

SING A STORY



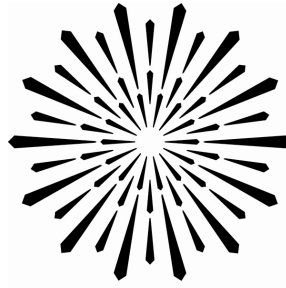
A Teacher's Guide to Opera with Young Students
The San Francisco Opera Guild
2011 DAS RHEINGOLD

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Introduction: Sing a Story in Your Classroom

Hello, and welcome to the *Sing a Story Teacher's Guide*. *Sing a Story* is an in-class program designed to introduce your students to opera through storytelling. In the process of learning the story of *DAS RHEINGOLD*, your students will hear music and participate in a dramatic retelling of the story using props and costumes.

This *Teacher's Guide* is meant to help you continue using art, music, drama and writing in activities with your students after the in-class performance.

We hope that this guide will be useful to you in your continuing exploration of arts in the classroom, and we welcome your feedback.

You may give us your feedback on this program by completing and returning the *Teacher's Evaluation Form* at the end of this guide. We look forward to reading your comments, and integrating your ideas into upcoming incarnations of *Sing a Story*.

Thank you and enjoy!
Sincerely,

Susan Malott
Managing Director
San Francisco Opera Guild

Caroline Altman
Director of Education
San Francisco Opera Guild

The Story of *Das Rheingold*

Our story begins in Germany, deep under a river called the Rhine River. Here we find the Rheinchildren. They are swimming around and singing a song. While it may seem that they are playing, they actually have a very important job. They are guarding a precious ring called the "Rheingold".

A man named Alberich creeps up and overhears the song that the Rheinchildren are singing. It is about the Ring. The song says that whoever holds the Ring will have all the money in the world, all the power in the world, and will be able to become invisible! Alberich decides that he wants the Ring, so he chases the children away and steals it.

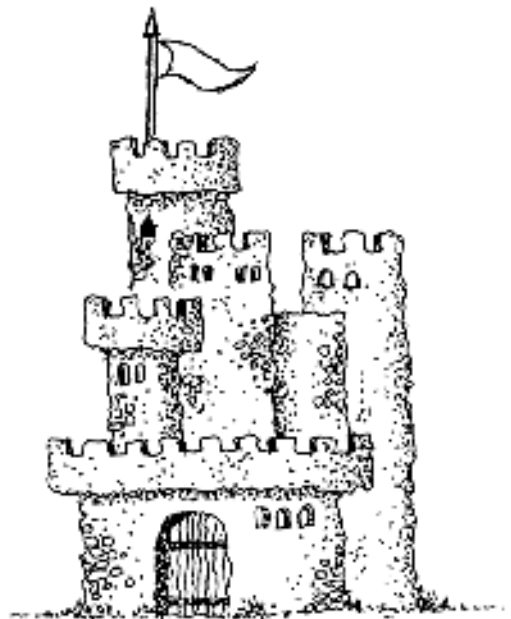
Meanwhile, in another part of the land, King Woton and Queen Fricka are admiring the new castle, Valhalla, which was built just for them by Giants! In exchange for building this great castle, the Giants request that Queen Fricka's sister, Princess Freia, go and live with them. Freia is not very happy about this and runs in and begs Woton not to let the Giants take her away. The Giants are right behind her and remind Woton of the agreement before they take Freia away. Just then Loge appears. He is Woton's friend and he has a plan to save Freia.

Loge tells the Giants about the magic Ring. He says that whoever possess the ring will have all the money in the world, all the power in the world, and will be able to become invisible. Loge knows all this because he was hiding and watching when Alberich stole the ring from the Rheinchildren. The Giants decide they would rather have the Ring than Freia, and agree to trade her for this magic Ring. Woton and Loge set off to look for it.

