

AUSTIN OPERA
It's an experience.

FIDDLER ON THE ROOF

INTERACTIVE RESOURCE GUIDE



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Welcome to the Interactive Resource Guide for *Fiddler on the Roof*

We are delighted to present this exploration of one of musical theatre's most beloved and enduring works. *Fiddler on the Roof* tells the powerful story of Tevye, a father striving to balance tradition, family, and change in a world that is shifting around him. With its unforgettable music, rich cultural roots, and deeply human themes, *Fiddler on the Roof* continues to resonate with audiences across generations and around the globe.

We are thrilled to share this TEKS-aligned resource to enrich your experience. Inside this guide, you and your students will find:

- Insights into the music, choreography, and storytelling that make *Fiddler on the Roof* iconic
- Exploration of Jewish folk traditions and historical context
- Engaging activities that invite reflection, creativity, and discussion

And much more!

This guide is designed to deepen your understanding and appreciation of *Fiddler on the Roof*, whether this is your first introduction to the show or a return to a familiar favorite. We hope it inspires meaningful conversations and prepares you for a memorable experience at the theatre.

Thank you for joining us on this musical journey. We look forward to seeing you at the Long Center.

Warm regards,



Andréa Ochoa

Director of Education & Community Impact



About AUSTIN OPERA

Austin Opera, voted “Opera Company of the Year” for 2020 in a national BroadwayWorld.com poll, engages 35,000 community members annually through three mainstage productions, as well as a diverse slate of community and educational programming. Serving Central Texas since 1986, Austin Opera inspires audiences with its trademark blend of innovation and artistic excellence. With the leadership of General Director & CEO Annie Burrige and the Sarah and Ernest Butler Music Director Timothy Myers, Austin Opera presents a curated season of grand opera productions at the Long Center, the crown jewel of Austin performing arts venues. Combining the finest

American and international stars with the outstanding local talent of our Orchestra and Chorus, Austin Opera’s productions include accessible takes on classic operas as well as challenging new works that reinforce the continuing relevance of opera. Austin Opera is also a force in hundreds of classrooms across Central Texas, nurturing the next generation of opera audiences through its award-winning education programs. We work directly with educators, community leaders, students, and parents to make opera relevant, educational, and entertaining for students of all ages, offering much of our educational content online for free.

TEKS: Texas Essential Knowledge & Skills

§110.24. English Language Arts and Reading, Grade 6, Adopted 2017.

(10) Author's purpose and craft. The student analyzes the author's purpose, perspective, and use of literary elements. The student is expected to:

(B) analyze how an author's background and historical context influence the events and themes of a literary work.

§117.208. Music, Middle School 1, Adopted 2013.

(5) Critical evaluation and response. The student listens to, responds to, and evaluates music and musical performance in both formal and informal settings. The student is expected to:

(A) demonstrate appropriate concert and stage etiquette as an informed, actively involved listener during live and recorded performances in a variety of settings.

(B) identify and describe musical elements such as melody, rhythm, harmony, texture, timbre, and form while listening to a variety of musical styles and genres, including opera and musical theatre.

§117.315. Theatre, Level I, Adopted 2013.

(1) Foundations: inquiry and understanding. The student develops concepts about self, human relationships, and the environment using elements of drama and conventions of theatre. The student is expected to:

(A) relate theatre to personal experiences and historical and cultural contexts.

WHAT TO EXPECT AT THE OPERA



Whether it's your first time at the opera, or you've been more times than you can count, these tips and tricks for your visit will help you feel comfortable and help the evening run smoothly.

Final Dress Rehearsal

Because this is a final dress rehearsal, there will still be elements of the production that are in process. There may be stopping to fix mistakes, or singers "marking," which means singing lightly to save their voices. There will also be a tech table in the middle of the audience where the production team, including the director, costume, lighting, and set designers, are working hard to make sure all of the finishing details are in place.

Be quiet and courteous

Be quiet and courteous to the actors on stage. A night at the opera is a live theater experience, things work a little differently than they would at a movie theater or school assembly. Since there are singers on stage actively working, our audience needs to be as respectful as possible.

Applaud after arias

Let the singers know that you love the work they're

doing. You can say "bravo" for men, "brava" for women, and "bravi" for a group!

How will I know what is going on?

