

A guide to

how
Nanita
learned to make flan

*Musie by Enrique Gonzalez-Medina
Libretto by Campbell Geeslin*

Turn the page, begin your journey!

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¡Bienvenidos!

Exploring

Nanita

Let the journey begin!

As we grow up, everything is an exploration and a journey. Experiencing opera is no different, whether you're a young person or just young at heart. Opera is a wonderful teaching tool that integrates every area of learning and curriculum, from history, language, and math, to 21st Century learning skills such as innovation, communication, and collaboration.

Your Opera Xpress experience has been specifically designed to guide you through using the 50-minute production as a classroom resource. We suppose that makes you eager and spirited Nanita, and the Opera the saucy parrot, Don Pepe!

And with nearly 45 years of success in schools all across the Southeast, we think

you'll find a great new route to achieving and reinforcing your classroom objectives. From what to do to prepare for the visit, what to expect while we're on the stage, and how to turn the experience into a lasting learning event, we have an exploration in learning lined up that will be as *delicioso* as Nanita's flan.

Just like any journey, there is more than one way to get to the destination. We highly encourage you to adapt and edit any proposed lessons to best fit your classroom needs. And if you have questions or curiosities, we're here to help you find the answers.

Thank you for your dedication to our young minds, and let the journey begin!

Contact us!

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Stretch out those new shoes!

Tips for making the most of your experience.

BEFORE



Things to Talk About

Be sure to discuss these topics before your visit to make for a prepared, appreciative audience!

- What is an opera?
- What elements make up an opera?
- What is a fairy tale and how is it different from real life?
- What does being a good audience member look like?

Help Us Set the Scene!

Before we arrive, we encourage you to explore the story through this opera guide and set the scene for your classmates and us by creating a visual journey into the performance space.

Discuss the story, its culture and traditions, and growing up and **share** your interpretation of these things by **decorating** the hallway leading into the performance space. Decorations could reflect a celebration in Latino culture, shoes that students have created (just like Nanita!), or anything else you can imagine!

DURING



What to listen for

Be sure to listen during the opera for the different types of voices and rhythms explored in this fun performance. Voices, instruments, and rhythms to listen for:

- **Soprano:** the highest female voice, sung by Nanita
- **Mezzo soprano:** the middle female voice, sung by La Bamba/Old Woman
- **Tenor:** the highest male voice, sung by Pablo & the Parrot
- **Baritone:** the middle male voice, sung by the Mayor & Ranchero
- **Piano:** our 10-fingered orchestra
- **Rumba:** a fun Latin dance rhythm repeated throughout the opera.

You're part of the performance!

The audience is just as important as the people on the stage! Students should be prepared to participate at points during the performance by clapping along, moving and counting with us –all lead by the performers- and even providing props for the performance.

See the prop-making lesson on the next page to prepare for the performance.

AFTER



Talk to us!

After the performance, plan to stay for a Q&A with the cast. Students may raise their hands and ask our singers, pianist, and stage manager questions about the opera, singing, and more. Here are a few examples to get the conversation started:

- How did you learn to sing like that?
- How were the sets made?
- How long did the opera take to learn?
- Are there other ways to participate besides singing?

Connecting in the classroom

Following your visit, use this guide to connect the opera back to your classroom studies!

From culture and history to math and science, opera connects to all curricular areas. Journey through our guide to discover how *How Nanita Learned to Make Flan* can be used in your very own classroom.

And don't forget to check out the original story, a book of the same title by Campbell Geeslin.

We hope your shoes are just as magical as Nanita's!

You're Part of the Performance!

Our performance isn't complete without your participation. Give these pre-performance explorations a try before your performance to help us all have a fun, educational, and inspiring journey in Nanita's shoes.

Performance props

How Nanita Learned to Make Flan is a story that is set in Latin culture, but, no matter what culture we live in, we all share certain customs. One of these customs is using flowers for celebrations.

At the end of the opera, Nanita's entire community prepares for a *fiesta*. We're asking for the audience's help in preparing for the fiesta, too! Before we arrive at your school, have students create their own flowers that we will use during the performance.

In opera and theater, we call small items used during a performance "props". Help us have props for our celebration by following one of these easy methods. And don't forget to bring them to the performance with you!

Tissue paper option

Supplies:

- 1 sheet of tissue paper per student
- 1 pipe cleaner per student
- scissors

Steps:

1. Place 3 sheets of tissue paper on top of each other.
2. Fold tissue paper into a 1-inch accordion.
3. Cut accorded paper into three equal sections.
4. On each section, wrap pipe cleaner around the middle to hold tissue paper.
5. Spread each piece of paper out and fluff until the flower is made.