Meanwhile, Alberich has taken the Ring deep underground where he is collecting lots and lots of riches and forcing his servants to work harder than humanly possible. Woton and Loge find him and decide to play a trick on him in order to steal the Ring. After much flattery, they ask Alberich what other powers the Ring possesses. Alberich answers that the Ring can make its owner change shape, and demonstrates by turning himself into a dragon! Loge slyly asks if he can turn into another creature. When Alberich turns himself into a little Frog, Woton and Loge grab him, tie him up, and steal the Ring!

Woton and Loge take Alberich back up to the surface with all of his treasure. The Giants are there waiting with Freia and agree to trade if Woton and Loge bring enough gold to make a pile that is at least the same height as Freia. After the gold is piled, there is not quite enough! Freia is worried until she sees that Magic Ring that Woton has put on his own finger. She begs Woton to put the Ring on the pile. Woton, who hoped no one noticed that he had taken the Ring, refuses, stating that he wants to keep the power himself. Suddenly Erda, a goddess, appears and in singing a beautiful song, she reminds Woton that love and family are much more important than gold or treasure. Woton puts the Ring on the pile and the Giants set Freia free. A rainbow bridge appears leading everyone to the castle.

As Woton, Fricka, Freia and Loge cross the rainbow to the castle, we see the Giants arguing about the ownership of the Ring. The Rheinchildren reappear and call out to the Giants, asking for them to return the Ring. The Giants are so busy arguing, they do not hear the children and the children put a terrible curse on whoever holds the Rheingold!



ABOUT THE COMPOSER

Richard Wagner was born on May 22, 1813, the ninth child of Carl Friedrich Wagner and Johanna Rosine Wagner. Richard loved the theater, and at the age of 13, wrote a play. He wanted to set it to music, and so he asked his family for music lessons.

Wagner did very well at his studies of music and impressed his teachers. He began composing symphonies and a few operas. Even though some of his operas were successful, Wagner was often poor, and had to travel around for work as a writer or choir director. Later, he would find more success as the favorite composer of King Ludiwig II of Bavaria.

Wagner's work is mostly based on the myths and legends of Northern Europe. His most famous work, The Ring Cycle, is made up of four operas, one of which is Das Rheingold. In order to stage these great operas as he wanted them, Wagner built his own opera house! Unlike most other great opera composers, Wagner wrote both the music and words for his works.

Richard Wagner changed the way people thought about opera. He believed that the music, scenery, and poetry of an opera should all work together to make a great performance. On 13 February 1883, Richard Wagner died of a heart attack. His influence on music would last for years, because many people consider Wagner's musical style to be the beginning of modern music.



Geography Lesson

Summary of Activity

Students will examine the map of Europe. Then they will trace the outline of the maps of Germany and California, learning different cities and features of each.

Time: 30 minutes

Setting: Classroom

Materials needed:

Maps (provided)

Tracing Paper

Pencils or Crayons

A Globe (optional)

Subjects: World Geography

Objective:

Teach the children about different cities and countries in Europe using the birthplaces of great composers to start. Teach the children about the map of the state where they live.

Procedure:

- Make photocopies of the maps provided and explain different features (e.g. the border is the line between countries)
- Using tracing paper, have children trace the border of the map of Germany to create a map of their own. Be prepared to show them where Berlin and the Rhein River are.
- Using tracing paper, have children trace the border of the map of California to create a map of their own.
- On the map of California, teach children to find the city where they live, and other important features (the state capitol, mountains, etc.)
- If there is a globe or a large world map in the classroom, find different countries or cities around the world.