No need to worry if you don't know the language of the opera. There will be a highly visible screen with "supertitles" that provide a complete translation of the words being sung. The experience of watching an opera has been truly transformed by making it possible for everyone to follow the story.

Dress like yourself

Whether you wear that dress or suit you've been saving for a special occasion, or you're more comfortable going out in jeans or basketball shorts, dress like yourself at the opera!

And finally... Have fun!

WHAT IS OPERA?

by Dr. Charles Carson, 2025-2026 Scholar-in-Residence

For many of us, the word opera conjures up pictures of women singing in Viking helmets or—let's be real—the over-the-top drama of Bugs Bunny and Elmer Fudd cartoons. Well, to be honest, those cartoons aren't that far off. Operas are supposed to be dramatic! But what is opera, actually?

The word “opera” comes from the Latin word for “work,” and that's what it is—all of the arts (music, singing, acting, movement, and design) working together to give you larger-than-life characters and dramatic situations in fantastic locations. (It's like TikTok, but live!)

Opera as we know it today began in 16th Century Italy, when musicians and thinkers got together to try to re-create the “pure” drama of Ancient Greece. For them, this meant blurring the lines between singing and speaking, and using instruments to help to singers communicate deeper meanings than acting alone could. They thought this unified approach would speak more directly to audiences. *What do you think?*

Musical theater evolved from lighter forms of opera mixed with comic plays, so you can say they are like musical cousins! Just like opera, musical theater uses instrumental music (the orchestra), songs (solo singers), and choruses (a choir) to tell many different kinds of stories—from hilarious comedies, to heartbreaking tragedies. But there are some differences. To begin with, musical theater uses spoken dialogue more than opera (that's the influence of the comic plays). Also, musical theater performers often sing with a different style of voice—one that can sound more like pop music—whereas opera singers use their big, powerful voices to sing very fast and high, often for longer periods at a time. But because opera and musical theater are Cousins, some musical theater songs can actually be a better fit for opera singers! Opera companies have a long tradition of performing musicals, and it can be fun to hear these works accompanied by a large, full orchestra rather than a smaller theater band. In this production of *Fiddler on the Roof*, we will get to experience first-hand how close musical theater is to opera!



WHO WORKS AT THE OPERA?

It takes more than singers to put on an opera. Although you may see only the performers in the spotlight, many people behind the scenes make what you see possible.

BACKSTAGE

The **Stage Director** tells singers how to move on stage so that the audience can understand what is being sung, even if it is in a different language.

The **Technical Director** coordinates lighting, set, and costumes, supervises the building and mounting of scenery onstage, and oversees the work of all crews during rehearsals and performances.

The **Scenic Designer** is responsible for the visual appearance and function of all scenic elements in an opera to help bring the story to life on stage. They plan or design the set and supervise its construction.

The **Lighting Designer** plans or designs the color, intensity, and frequency of the light onstage.

The **Wig and Make-Up Designer** creates and

oversees hairstyles, wigs & make-up.

The **Costume Designer** will help the singers accurately portray their characters in the opera's setting.

The **Properties (Props) Manager** is in charge of finding objects for the singers to use while on stage that will correctly reflect the time period of the opera and

give the actions on stage a more realistic feel.

The **Choreographer** invents dances and movements and teaches them to dancers and/or cast members.

The **Crew or Stagehands** assist in the construction, installation, and changes of the set, costumes, lights, and props. Stagehands know when to change the scenery.

ON STAGE

Cast: All singers and actors who appear onstage.

Actors: Performers who have dialogue but do not sing.

Principal: A singer who performs a large role in the opera.

Comprimario: A singer who specializes in the small character roles of opera, from the Italian meaning "next to the first".

Supernumeraries (or Supers): Actors who participate in the action but do not speak or sing.

Dancers: These performers train for years and perform choreographed routines onstage. From flamenco to ballet, dance plays a supporting role in countless operas.

Chorus: A group of singers with more than one person singing each part, like a choir. The choruses in opera represent certain groups required by the story such as soldiers, priests, peasants, or townspeople. Certain operas include the use of a children's chorus.

IN THE PIT

The **Conductor or Maestro** shows the orchestra when to play and the singers when to sing. The conductor controls how fast or slow the music goes.

The **Orchestra** is made up of a group of musicians who play instruments. They typically stay with the conductor in the **orchestra pit** during operas, as opposed to onstage for concerts.

