



Elaine Rinaldi, Founder & Artistic Director

Greetings!

Thanks for spending some time with us this afternoon at Pinecrest Gardens, where you are about to enjoy a performance of “The Three Little Pigs”. Our performance features the traditional story that you know and love, with a new important lesson: if you don’t know something, the best way to find out how to do it is to go to the library!!

The opera today is sung to music from several of Mozart’s famous operas. In this Parent Guide, you can find more information on Mozart, his operas and other fun facts!

Thanks again for your support, and we hope to see you at our next Family Fun concert on February 19th, “Musical Stories from Around the Globe”.

Warmly,
Elaine Rinaldi, Founder & Artistic Director
Orchestra Miami

Synopsis

Despina and her brothers, Cherubino and Don Giovanni, are old enough that Mama Pig has told them they need to build their own houses. Cherubino and Don Giovanni decide to build their houses out of the first things that they find: straw and sticks. Big sister Despina, on the other hand, takes a more careful approach. She decides to research about how to build houses at the Library. So the three head off to the Library.

Meanwhile, at the Library, Wolfgang Bigbad, who hasn’t had anything to eat, is pacing outside and in a nasty mood. He smells the Pigs approaching, and pretends to be a statue. The Pigs see the “statue”, and Cherubino dares Don Giovanni to invite the statue to dinner.

Later on, Despina returns from the library. Her brothers, who are supposed to be building their houses, are goofing around. Wolfgang Bigbad has gotten lost in the



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woods coming back from the Library. He comes across Don Giovanni. Don Giovanni runs into his stick house, and Wolfgang Bigbad demands to be let in. Wolfgang huffs and puffs and blows the door down, and Don Giovanni runs to Cherubino's house. Wolfgang is close behind, and after asking to be let into Cherubino's straw house, blows the door down.

The two pig brother's run to Despina's brick house, but she isn't there, as she went to the Library to return some books. Wolfgang Bigbad knocks on the door and pretends to be Despina. The brothers freak out, as they think the "statue" they invited to dinner has actually arrived! They refuse to let him in the front door, and huffing and puffing won't bring this house down, so Wolfgang Bigbad climbs onto the roof to see if he can find another way in. However, he falls down the chimney, to his untimely end. In the end, the brothers admit that going to the library and reading books is a pretty smart thing to do after all.

A note from creator John Davies

In 1991, while working as Director of Education for Syracuse Opera, I was asked by a large Parent Teacher Association if we had anything in our repertoire celebrating books and reading. The PTA had initiated a program called PARP (Parents As Reading Partners) and was looking for imaginative ways to celebrate reading and literature. We didn't happen to have a "reading show" in our repertoire at the time, but rather than jeopardize a chance for work, I somewhat recklessly guaranteed that we would "any moment now."

I wrote *The Three Little Pigs* shortly thereafter. I thought it would be fun to have the two pigs who build their homes of sticks and straw do so out of a kind of slovenly lack of planning. In contrast, the little book-loving pig who builds her brick house goes to the library and reads up on wolf-resistant structures.

The Three Little Pigs has been produced with regularity in the USA since 1991. It gives me real satisfaction to think many excellent American singers having wonderful operatic careers today used to be big bad wolves and little piglets.



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Meet the Characters

Despina: the long-suffering older sister of the family, loves to read, and is used to getting her brothers out of messes. Sung by a soprano. Her name, “Despina”, is the name of a spirited character from one of Mozart’s famous operas, *Così Fan Tutte*.

Cherubino: the bossy older brother, who enjoys getting into scuffles and instigating trouble. Sung by a tenor. His name, “Cherubino” is the name of a character from Mozart’s famous opera, *Le nozze di Figaro*, who is a teenage boy who is always finding himself in trouble!

Don Giovanni: the curious younger brother who generally accedes to whatever his older brother puts him up to. Sung by a baritone. His name, Don Giovanni, is the name of the title character from Mozart’s famous opera *Don Giovanni*.

Wolfgang Bigbad: the villain of our story, he enjoys lurking around libraries and trying to eat pigs. Sung by a bass-baritone, his name is a play on Mozart’s first name, Wolfgang, and the Big Bad Wolf.

What Does This Mean?

★ **Pastiche** - when a work of art mimics another work of art from another time or place. For example, *The Three Little Pigs* is a pastiche because it imitates Mozart’s operas, using music from the same operas!