Map of Europe



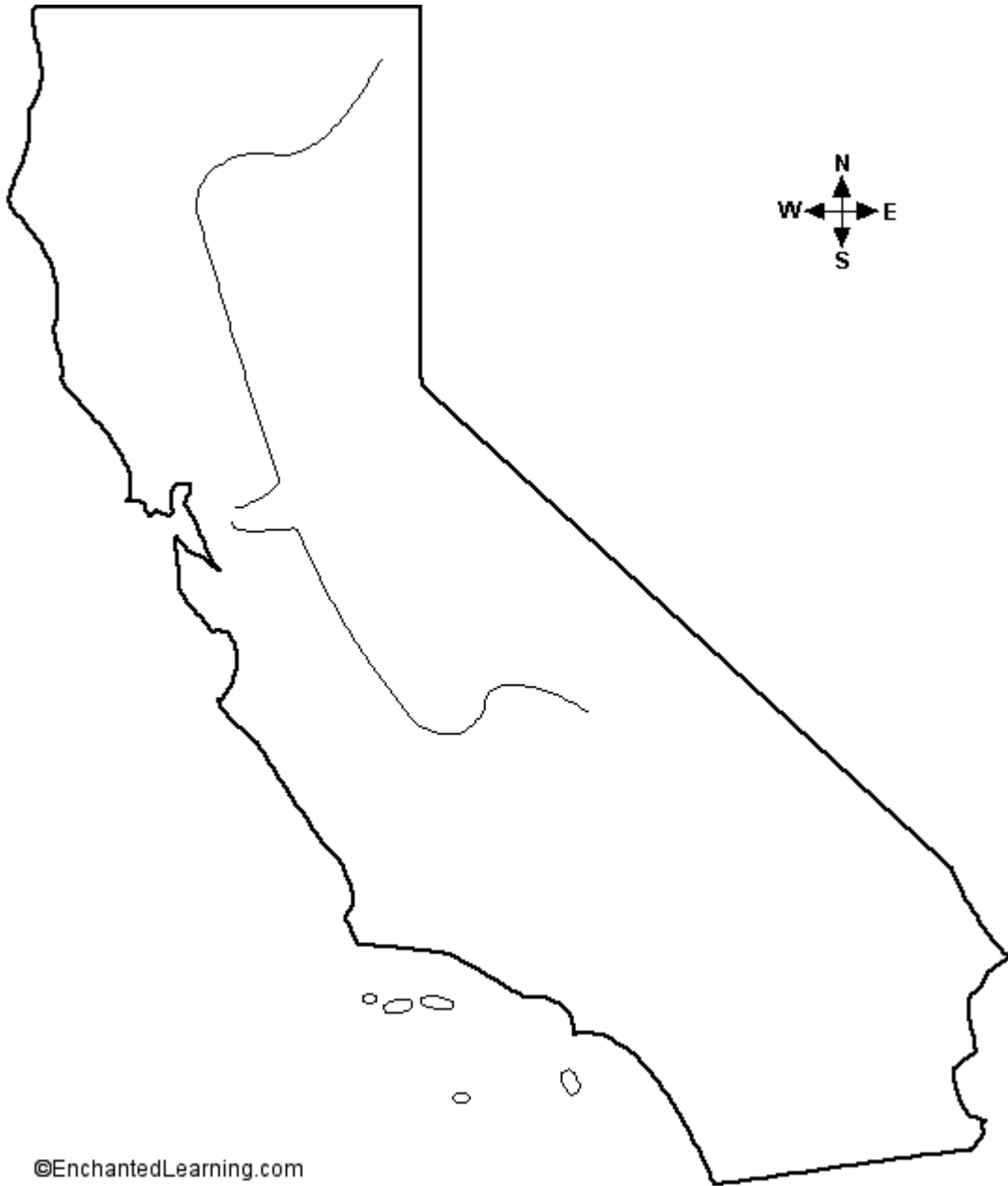
This is a map of Europe. Europe is another continent, like North America, where *you* live. Most of the great composers of opera were born in Europe and traveled through many of the different countries there. How many countries are there in Europe? Do you know what different languages are spoken there?

