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: Well hey there and welcome to Busy Kids Love Music, an educational podcast for music-loving families. I'm Carly Seifert, the creator of Busy Kids Do Piano, and I'm thrilled to have you with me today.

Today we are going to talk about opera. A lot of people have strong feelings about opera; some people are huge fans of opera, and others dislike opera music. Many of the most famous composers have composed an opera at one point or another in their musical careers. We're going to learn about some of the types of voices in opera and hear different samples of opera music -- maybe you'll begin to develop some strong feelings about opera after today's episode!

Let's start by talking about what an opera actually is: An opera is like a play that is set to music. Instead of actors speaking the lines, everything -- or almost everything -- is sung. The singers perform on a stage and an orchestra accompanies them in the orchestra pit, which is in front of the stage but lower down. Some operas even feature dance.

The music you're listening to now is an overture from an opera that Mozart wrote called *The Marriage of Figaro*. An overture is often played by the orchestra at the beginning of the opera, and includes music that is going to be played throughout the show.

There are many different types of operas. Some operas are very serious and tragic. Others have lots of magic and fantasy as part of the story. Some operas are even silly and lighthearted, such as *The Pirates of Penzance* from the famous composers Gilbert and Sullivan.

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Opera singers must have powerful voices and often train in different languages, since many operas are written in Italian, German or French. If an opera is in a different language, there will be a screen above the front of the stage with the translated lyrics appearing on it, so that the audience knows what is happening on the stage.

A soprano is the highest female voice. The heroine of an opera is often played by a soprano. Listen to this soprano sing a portion of Strauss' *Voices of Spring*, and notice how high her voice is able to reach.

Now listen to a mezzo soprano voice. While still able to sing high -- though not quite as high as a soprano -- this female voice also has a lower range.

A tenor is the highest male voice, and often plays the hero of the show. Here is a sample of an incredible tenor voice singing a bit of Vivaldi's opera, *Giustino*.

Finally, the lowest male voice of the opera, a bass. Bases are often the villains -- or the bad guys -- of the show.

As you can imagine after hearing these clips, it takes a lot of skill and training to become an opera singer. In 1597, in Florence, Italy, the first opera ever written was performed.

Public opera houses began to pop up in Italy about 50 years later, and opera began to be a form of entertainment for wealthy people. Mozart wrote famous operas during the classical period, and then in the 19th century, composer Richard Wagner began to write many dramatic, German operas. Today, there are many different styles of opera that continue to be composed and performed.

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Because there are so many different types and styles of opera music, you'll definitely want to download our listening calendar at busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/5. This listening calendar will have links to musical performances that fit with the theme of this episode -- opera music -- and you'll get to hear how much variety exists within opera.

We also learned so many new words in today's episode, so I would encourage you to download the transcript from today's episode and review some of those words. The transcript is also available at busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/5.

If you enjoyed learning about opera music, be sure to rate and review the Busy Kids Love Music podcast as well as subscribe so that you don't miss our next brand new episode, airing in two weeks.

Thanks for joining me today to learn and discover new things about music. I'll see you soon!