What is the orchestra pit? It is a partially covered area right in front of the stage. You'll generally only be able to see the back of the conductor's head in the pit if you are an audience member. A composer typically uses woodwinds, brass, percussion, and string instruments in various combinations in the orchestra to help express a variety of emotions and environments.

Woodwinds include piccolos, flutes, and reed instruments such as the oboe, clarinet, and bassoon, all requiring a very focused stream of air. **Brass** instruments produce sound through the buzzing or vibration of the player's lips resonating within a tubular chamber. They include horns, trumpets, and trombones. **Percussion** is a broad term describing any instrument that is struck,

scraped, or rubbed by hand. Timpani, snare drum, triangle, cymbals, xylophone, glockenspiel, and chimes are just an example of a few utilized by composers. **Strings** include any instrument that produces sound from vibrating strings such as violins, violas, cellos, double bass, and harp.

IN THE HOUSE

The Audience (that's you!) also has an important role to play. It would not be a real performance without you! Sometimes as an audience member, you have to be creative too. A setting might be suggested by a few panels or a background requiring you to engage your imagination. You can become a part of the communal experience, living and breathing with the cast and musicians as they create art onstage.

THE OPERATIC VOICE

Being an opera singer is hard work! Singers need to be physically strong and have superb technique in order to sustain long phrases (musical thoughts): this means they have excellent control of both the inhalation and the exhalation of their breath. Likewise, their voices must maintain a resonance using cavities in the face to increase the audibility of the voice in both the head (mouth, sinuses) and the chest cavities. All of this resonance is necessary to achieve the volume required to be heard above the orchestra that accompanies the singers. Opera singers do not usually use microphones, so they must project their voices throughout a whole

theatre using only their muscles and technique! All voices are defined by both the actual voice "type" and the selection of repertoire for which the voice is ideally suited. The range, pitch, and tone of a singer's voice will determine what kind of role they will play in the opera.

[Watch this video from the Royal Ballet and Opera to hear the different voice types in action.](#)

Below is a list of voice types (and ranges) commonly found in operas:

Treble Voice Types



Soprano (sopra = over)

The highest pitched female voice. Composers often (but not always) write the female lead role in an opera for a soprano. Soprano voices vary by sound type: coloratura sopranos, who can sing very high notes and rapid passages with ease; dramatic sopranos, whose voices have great power; and lyric sopranos, whose voices have exceptional beauty and can sustain long passages.

Photo: Hailey Clark in Austin Opera's production of *Pagliacci*.



Mezzo-soprano ("mezzo" = "médium")

Lower than the soprano and higher than the contralto. Mezzos often play either the character of a young boy (this is called a trouser role), a complex character with energy and awareness of life, or an evil character. Bizet's *Carmen* is one of the most famous mezzo roles in opera, and is a rare lead role for a mezzo.

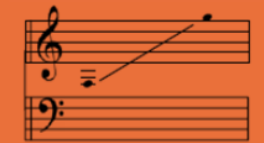
Photo: Cecilia Hall in Austin Opera's production of *Carmen*.



Contralto ("contra" = "against" & "alto" = "high")

The lowest pitched female voice, these singers have a deep, well-rounded sound. Contraltos are rarer than sopranos or mezzos, and they are usually given the role of a maid, mother, or grandmother.

Photo: Marian Anderson, one of the finest contraltos of her time and a force in the Civil Rights movement.



Countertenor ("contra" = against, tenor)

The highest pitched male voice, Countertenors typically sing in the mezzo-soprano range, using a well-developed falsetto technique combined with their full voice. They have a distinct, ethereal tone that is often described as bright, pure, and otherworldly. Countertenors are primarily associated with early music, particularly Baroque opera and sacred music, but they have also found a place in contemporary opera and even crossover genres.

Photo: Anthony Roth Costanzo in the Metropolitan Opera's production of *Akhnaten*.



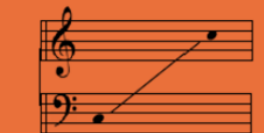
Non-Treble Voice Types



Tenor ("tenere" = "to hold")

The highest sounding male voice: often the leading role. Tenors, like sopranos, can have a lyric or dramatic quality. Luciano Pavarotti was one of the world's most famous lyric tenors. Tenors typically play characters that fall in love with sopranos.