Map of Germany



This is a map of *Germany*. *Germany* is the country where Richard Wagner was born! Use a piece of paper and a crayon or pencil to trace the **border** of the map to make a map of your own! Then ask your teacher to show you where the capitol city of Berlin is. You can even ask your teacher to show you where the Rhein River is, since it is such an important part of the story of *Das Rheingold*!

Map of California



This is a map of California. California is the state where you live! Use a piece of paper and a crayon or pencil to trace the **border** of the map to make a map of your own! Then ask your teacher to show you where you live in California, and put a dot there. Now if you ever need to go on a great quest, like in *Das Rheingold*, you won't get lost!

Das Rheingold

Multi – Lingual Vocabulary Chart

German	English	Spanish	French	Italian	Chinese
der Tag	day	el día	le jour	il giorno	
das Glück	luck, fortune	la suerte	la chance	la fortuna	
der fluch	Curse	La maldición	La malediction	Il curse	
der Mann	man, husband	el hombre/ el esposo	le homme	il sposo	
die Musik	music	la música	la musique	la musica	
die Nacht	night	la noche	la nuit	la notte	
lieben	to love	amar	aimer	amore	
das Lied	song	la canción	la chanson	la canzone	
die maid	Maiden	el maiden	la demoiselle	Il maiden	
der frosch	Frog	la rana	la grenouille	la rana	
die Königin	Queen	la Reina	la reine	la regina	
der drache	Dragon	el dragon	le dragon	il drago	
der ring	Ring	el anillo	l’anneau	l’anello	

Interesting note: Most “w”s in German are pronounced like “v”s!

Options for language activities:

- Post words and their translations in strips in your classroom.
- Add words (starting with any of the languages) as the semester progresses.

Other Options for language activities:

- Write a SHORT (three line) scene using just English or just Spanish (or just Italian if you are fluent in Italian)
- Write the scene again using more than one language.



Norse Mythology and Wagner

Das Rheingold is an opera by German composer, Richard Wagner. It was written in 1854 in Switzerland. It is part of a collection of four operas which took 20 years to write and takes 15 hours to perform (don't worry, we won't take that long!) called *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, or The Ring Cycle.

The subject of the cycle is a story borrowed from a very long time ago indeed! *Norse* or *Scandinavian* mythology is a collection of stories or beliefs shared by Northern Germanic tribes and was passed down orally from generation to generation in a form of poetry. At the center of these stories was a collection of Gods or powerful beings that were said to be responsible for many happenings on earth and in the cosmos. These characters are present in many stories today (including those on stage and in the movies!)

In addition to that, we still see evidence of these powerful beings in our day to day life! For example, most of the days of the week are named after Norse Gods or Heroes...

Look!

MONDAY.....Moon's Day
TUESDAY.....Tyr's (Tiw's) Day
WEDNESDAY.....Odin's (Wodin's) Day
THURSDAY.....Thor's Day
FRIDAY.....Freia or Frigg's Day
SUNDAY.....Sun's Day

(Saturday is still named after Saturn which is not Norse)

Music and Action

Summary of Activity

Students will listen to *Das Rheingold* and develop the beginnings for physical characterization of specific characters.

Time:	30-45 minutes
Setting:	classroom
Materials:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Das Rheingold</i> CD• CD player• Chairs
Subjects:	Drama/ Physical Theatre, Music

Objective:

Students will be able to identify characters and musical themes in *Das Rheingold*.

Procedure:

Musical chairs

- ◆ Review the story of *Das Rheingold* briefly with the students.
- ◆ Musical Chairs:
 - Set up chairs in a circle for every student in the class.
 - Take away one chair.
 - Play a selection from the CD and have students move around chairs as it plays.
 - When you stop the CD, they have to sit in the nearest chair.
 - The student who is left standing can play again or be "out" if you are having a competitive game.

Funny character walks

- ◆ Pick a character in the story
- ◆ Create a funny walk for that character
- ◆ Students can show their walk and the others can guess which character they are walking as

Everyone show their walks *while* playing music from preview CD.

