

STOP. THIS. OPERA!

A One-Act Opera for Young Audiences

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## SYNOPSIS

Wracked with stage fright over her operatic debut, a singer tries desperately to stop the performance so she won't have to sing her show-ending aria. In her attempts to stop the opera, she pleads with the composer, the conductor and orchestra, the stage manager and crew, even the prompter and the supertitles operator, all of whom push the opera to its conclusion. The singer overcomes her fear and brings down the house, only to learn she must do it again the following night.

An opera for young audiences, *STOP. THIS. OPERA!* introduces the moving parts of a production and many important roles on- and off-stage. It also addresses the fear of putting oneself and one's talents on display, and the benefit and self-confidence gained by doing so.

## CHARACTERS

### **Principal Roles (3 Singers)**

THE ONE WITH THE BIG SOLO (soprano or tenor) – a terrified opera singer making their debut. Their stage fright is so great, that they are trying anything they can think of to stop the opera from reaching its end.

THE SUPPORTING CHARACTER (mezzo-soprano or baritone) – a seasoned professional doing what they can to move the show along while encouraging BIG SOLO.

COMPOSER (flexible voice type) – sympathetic to BIG SOLO, but absolutely opposes any attempt to stop or change the opera.

### **Secondary Roles (as available, and willing)**

CONDUCTOR and ORCHESTRA

DIRECTOR

STAGE MANAGER AND BACKSTAGE CREW

PROMPTER and SUPERTITLES TECH

HAIR/MAKEUP/COSTUME PERSONNEL

LIGHTING BOARD OPERATOR

### **Chorus**

OPTIONAL CHORUS comprised of children (and/or willing adults) in the audience.

*A Note about Casting: Secondary Roles should be filled by actual personnel serving in each capacity. The order of action involving Secondary Roles and the Chorus may be rearranged or omitted, based on the availability – and willingness – of said participants. Additionally, the COMPOSER or SUPPORTING CHARACTER may double as any of the Secondary Roles.*

*The action takes place in the course of an opera production – it doesn't matter which one. Sets and costumes may be pulled from anything readily available, but there should be some kind of production on stage.*

## **OVERTURE**

As the Orchestra plays the overture, THE ONE WITH THE BIG SOLO is fretting around the stage, trying to hide behind the set pieces. “I have to stop this opera!” she says. “My big solo is at the end of this opera - my professional debut - and I’m FREAKING OUT!!”

Enter SUPPORTING CHARACTER, who sings a dramatic aria detailing the imminent arrival of a very important person. This person will give us the inspiration that we’re all looking for.

## **FIRST TABLEAU** – CONDUCTOR and ORCHESTRA

BIG SOLO pops up in the pit, next to the CONDUCTOR. She appeals to CONDUCTOR and ORCHESTRA for an end to the opera: Go really slow! Break a string! Lose your sheet music! Anything! CONDUCTOR reiterates that their job is clear, and the COMPOSER should make any changes to the music.

## **SECOND TABLEAU** – COMPOSER

The COMPOSER is revealed, sitting in the audience, covered by sheets of staff paper. “Help me!” BIG SOLO shouts. “We can’t get to the end of this opera – can you rewrite it?” COMPOSER sings a sprawling aria on the meaning of opera, the integrity of the writing, and that the scores have already been shipped. COMPOSER won’t rewrite the opera, and besides, it was written specifically for BIG SOLO!

## **THIRD TABLEAU** – DIRECTOR

“There’s got to be away to stop this opera!” BIG SOLO is determined, and comes up with an idea. SUPPORTING CHARACTER returns to the stage for some recit. BIG SOLO returns to the stage and tries to sabotage the action, shuffling set pieces and nearly knocking SUPPORTING CHARACTER over. The DIRECTOR appears on the edges of the scene, hissing at BIG SOLO to stop messing with the staging. It is, after all, really well thought out! BIG SOLO pleads with the DIRECTOR to slow down the action, maybe have her sing her aria off-stage? No chance, says the DIRECTOR, besides – *we’re in the middle of the show!!*

## **FOURTH TABLEAU** – STAGE MANAGER and CREW

BIG SOLO runs off stage, and appears again, STAGE MANAGER and CREW in tow. The STAGE MANAGER is hollering that BIG SOLO has jumped her entrance and the CREW is terrified that she’s going to hurt herself. LIGHTING gets involved by pursuing her with the follow spot. HAIR/MAKEUP/COSTUME chases her around the stage, collecting parts of her costume that she has discarded.

## **FIFTH TABLEAU** – PROMPTER and SUPERTITLES

BIG SOLO, having evaded the entire backstage crew, figures she can get out of singing her aria by simply not reciting any of the text. The PROMPTER, sitting in the front row of the

audience, shouts the text to BIG SOLO, who is compelled to repeat them. She begins to argue with the supertitles, insisting she is in charge of what she says. The supertitles disagree.

**SIXTH TABLEAU** – the big chorus number

SUPPORTING CHARACTER returns to set up the big finale, making an appeal to the audience for volunteers. These volunteers form the CHORUS, and comment on SUPPORTING CHARACTER's pronouncement that the very important person is about to arrive. COMPOSER teaches the chorus their parts, PROMPTER provides the text, and CONDUCTOR gives a big cue.

**SEVENTH TABLEAU** – time to face the music

BIG SOLO is pushed to center stage by DIRECTOR and STAGE MANAGER. She stands center stage, in the spotlight, and is terrified. SUPPORTING CHARACTER sets up her entrance. ORCHESTRA plays her melody in a gorgeous setting. COMPOSER gives her a big thumbs up; DIRECTOR wiggles a finger, directing her into the perfect place. PROMPTER whispers her first words; SUPERTITLES declares, "Everybody pay attention – she's going to be GREAT!" At the CONDUCTOR's cue, she sings – and it's wonderful.

**CURTAIN CALL**

The audience – prompted by SECONDARY ROLES – goes wild. SUPPORTING CHARACTER, CONDUCTOR, DIRECTOR and COMPOSER join BIG SOLO on stage for their bows. BIG SOLO is ecstatic – she did it! Can you believe it?! SECONDARY is complimentary, "Congratulations! It was a great debut. Get some rest."

"Rest...?" SOLO replies. "Why is that so important?"

SUPPORTING replies "We have another show tomorrow night."

"...WHAT?!"

**END OF THE OPERA**