

Match each opera term to its corresponding definition. Print this quiz to fill in your answers on the lines provided.

1. Aria	_____	a. a lyric voice that has the power and incisiveness for dramatic climaxes.
2. Aside	_____	b. 19th century term referring to secondary or supporting roles such as confidantes, messengers, and matchmakers.
3. Basso profundo	_____	c. the front opening of the stage which frames the action.
4. Bel canto	_____	d. pert young female character with a light soprano voice.
5. Cadenza	_____	e. a secret comment from an actor directly to the audience that the other characters cannot hear.
6. Coloratura	_____	f. German prefix meaning “heroic.” Can also apply to other voices, but usually used in “heldentenor.”
7. Comprimario	_____	g. the upper part of a voice in which the vocal cords do not vibrate completely. Usually used by males to imitate a female voice.
8. Crescendo	_____	h. an opera about ordinary people, usually, but not always comic. First developed in the 18th century.
9. Falsetto	_____	i. a passage of singing, often at the end of an aria, which shows off the singer’s vocal ability.
10. Helden	_____	j. the rehearsal held on the main stage for the first time. The entire opera is sung through without any costumes or blocking.
11. Leitmotif	_____	k. occurs at the end of a scene or act, when all cast members on stage freeze in position and remain that way until the curtain closes. It looks as though that moment has been captured in a photograph.
12. Opera buffa	_____	l. (“air” in Italian) a piece of music written for one singer (soloist), usually with instrumental accompaniment.
13. Proscenium	_____	m. describes a realistic style of opera that started in Italy at the end of the 19th century.
14. Recitative	_____	n. the most serious bass voice.
15. Sitzprobe	_____	o. lines of dialogue that are sung, usually with no recognizable melody. Used to advance the plot.
16. Soubrette	_____	p. a build in the volume or dynamic of the music.
17. Spinto	_____	q. Italian phrase literally meaning “beautiful singing.” A traditional Italian style of singing emphasizing tone, phrasing, coloratura passages, and technique. Also refers to the operas written in this style.
18. Tableau	_____	r. elaborate ornamentation of music written for a singer using many fast notes and trills. Also used to describe a singer who sings this type of music.
19. Verismo	_____	s. a melodic passage or phrase, especially in Wagnerian opera, associated with a specific character, situation, or element.

Answer key

1. l. Aria: (“air” in Italian) a piece of music written for one singer (soloist), usually with instrumental accompaniment.
2. e. Aside: a secret comment from an actor directly to the audience that the other characters cannot hear.
3. n. Basso profundo: the most serious bass voice.
4. q. Bel canto: Italian phrase literally meaning “beautiful singing.” A traditional Italian style of singing emphasizing tone, phrasing, coloratura passages, and technique. Also refers to the operas written in this style.
5. i. Cadenza: a passage of singing, often at the end of an aria, which shows off the singer’s vocal ability.
6. r. Coloratura: elaborate ornamentation of music written for a singer using many fast notes and trills. Also used to describe a singer who sings this type of music.
7. b. Comprimario: 19th century term referring to secondary or supporting roles such as confidantes, messengers, and matchmakers.
8. p. Crescendo: a build in the volume or dynamic of the music.
9. g. Falsetto: the upper part of a voice in which the vocal cords do not vibrate completely. Usually used by males to imitate a female voice.
10. f. Helden: German prefix meaning “heroic.” Can also apply to other voices, but usually used in “heldentenor.”
11. s. Leitmotif: a melodic passage or phrase, especially in Wagnerian opera, associated with a specific character, situation, or element.
12. h. Opera buffa: an opera about ordinary people, usually, but not always comic. First developed in the 18th century.
13. c. Proscenium: the front opening of the stage which frames the action.
14. o. Recitative: lines of dialogue that are sung, usually with no recognizable melody. Used to advance the plot.
15. j. Sitzprobe: the rehearsal held on the main stage for the first time. The entire opera is sung through without any costumes or blocking.
16. d. Soubrette: pert young female character with a light soprano voice.
17. a. Spinto: a lyric voice that has the power and incisiveness for dramatic climaxes.
18. k. Tableau: occurs at the end of a scene or act, when all cast members on stage freeze in position and remain that way until the curtain closes. It looks as though that moment has been captured in a photograph.
19. m. Verismo: describes a realistic style of opera that started in Italy at the end of the 19th century.