The Journey of The Ring

Summary of Activity

Follow up from the Sing a Story performance. Students will be able to demonstrate through drawing and movement the tempo, mood and style of a given piece.

Time: 45 - 90 minutes/in multiple sessions

Setting: classroom

Materials:

- Butcher paper
- pencils
- crayons
- *Das Rheingold* CD

Subjects: literacy, music and visual arts

Objective:

Students will visually represent episodic plot, characters and relationships in *Das Rheingold*, in the form of a large "map."

Procedures:

- On a long (six foot+) piece of butcher paper, draw in a "path" winding along the sheet, from one end to the other.
- Review the story of *Das Rheingold* with the students, emphasizing characters, place, and the way the Ring changed hands.
- Hand out crayons and pencils.
- Students may either draw in their favorite characters or events onto the map. Try to help them place the events generally - at either beginning, middle or end of the sheet. Promote the use of the entire sheet of paper.
- Help the students write the names of their characters onto the map next to each character's picture. Have the students sign their works and display it on the wall (s).

Option:

- Board game:
 - ♦ Create a life-sized Board game from the map created in the previous exercise. Use masking tape on the classroom floor to create a "map" or Game Board of events in the story.
 - ♦ Students in-role: Students can use the "board" as their playing area in re-enacting scenes from *Das Rheingold*.

Combining Art with Music

Summary of Activity

Students will be able to demonstrate through drawing and movement the tempo, mood and style of a given piece.

Time: 30-45 minutes

Setting: classroom

Materials:

- white paper
- newspaper
- crayons
- pencils
- *Das Rheingold* CD
- CD player

Subjects: music and visual arts

Objective:

Students will visually represent changes in musical moods, tempos and style.

Procedures:

- Have the students place the white piece of paper in the middle of a sheet of newspaper (to protect the desks).
- Hand out crayons and/or pencils.
- Students may either draw with their eyes open or closed, though closed eyes tend to yield more interesting drawings. Explain to the students that they are to respond to the changes in the music. For example, when the music is fast they may draw quickly, when it is slow, they may be more slowly and deliberately.
- Promote the use of the entire sheet of paper.
- Play the piece for a few minutes simply for listening.
- Play the entire piece of music again, this time asking the students to draw while it plays.
- After you turn off the music, have the students discuss with you why they drew certain ways.
- You will probably want to play the whole piece again at this point, giving them several minutes to complete their works of art then display them!

Discussion Questions:

- What do certain colors signify?
- How are different emotions brought out in music (i.e. in loud or soft sound, high or low pitches, fast or short notes)?
- Does changing a tempo (speed of the music) or style change the feelings in a piece of music?

Evaluation:

Have the students repeat this exercise listening to a popular piece of music and a classical piece of music. Discuss the differences and similarities

New Endings

Summary of Activity

Follow up from the Sing a Story performance. Students will be able to demonstrate understanding of plot, and use of imagination through writing, art and/or dramatic play.

Time: 45 - 90 minutes/in multiple sessions

Setting: classroom

GRADE LEVEL: 3rd grade

Materials:

- Butcher paper
- pencils
- crayons

Subjects: art, drama and literacy

Objective:

Students will verbally, physically and visually re-interpret the ending of *Das Rheingold*.

Procedures:

❖ **Drama/ Storytelling:**

- Making a Scene
 - Pick a scene from the story.
 - Choose one student to portray each character
 - Reread/ paraphrase the scene as the narrator.
 - Encourage the students to act out their part of the scene as it comes along.

❖ **Art and/or Writing:**

- Option 1: Ask the children what happens after the very end of the story? How would they continue the story? Will the Rheinchildren get the Ring back? What about the curse? Who will it affect? What else might happen?
 - Ask them to:
 - Tell their ending and/or
 - Write down their ending and/or
 - Make a picture for it and/or
 - Act out the ending
- Option 2: Ask the children how they would change the ending of the story- i.e. Who do they think should get the Ring? What would they do if they had the Ring?
 - Ask them to:
 - Tell their ending and/or
 - Write down their ending and/or
 - Make a picture for it and/or act out the ending

PERSONAL LEITMOTIFS!!