See visual instructions here:

<http://www.instructables.com/id/Tissue-Paper-Flowers/?ALLSTEPS>

Construction/drawing paper option

Supplies:

- 1 piece of construction or white paper per student
- Markers/crayons (optional)
- 1 pipe cleaner per student
- scissors

Steps:

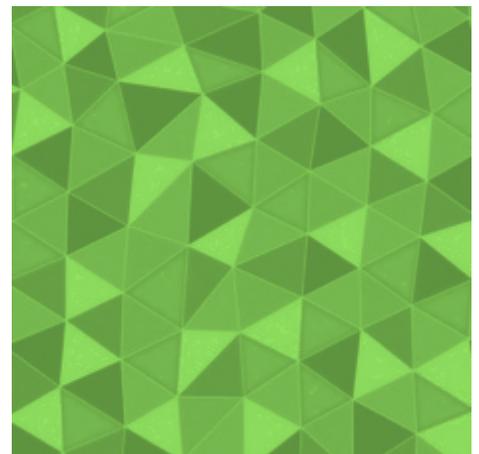
1. On construction or drawing paper, have students cut out a flower shape of their choosing. Also have them cut a small slit in the center of the flower.
2. (Optional) Have students decorate the flower with markers or crayons.
3. Push pipe cleaner through the slit in the flower and twist into a knot to hold flower in place, leaving the rest of the pipe cleaner as the stem.

Help us set the scene

Getting familiar with the story you will experience is always a good idea. What's a better idea? Sharing it with your fellow classmates!

Explore the synopsis of *How Nanita Learned to Make Flan* and set the scene for your classmates by **discussing** the story, its culture and traditions, and growing up and then **share the story by decorating the hallway** leading into the performance space.

Your decorations could reflect a celebration in Latino culture, shoes that students have created (just like Nanita!), or anything else you can imagine!



The Story

It's a new morning and Pablo, el zapatero, is busy at work again.

All that tap-tapping wakes Nanita, who just doesn't understand why her **papá** is always so busy. He has so many shoes to fix that he's going **loco!** The Mayor's shoes look tired and run down, **las botas** of the Colonel need their glow for his marching and show, la Señorita La Bamba's dance shoes need new taps, and el Padre's shoes look sick, but his little Nanita needs a new pair of shoes for her big day. Even though her feet are small, Pablo just can't find the time to make her shoes.

In comes the Mayor, another busy man of the town, to ask for his newly repaired shoes. Just like Pablo, he is as busy as can be. Then Señorita La Bamba stops by to pick up her dance shoes before her class. Everyone is busy as can be, even as they say their goodbyes.

A Wish Fulfilled

Nanita is all alone in her papá's **zapatería**, preparing for her chores. It's all work and no play, she realizes. The church bell rings and tells her things that she must do: at one she heats the pot and stews 'til hot; at two she and papá eat; three is **siesta** time and four brings more chores; five is time to close the shop, six brings the setting sun, seven and eight are more cooking and eating; and, finally, nine is the time to say "**muy buenas noches**". Tired as can be from their busy day, Pablo and Nanita say their goodnights and go to bed. Once he has left the room, Nanita realizes that her papá makes new shoes all day - it can't be that hard! After making sure he's asleep, she sets to work making her very own pair of shoes for her big day from the scraps in the shop. **Rojo, amarillo, verde, and azul...** sixteen tacks around each sole... Nanita quickly learns just how much work goes into making one shoe. Hurrying to get the shoes finished, Nanita slips them on and finds them such a delight she decides to wear the shoes all night.

The Grand House

As Nanita sleeps in her beautiful new shoes, her feet begin to twitch! Her handmade shoes are enchanted and begin to carry her in her sleep through the desert, under the big, round, coldly white moon. She encounters the moon's friend, a coyote, while sleepwalking and he chases her until the fiery, scorching sun is up and at his highest. Tired and hot from the sun, Nanita spots a great big house where she knocks on the door for help.

A Ranchero answers the door and tries to shoo her away. That is, until the Old Woman of the house complains about how much work she has to do. Then he brings her inside to put her to work, a mouse in the house. The Old Woman is delighted. She is even more delighted when she sees Nanita's shoes.

She demands the shoes from Nanita and both Nanita and the Old Woman declare "These shoes were meant for me!". But Nanita thinks the shoes will get rid of the mean Old Woman and she gives them to her and sets about her cleaning, even though all she wants is to go home.

Meanwhile, Pablo takes a break in his shop to think about how much he misses his Nanita.