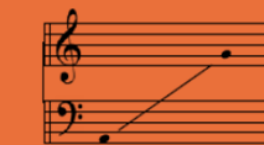
Photo: Efraín Corralejo in Austin Opera's production of *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna*.



Baritone (from the Greek term for "deep sounding")

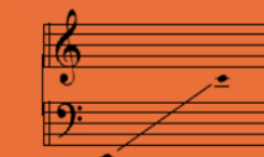
These voices are more mellow-sounding and slightly lower than tenors. The roles sung by baritones are usually father figures or counts and other nobles, and these are often important roles in the story.

Photo: Will Liverman in Austin Opera's production of *The Pearl Fishers*.



Bass ("low") Bases are the lowest-sounding human voices, and they often play roles of wise and older characters in opera, like kings, emperors, or gods. They can also play profoundly evil characters. The basso profundo is the lowers voice in singing, and is commonly heard in Russian opera.

Photo: Musa Ngqungwana in Austin Opera's production of *The Barber of Seville*.



CAST



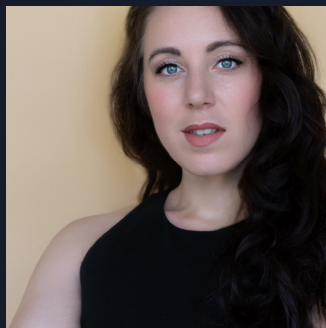
Steven Skybell
Baritone
Tevye

[Learn more about Steven Skybell](#)

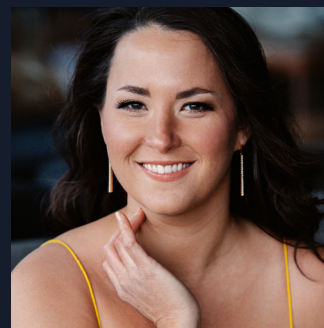


Mela Sarajane Dailey
Soprano
Golde

[Learn more about Mela Dailey](#)



Sharon Robinson
Soprano
Tzeitel



Rachel Blaustein
Soprano
Hodel

[Learn more about Rachel Blaustein](#)



Audrey Ballish
Soprano
Chava

[Learn more about Audrey Ballish](#)



Emily Grace Wolfman
Shprintze



Riley Richichi
Bieklke



Ryan Everett Wood
Baritone
Motel



Michael Pandolfo
Baritone
Perchik

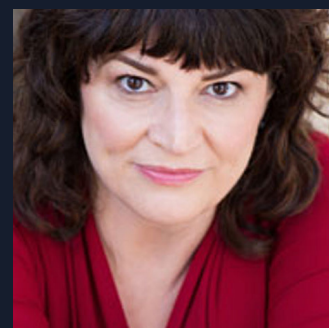
[Learn more about Michael Pandolfo](#)



Mitch Jones
Baritone
Fyedka



Robert Faires
Lazar Wolf



Barbara Chisholm
Yente

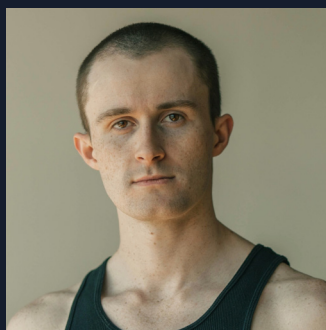
CAST



Ryan Lynch
Mendel



Ian Bethany
Avram



Matthew Kennedy
Mordcha



David Kroll
Constable



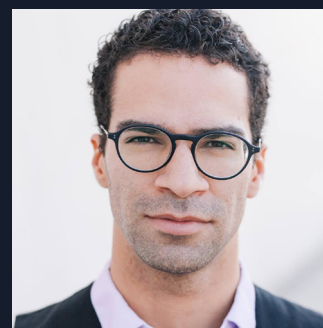
Rabbi Neil Blumofe
Rabbi



Julia Watkins-Davis
Grandma Tzeitel



Rebecca Harris Tulbah
Fruma-Sarah



Patrice Calixte
Fiddler

CREATIVE TEAM



Timothy Myers

Conductor

[Learn more about
Timothy Myers](#)



Crystal Manich

Stage Director

[Learn more about
Crystal Manich](#)