A *leitmotif* (pronounced "light-mo-teef") is a small musical melodic or rhythmic phrase that stands for something. Just like the color red often means "stop" or an alarm sounding means "warning!", composers use musical little phrases to stand for a feeling or a character or a place.

Think about when you watch a movie. Does the music tell you when a scary bit is coming up? Or in cartoons, can you tell it is supposed to be morning or a scene on a farm just from the music? *Leitmotifs* are even more detailed than that because they use the same series of notes or tones or rhythms each time as a signal of a person, place or thing.

Can you make up your own *leitmotif*? What about one for your dog? Or friend? Or teacher? What about one for a spelling test? As a class, make up a series of notes or a rhythm that goes along with various subjects in school. What would math sound like? How about reading? How about recess?



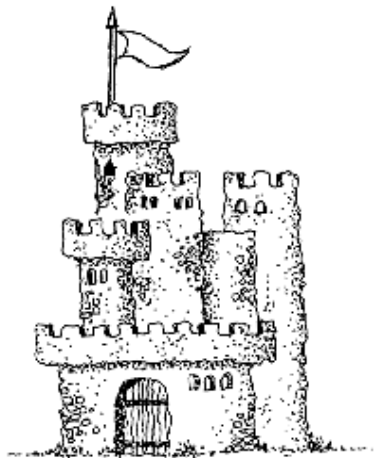
CD Track list and listening examples

1. Lugt, Schwestern! (Rheinmaidens, Alberich)
The Rheinmaidens singing at the River with Alberich
2. THE GIANTS!!
3. Hehe! Hehe! Hieher! Hieher! (Woton, Loge, Alberich)
Underground Travelling Music/Poking Music
4. Ohe! Ohe! Schreckliche Schlange (Loge, Woton, Alberich)
The Dragon, The Frog, and traveling back to earth!
5. Schwules Gedunst Schwebt in der Luft
Rainbow Bridge
6. Rheingold! Rheingold! Reines Gold! (Rheinmaidens, Woton, Loge)
Rheinchildren calling out one last time

DRAW AND DESCRIBE VALHALLA!!

Woton and Fricka have been given the most luxurious and beautiful castle. What do you think it looks like? How many floors? How many and what kind of rooms? What color is it? What is on the floor? How is it furnished? What is in the kitchen? What are the grounds like? Do any pets live at Valhalla? What else?

