn that Marie was a canteen girl, but they change their opinion when she tells them that she can never repay the debt she owes the soldiers. The Marquise is so moved by her daughter's goodness of heart that she gives her permission to marry Tonio. Everyone joins in a final "Salut à la France."

Interesting Links ...

- Soprano Natalie Dessay performs "Chacun le Sait, Chacun le Dit" from Donizetti's "La Fille du Régiment." Vienna. April 1, 2007.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ljdii2A5cCw&feature=related>
- Metropolitan Opera International Radio Broadcast Information Center - *La Fille du Régiment*
<http://www.operainfo.org/broadcast/operamain.cgi?id=50000000000129&language=1>

Activities: *La Fille du Régiment*

Try some or all of the following activities to enhance the educational experience of your students before, during and after the performance. The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) listed represent only a sampling of how introducing students to live theatre performances can enhance their education.

Before Going to the Opera

Connect and motivate.

TEKS. LANGUAGE ARTS. 7.3, 7.4, 8.3, 8.4, HS 3, 4 THEATER 7.3, 7.4, 8.3, 8.4, HS 3, 4 MUSIC 7.5, 8.5, HS 5

Read and Discuss the Synopsis:

- What do you know about the story of *La Fille du Régiment*? What do you think is the point of the story?
- Should the opera end with a happy ending? Why or why not?
- What do you think the opera will be like?

Listen to musical examples:

- How does recitative differ from an aria?
- What does the music express about the opera or characters?
- How does the music make you feel?
- Can you visualize what the opera will be like when you listen to the music?

Watch a video/dvd production:

- There are several productions of *La Fille du Régiment* available to view. You may even want to look at short clips which can be found on www.youtube.com.

What is Opera?

TEKS. MUSIC 7.4, 7.5, 8.4, 8.5, HS THEATER 7.4, 8.4, HS

- Discuss the differences between Opera, Musical Theatre, and Plays
- Discuss the history or the beginnings of Opera
 - A brief history can be found at: http://www.operagifts.com/history_of_opera.php
- Discuss the different orchestra instruments used in the “pit” for an opera
- For more information see The Opera Guild of San Antonio’s teacher’s guide, *What is Opera?*

Discuss audience etiquette.

TEKS. MUSIC. 7.5, 7.6, 8.5, 8.6 High School 5, 6. THEATER.7.5, 8.5, HS 5.

Discuss the following with the students prior to attending the performance:

- Is it alright to laugh? Cry?
- Is it alright to applaud? When?
- What does “Bravissimo” mean and when is it appropriate to call out during an opera performance?

Read the background information. (Grades 7-12)

TEKS. MUSIC. 7.5, 8.5, HS 5. THEATER. 7.4, 8.4, HS 4. SOCIAL STUDIES. 8.27 HS 20.

- How did life differ in the 19th Century from the times in which we live now?
- How was life different in 19th Century Europe than it is now?
- How do you think the times may have inspired the story/opera?

During the Performance of the Opera

Look.

TEKS. THEATER 7.5, 8.5, HS 5. MUSIC 7.5, 7.6, 8.5, 8.6, HS 5, 6

What do you see? Notice the following:

- colors
- sets
- costumes
- hair and make-up
- movement - choreography
- lights
- conductor
- orchestra

Listen.

TEKS. MUSIC 7.5, 7.6, 8.5, 8.6. HS 5, 6

- How does each scene begin?
- What arias or other songs are sung?
- How does the music change the mood?
- What makes the music sound militaristic or martial?
- Note the skill of the singers.
- What are the voice ranges of the singers?

Think.

TEKS. THEATER 7.5, 8.5, HS 5

- What problems happen in the opera?
- How are the problems solved?

After Going to the Opera

React to the experience.

TEKS. MUSIC. 7.6, 8.6, HS 6. THEATER. 7.5, 8.5, HS 5.

Write or talk about the following:

- Did you like the opera or not? Why or why not?
- What did you like best or least?
- How would you rate the student performances?
- Discuss the different voice types in the opera.
- Discuss the director's concept. Did you like his interpretation? Why or why not?
- How did the orchestra support the story?
- What is the message at the end of the opera?
- The plot of the opera is very convoluted. How much time passes during *La Fille du Régiment*?



Retell the story.

TEKS. THEATER 7.2, 8.2, HS 2

What was the main idea of the opera? Who were the main characters? What was the sequence of the plot? Was the opera serious or comic or a combination of the both?

- Write about the performance as if you are a critic.
- Retell the entire story in 50 words or less.
- Write a headline for a newspaper article that expresses the main idea of the opera.
- Act out your favorite scene using words and gestures.
- Turn the opera into a dance and present your favorite part.
- Write a song to express a lesson to be learned from the opera.
- Draw a picture to illustrate a scene in the opera.

Write something original.

TEKS. MUSIC: 7.4, 8.4, HS 4.

- Write a song for one of the characters in the opera.
- Write a song for a character in story of your choice.
- Write a story, song, poem or skit with ideas from the opera. Examples:
 - 19th Century
 - France
 - French Military
 - Marriage
 - Nationalism
 - War
 - Peace

Research.

TEKS. MUSIC. 7.5, 8.5, HS 5.

Find out more about one of the following:

- opera
- careers in opera
- Opéra Comique
- Paris, France
- Gaetano Donizetti
- Vivandière

Design.

TEKS. THEATER 7.3, 8.3, HS 3

Create your own scenic design for the production.

- Keep in mind the following:
 - What time period do you want to set your opera?
 - What scenic elements are necessary to tell the story?
 - How can your scenery support the singer's need to project their voice?

Additional Resources

- San Francisco Opera Guild Study Guide: *La Fille du Régiment*
<http://sfopera.com/uploads/education/DaughteroftheRegimentstudyguide.pdf>
- Opera Guild of San Antonio: <http://www.operaguildda.org/>