Michael Pappalardo

Choreography

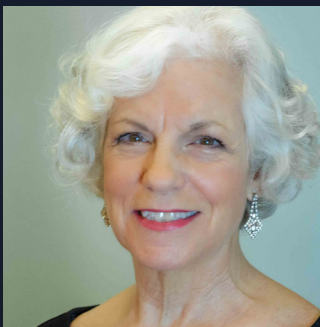
[Learn more about
Michael Pappalardo](#)



Adam K. Roberts

Production Vocal Coach

[Learn more about
Adam K. Roberts](#)



Cina Crisara

Chorus Conductor



Chad Phillips

Costume Designer



Andrew Boyce

Scene Designer



Thomas Hase

Lighting Designer



David Bullard

Sound Designer



Tracy McCaskill

Wig/Makeup
Designer



Bill Mester

Audio Designer

SYNOPSIS

ACT I

Tevye explains the role of God's law in the villagers' lives, insisting that without their traditions, they would find life "as shaky as a fiddler on the roof."

Three of Tevye's daughters—Tzeitel, Hodel, and Chava—wonder if the matchmaker will find them the men of their dreams. The matchmaker, Yente, tells Golde she has selected the butcher, Lazar Wolf, as a match for Tzeitel.

Tevye reflects on how much he wishes he had a small fortune. A group of villagers, including a revolutionary student named Perchik, approaches him with news of a violent pogrom in a nearby village. Tevye invites Perchik to Sabbath dinner and arranges for him to instruct his daughters. Motel, the timid tailor, tries to ask Tevye for Tzeitel's hand but gets tongue-tied. The family welcomes the Sabbath.

Tevye meets with Lazar Wolf and agrees to the match. A boisterous celebration follows. On his way home, Tevye meets the Constable, who warns of a planned demonstration against the Jews of Anatevka. Tevye, inebriated, conjures The Fiddler, who plays as Tevye dances home.

Tevye tells Tzeitel she is to marry Lazar Wolf. Golde rejoices, but Motel soon tells Tevye that he and Tzeitel have pledged to marry. After internal struggle, Tevye agrees and manufactures a wild nightmare to convince Golde that the match with Lazar will lead to Tzeitel's death at the hands of Lazar's first wife, Fruma-Sarah. Villagers gossip about the change in Tzeitel's wedding plans. On the street, Russians taunt Chava. Fyedka, a young Russian, insists they stop. Afterward, he follows Chava into Motel's shop to try to speak with her, but leaves when Motel enters.

The musicians lead to Tzeitel and Motel's wedding. Perchik asks Hodel to dance, and she accepts—a forbidden act. Everyone joins in. The Constable and his men suddenly enter and destroy everything in sight. Perchik is struck with a club. The Constable bows to Tevye and apologizes. The family begins to clean up.

ACT II

Tevye chats with God about recent events. Perchik tells Hodel he's leaving to work for justice in Kiev. He proposes, she accepts, and he promises to send for her. Tevye reluctantly approves.

Yente tells Tzeitel she's seen Chava with Fyedka. News from Perchik's letter spreads among the villagers as gossip.

Tevye brings Hodel to the railroad station. She is going to Siberia, where Perchik has been arrested. Villagers gossip about Motel and Tzeitel's new sewing machine. Chava promises Fyedka she'll speak to Tevye about their love. Tevye refuses to listen and forbids her to speak of Fyedka again.

Golde tells Tevye that Chava and Fyedka are married. Tevye declares that Chava is dead to them. When she appears to ask his acceptance, he cannot answer.

Yente tries to arrange matches for Tevye's remaining daughters. The Constable arrives and announces that everyone must leave Anatevka in three days. Heartbroken, the villagers sing fondly of their home.

The family prepares to leave. Tzeitel and Motel are going to Warsaw. Hodel and Perchik are still in Siberia. Chava and Fyedka are leaving for Krakow. Tevye refuses to acknowledge them, but when Tzeitel says goodbye, he prompts her to add, "God be with you!" The villagers share their final goodbyes. As they leave, Tevye beckons to The Fiddler to follow.

—Adapted with permission from Music Theatre International

THE HISTORY OF FIDDLER ON THE ROOF

To fully understand *Fiddler on the Roof*, it is important to explore the real history and stories that inspired it. Although the musical is filled with humor, music, and memorable characters, it is rooted in the lived experiences of Jewish communities in Eastern Europe at the turn of the 20th century. Learning about the author Sholem Aleichem, the evolution of the character Tevye, and the historical conditions of shtetl life helps us see *Fiddler* not just as entertainment, but as a reflection of real people facing hardship, change, and displacement. By examining this historical context, we gain a deeper understanding of why themes like tradition, family, and resilience are at the heart of the story—and why they continue to resonate today.