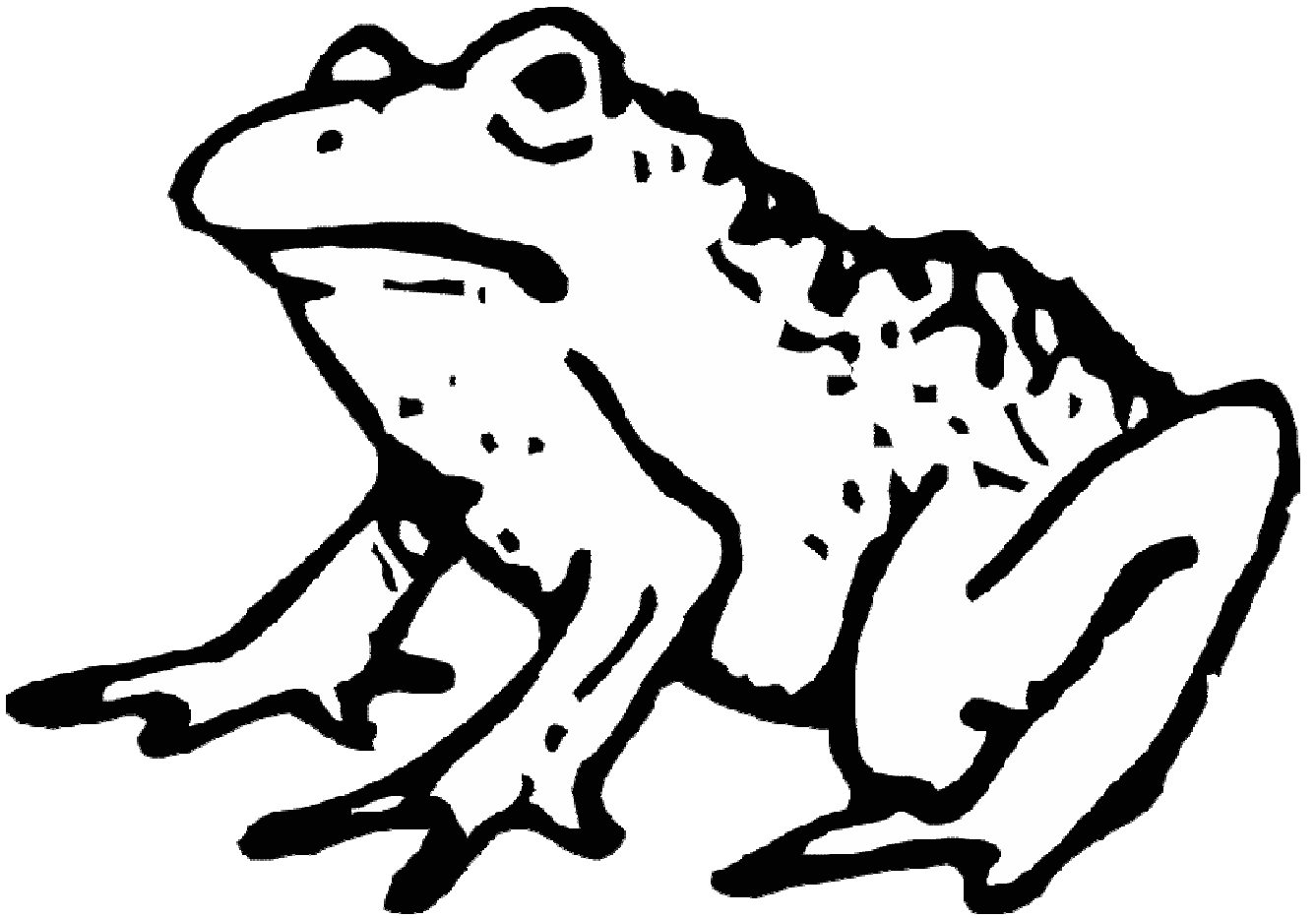
NOW...Giants are designing a dream castle for you! Who lives there with you? What color is it? What activities can you do there? Where (in the world) is it? How many rooms and what kind? What sort of transportation gets you there? Are there gardens? Swimming pools? A bowling alley? What style is it? Do you have any pets there? What is the kitchen like? What do you eat there? Where and how do you sleep? Write a description and draw a picture!!