★ **Opera** - a (very dramatic) work of art that tells a story through song and an orchestra. The first opera ever written was written in the year 1597! It was called *Dafne*, and it was written by composer Jacobo Peri. Opera has an impressive history of all types of composers writing opera, from Peri in the renaissance, to Amy Beach in the romantic period, to (composer) John Adams writing an opera about a U.S. President 35 years ago!



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★ **Aria** - when an opera singer sings an extended piece of music by themselves, typically to themselves (and the audience). Aria is Italian for “air,” or melody!

★ **Soprano** - A singer, typically a woman, who can sing in the highest range. [Here](#) is an example from one of the most famous soprano arias from Mozart’s *The Magic Flute*!

★ **Mezzo Soprano**- A singer, typically a woman, who can sing a high range, but is lower than a soprano. Sometimes, mezzo sopranos sing what are called “pants roles”, because they are playing men! [Here](#) is an example of a mezzo soprano singing a “pants role” aria as Cherubino

★ **Tenor** - A singer, typically a man, who sings in a high range! [Here](#) is one of the most famous arias ever sung by a tenor, from Ruggero Leoncavallo’s *I Pagliacci*!

★ **Baritone**- A singer, typically a man, who sings in the middle-lower range. [Here](#) is an example of a baritone aria from Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*!

★ **Basso (bass)** - A singer, typically a man, who sings in the lowest range. [Here](#) is an example of a basso aria, from Giacomo Rossini’s *The Barber of Seville*!

★ **Libretto** - the text that the opera is set to. Often, the libretto was written by a **librettist**, who is often a poet and not the composer of the opera.



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Composer Spotlight: Mozart

- ❖ Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, whose real name was Johannes Chrysostomus Wolfgangus Theophilus Mozart, was born in 1756 in Salzburg, Austria.
- ❖ He wrote his first piece of music at 6 years old, and his first opera at 11 years old!
- ❖ He wrote over 600 compositions in his short life!
- ❖ When he was 17, he was hired to work for the Court in Vienna, Austria!
- ❖ Mozart once wrote down an entire 9-voice piece of music (over an hour of music) after only hearing it once!
- ❖ Mozart was only 5'4" tall!
- ❖ He was related to another composer, Carl Maria von Weber, after marrying the love of his life, Constanze Weber. He also knew composer Joseph Haydn, and gave lessons to a young Ludwig van Beethoven when Beethoven was 16!
- ❖ His last piece of music was a [requiem](#), which is a piece of music used for a mass when someone dies.
- ❖ Mozart died at the age of 35; the cause of his death is still unknown.



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Questions for Before the Concert

- In *The Three Little Pigs*, we hear excerpts from *Le nozze di Figaro* (*The Marriage of Figaro*), *Così Fan Tutte* (*They all do that*), *Don Giovanni* and *Die Zauberflöte* (*The Magic Flute*). Can you name any of Mozart's other operas? *Hint: these are his "serious" operas, based on historical figures and events. He wrote 27 operas in lifetime- imagine how many more he would have written if he had lived to be older than 35?
- Mozart lived in a country called Austria. Do you know where Austria is?
- During Mozart's life, he made his living not just as a composer, but also as a "Court Musician". Do you know what court this refers to? *Hint: it's not a tennis court!
- Mozart's most famous opera collaborator was a librettist named Lorenzo da Ponte. Did you know that Mr. da Ponte emigrated to New York, and at the time of his death, ran a grocery store on the Upper West Side?

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Answers:

Mozart's operas are *Die Schuldigkeit des ersten Gebots*, *Apollo und Hyacinth*, *Bastien und Bastienne*, *La finta semplice*, *Mitridate*, *Re di Ponto*, *Ascanio in Alba*, *La Betulia liberata*, *Il sogno di Scipione*, *Lucio Silla*, *La finta giardiniera*, *Il re pastore*, *Zaide*, *Idomeneo*, *Re di Creta*, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, *L'oca del Cairo* (*Die Gans von Kairo*), *Lo sposo deluso*, *Der Schauspieldirektor*, *La clemenza di Tito* in addition to the four operas you hear in our show.

Austria is in Central Europe. It is a landlocked country, bordered by Germany to the northwest, Czech Republic to the north, Slovakia to the northeast, Hungary to the east, Slovenia and Italy to the south, and Switzerland and Liechtenstein to the west. Its capital is Vienna and Mozart's birth city is Salzburg, which is renowned for its famous summer music festival, as well as being featured in the film "The Sound of Music".

The Court refers to the royal court. Before becoming a freelance composer in Vienna, Mozart was court composer for the Archbishop of Salzburg, Prince-Archbishop Hieronymus Colloredo.