Who was Sholem Aleichem?

Sholem Aleichem is **one of the most renowned and beloved authors in the Yiddish language**. Aleichem, meaning “Peace be unto you” or “how do you do?” in Yiddish, was born in Pereiaslav in the Russian Empire in 1859. He grew up in a shtetl called Voronkiv, but his family moved back to Pereiaslav after his father’s business affairs failed.

When Sholem Aleichem was 24, he published his first yiddish story: *Tsvey Shteyner* (“Two Stones”). By 1890, in just 7 short years, he had already become a prominent figure in Yiddish literature. 4 years later in 1894 he would publish *Tevye der Milchiker* (Tevye the Dairyman) for the first time. **This iconic story formed the basis of what would become *Fiddler on the Roof*.**

Sholem Aleichem passed away at the age of 57 on May 13, 1916 in New York. At the time, his funeral was one of the largest in New York City’s history with 100,000 mourners in attendance. His will stated, “Let my name be recalled with laughter or not at all.”

The Evolution of Tevye

Tevye first appears in Sholem Aleichem’s short story collection *Tevye the Dairyman*. This collection contains eight stories where Tevye meets Sholem Aleichem by chance and tells him of his latest plights. The stories vary from funny situations, like in *Tevye Strikes It Rich* and *Tevye Blows a Small Fortune*, to talking about his daughters in *Hodel*, *Chava*, and *Shprintze*.

Sholem Aleichem wrote a Yiddish stage adaptation of these stories, but it was not produced while he was still alive. The first stage production of this adaptation was in 1919, and a film adaptation was produced 20 years later. A different man named Arnold Perl created his own stage adaptation of Sholem Aleichem’s stories (*The World of Sholem Aleichem*) that premiered in 1957. *Fiddler on the Roof* was based on Perl’s play and premiered in 1964 at the Imperial Theatre on Broadway. The character Tevye has always been depicted as a poor, hard-working, and traditional man across all these adaptations. He is grounded in his beliefs, and very little can cause him to stray away from tradition. His character reflects the struggles of the Jewish people in the early 20th century and is marked by deep faith and love for his family.



THE HISTORY OF FIDDLER ON THE ROOF

What was happening in Anatevka?

Anti-semitism ran high in late 1700s Russia causing Catherine the Great, or Czar Catherine II, to restrict Jewish people to a settlement along the western Russian border. This settlement was known as the **Pale of Settlement**. The settlement was made up of small and impoverished villages otherwise known as **shtetls**. These shtetls were often victims of **pogroms**, a term for government-organized riots. Russian citizen armies, fueled by anti-semitism, would loot and burn down Jewish houses and businesses.

In 1882, Czar Alexander III established the **May Laws**. These laws made it illegal for Jewish people to live outside of shtetls, confining the Jewish population to the Pale of Settlement. Additionally, Jewish people were prohibited from conducting business on Sundays and on Christian holidays (Easter, Christmas, etc.). The May Laws also limited trading and farming opportunities for Jewish people, resulting in poverty, starvation, and oftentimes death.

In order to avoid the May Laws, many Jewish people emigrated from Russia to countries like Germany, Canada, Australia, etc. Still others converted to Christianity in an effort to escape the harsh conditions.

The Pale of Settlement was abolished in 1917 after Czar Nicholas II was overthrown. Most shtetls were destroyed by the Nazi occupation during the Holocaust.

Tevye's Daughters: How did each marriage push away from tradition?

The village matchmaker informs Golde, Tevye's wife and the mother of their five daughters, that she has chosen Lazar Wolf, an older butcher/widower, to marry Tzeitel. However, Tzeitel is in love with a man named Motel, a meek and poor tailor. Her choice goes against the tradition of suitors being chosen by the village matchmaker. Tzeitel's marriage represents the tension that occurs when personal desire conflicts with familial expectations.

Hodel falls in love with Perchik, a student/revolutionary who challenges tradition. In Act II, Perchik decides to leave to fight for justice in Kiev. When she discovers he has been arrested, she chooses to leave and join him. Hodel is likely the first woman in her family to have left Anatevka in many generations. She puts her needs and desires first, even if it means leaving her family behind.