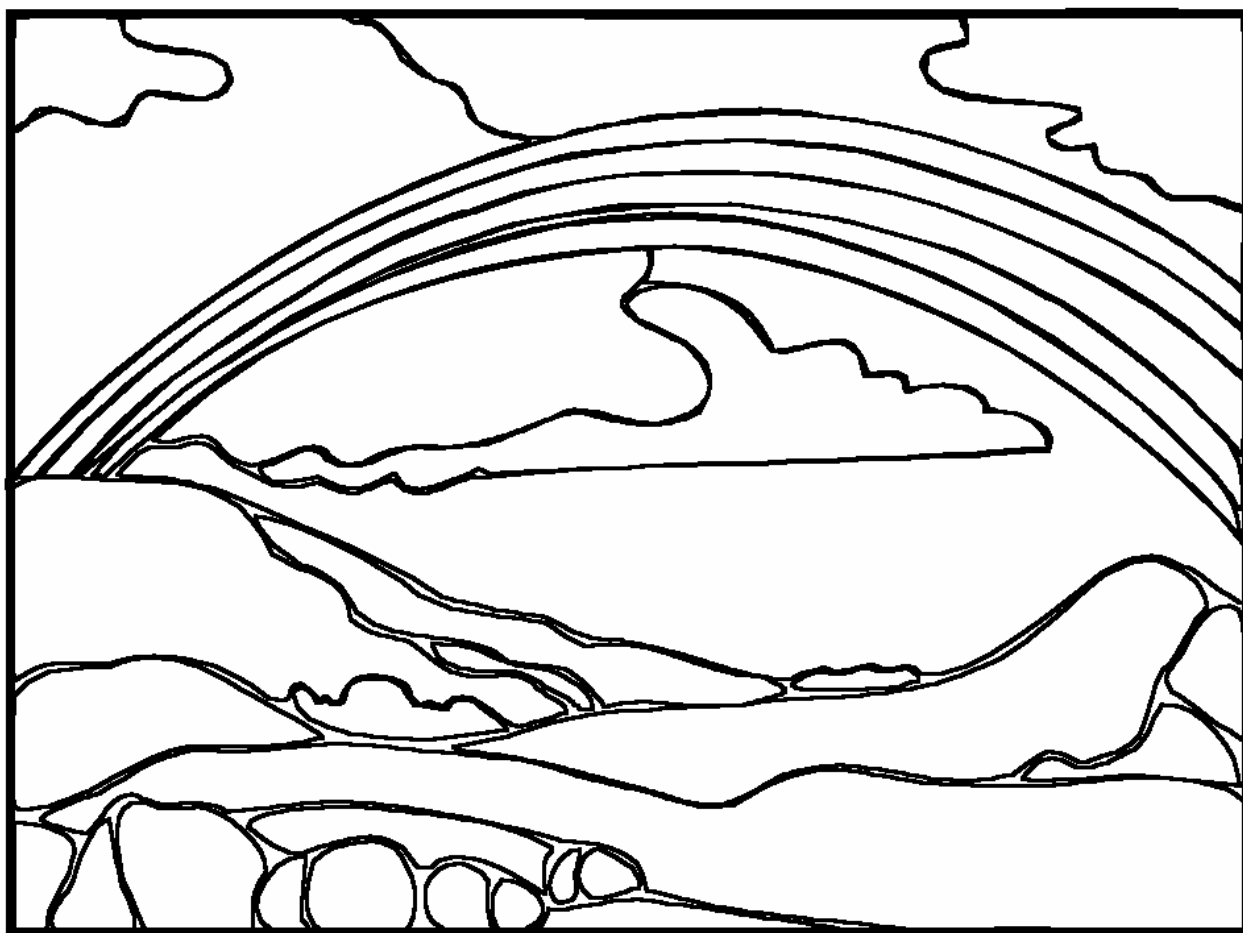
Color the Dragon!



Who turns into the...



Color the Rainbow!



Teacher Evaluation
Sing a Story 2011: Das Rheingold

School _____ Participating Teacher _____

Grade _____ Years involved w/Sing a Story _____

1. Were you able to integrate *Das Rheingold* into your lesson plans?
2. If yes, how?
3. Did *Sing a Story* help your students understand more about how music helps convey a story? How?
4. Compare your students' attitude toward opera before the program and after the performance.
5. Did your students learn anything about history or culture by participating in this program?
6. Did you see any change in classroom morale, cooperation, or self-esteem during participation in this program?
7. What was the most important thing you feel your students learned while participating in Sing a Story?
8. Anything else we should know?

*Thank you so much. Please return this form to
San Francisco Opera Guild Education
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Guilddeducation @sfopera.com*