Chava's marriage was the most controversial for her family. She elopes with Fyedka, a Christian man, and converts to Christianity for him. Her marriage and conversion creates a permanent rift between her and her family, especially with Tevye. Chava's choice represents the challenges that come with interfaith marriage and how tradition can break families apart.



Photo Credit: Philip Groshong, Cincinnati Opera

WHAT MAKES FIDDLER ON THE ROOF SO ICONIC?

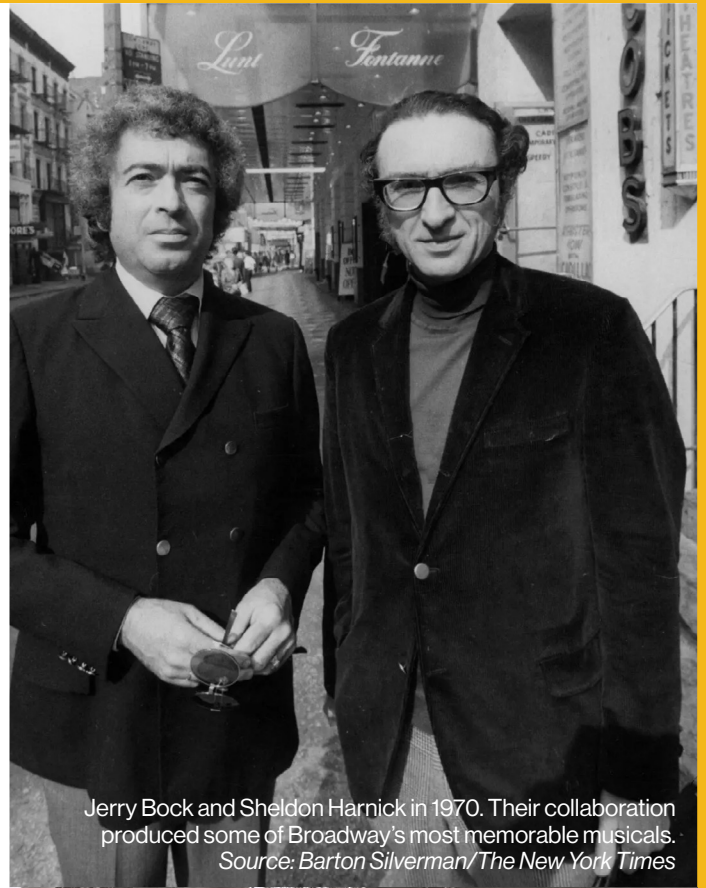
Fiddler on the Roof has been one of the world's most beloved musicals for over sixty years, and it's easy to see why. It combines unforgettable music, powerful storytelling, and rich cultural traditions into a show that feels both deeply specific and universally relatable. Even if you've never seen the musical, you might recognize songs like **"Tradition," "If I Were a Rich Man,"** or **"Sunrise, Sunset,"** which have become classics far beyond the stage. The score—by composer **Jerry Bock** and lyricist **Sheldon Harnick**—uses expressive melodies and recurring musical themes, much like opera, to reveal character, emotion, and the tension between tradition and change. Choreographer **Jerome Robbins**, also known for *West Side Story*, brings an equally dramatic approach to movement, using dance to tell the story of the community as much as the dialogue and music do.

The musical's sound and look are deeply rooted in Jewish culture. Inspired by traditional **klezmer music**, the score features clarinet slides, violin ornaments, and folk rhythms that evoke Eastern European Jewish life in the early 1900s. This commitment to authenticity extends to the costumes, which reflect historically accurate clothing from shtetl (village) life, including headscarves, prayer shawls, boots, and simple, practical fabrics.

At the same time, *Fiddler on the Roof* balances cultural authenticity with Broadway theatricality. Folk-inspired music blends seamlessly with sweeping musical theatre harmonies, and Robbins's choreography transforms traditional Jewish dances into bold, expressive stage moments. The famous **"Bottle Dance"**, inspired by real Hasidic traditions, becomes a striking theatrical image that symbolizes balance, discipline, and celebration.

One of the most powerful storytelling tools in *Fiddler* is the ensemble of villagers, who function almost like a moral chorus. Their collective presence shapes the emotional and cultural world of Anatevka, showing how the community responds to love, conflict, and change. Through their reactions, we see that *Fiddler on the Roof* is not just the story of one family, but of an entire community struggling to hold onto its identity in a changing world.

The lasting impact of *Fiddler on the Roof* can even be heard beyond the theatre. Its most famous song, **"If I Were a Rich Man,"** has been covered and reimagined by artists across genres, including **Louis Armstrong, Herb Alpert, Lena Horne, The Temptations, Andy Williams, Sammy Davis Jr., Roger Whittaker, and Frankie Vaughan**, and sampled in pop and hip-hop by artists like **Gwen Stefani, DJ Shadow, and Flo Milli**. These reinterpretations highlight what makes *Fiddler* truly timeless: music and storytelling so strong that they continue to resonate, evolve and inspire across generations and cultures.



Jerry Bock and Sheldon Harnick in 1970. Their collaboration produced some of Broadway's most memorable musicals.
Source: Barton Silverman/The New York Times



Photo Credit:
New York Public Library

Photo Credit: Philip Groshong, Cincinnati Opera



Louis Armstrong
Photograph by
Harry Warnecke and Gus Schoenbaeche, 1947
Source: Wikipedia

FIDDLER ON THE ROOF

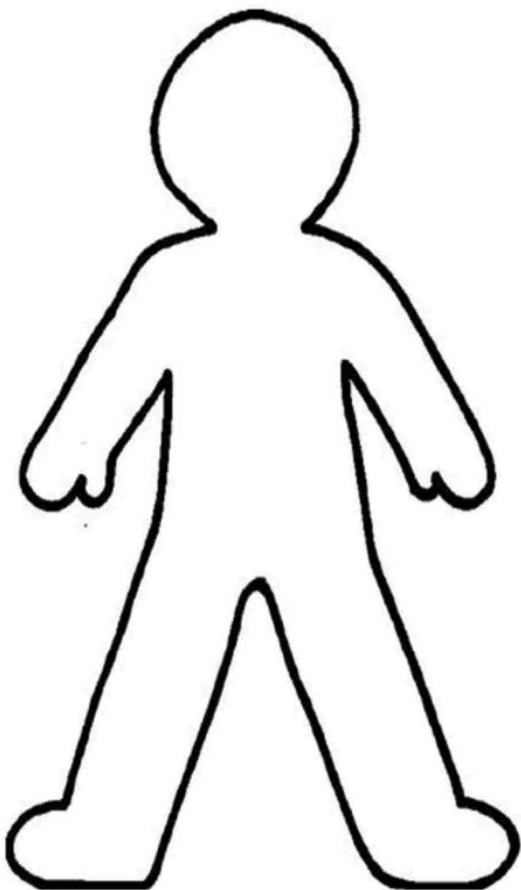
ACTIVITY

The title *Fiddler on the Roof* was inspired by Marc Chagall's painting *The Fiddler*. This painting is a combination of cubism (geometric shapes, fragments) and surrealism (dreamlike imagery, unexpected patterns, high-contrast colors). The painting depicts a fiddler creating music for 3 rites of passage in a person's life: the birth, the wedding, and the death.

Think of rites of passage you have gone through or will go through in your own life (graduation, getting your driver's license, your first job, etc.) What do these rites of passage represent for you and/or for your family?



Let's map your journey! Use this blank canvas to draw yourself at a key rite of passage. You can draw yourself graduating, celebrating a birthday, or any other important transition in your life.



MEET KEY PLAYERS

CONCERTMASTER'S CORNER with Patrice Calixte



Meet Concertmaster and our very own Fiddler, Patrice Calixte! Our questions for Patrice:

- Tell us about your position as Concertmaster in a professional operatic ensemble.
- What is it like being on stage as the Fiddler? Have there been any challenges or exciting aspects of this you're looking forward to?
- Tell us a bit about your career trajectory to where you are now.
What advice would you give a young aspiring musician?

MEET THE SISTERS with Emily Grace Wolfman and Riley Richichi



Meet our young actors who portray the youngest of the five sisters, Emily and Riley! Our questions for them:

- Tell us about your characters, Shprintze and Bielke.
- Tell us a bit about your work as an actor for various theaters in Austin.
- What do you look forward to in your future as a performer?

AUSTIN OPERA

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INTERACTIVE RESOURCE GUIDE