Advice from Don Pepe

Nanita is sadly working away in the great house when the Ranchero enters with a parrot - Don Pepe - to keep him entertained with jokes; if he isn't funny our feathered friend will end up as roasted meat! Nanita and Don Pepe meet and she asks him if he's ever travelled far. Don Pepe shares with Nanita that when he was a **niño**, pirates took him off to sea for a hundred years. He tells her about the fun and fear he had on the high seas, but that he just doesn't understand how he wound up here - just like Nanita.

In comes the Old Woman, angry that Nanita and Don Pepe have disrupted her peace and quiet. She tells them **el gran plan**: for them to make **el flan**. She sets about instructing Nanita how to make flan, lemon juice and sugar and whisking and all, and warns she will not repeat herself. She leaves the two to finish the flan for the Ranchero but, just like making shoes, it's more work than Nanita thought it would be. With the encouragement of Don Pepe, she finishes whisking and gets the flan into the oven. The Ranchero wanders in asking what smells so nice, like paradise! The Old Woman lets him taste the flan she says *she* made and the Ranchero loves it so much he demands the flan every night. Nanita, upset by the Old Woman taking credit for her hard work and oh-so homesick, *must* find a way out of the great house and Don Pepe declares he can show her the way.

Nanita Returns Home

The grand house is quiet, everyone is asleep, and Nanita wakes Don Pepe - it's the perfect time to make their escape! But the desert sands are hot and Nanita must have her shoes. With her shoes on her feet, she and her feathered friend begin their journey back to el zapatería, but those stubborn shoes still try to lead them astray. Nanita stomps her feet to show those shoes that she is charge of her journey. With Don Pepe guiding the way, Nanita makes it home and she and her friend say farewell.

Nanita calls out for her papá and they are reunited. Pablo is so thankful his Nanita is home that he sets to work finally making her a new pair of shoes. Nanita slips them on and she begins to get ready for her big day.

Did you know?

This opera is based on a book of the same title written by American author Campbell Geeslin?

Or that its composer, Enrique Gonzalez-Medina lives in Mexico?

Characters

Nanita

Our spirited main character & daughter of Pablo

Pablo

A humble shoemaker

Señorita La Bamba

Community dance teacher

Mayor

Leader of Nanita's town

La Luna

El Sol

Coyote

Old Woman

Caretaker of the Grand House

Ranchero

Head of the Grand House

Don Pepe

Lively parrot from Spain & Nanita's new friend

As she gets ready, the townspeople gather and begin to celebrate the greatest miracle of all - growing children. Just like how Nanita learned to make flan, growing up is a journey. The community gathers around Nanita for a **fiesta** and she shares the **maravilloso** flan she has learned to make. It is so **delicioso** that the Mayor declares it the official desert of their city, it makes Señorita La Bamba twirl and whirl, and it even makes busy-as-can-be Pablo smile.

iKumba con Ritmo!



Exploring rhythm through rumba

How Nanita Learned to Make Flan is set to Latino-style music, with much of the opera set to rumba rhythms. Explore this culture's music with students by journeying through the rumba and having them create their own!

Before exploring the rumba rhythm, discuss with students how this music sounds different.

- Does it sound different than music they are used to hearing? How?
- Does it make them want to move or dance? What would the dance look like?

Explain and explore one of the main rhythmic motives in the opera: the rumba!

A rumba is a type of rhythm that originated in Africa, traveled to Cuba, and is commonly used in the music of Latin American cultures. The rumba in our opera is counted like this, with stress on the bold counts:

1 2 3 **1** 2 3 **1** 2

- Have students count or clap out the rhythm. Be sure they can demonstrate it individually to you or a peer.
- Now clap out the entire line! Remember: the bold beats are stressed and the beats in parenthesis are silent.



Rumba can be slow or fast.

- Clap out the rhythm at different tempi.
- Is the rumba in our opera slow or fast? Clap it at our speed!

Now that you're rumba experts, add the words to it! Below is Pablo's line, sung to the rhythm above:

As everyone can see, I'm busy as can be! I'm busy as can be! ¡Sí! ¡Sí! ¡Sí!

- Have students figure out how the words can fit the rhythm!
- Do the words he sings match the rhythm and speed? Why or why not?

Take it one step further!

Have students create their own rumba! Have them improvise on the rhythmic motive above. Then, have them create their own words.

What will their rumba be about? Being busy? Working hard? A celebration? Be sure to have them share with their

La Lengua

Española

How Nanita Learned to Make Flan is an opera written in English but it introduces Spanish language to its audiences through words and phrases. Explore the Spanish language through Nanita's journey!

Los números 1 a 10

Review how to count from 1 to 10 in Spanish like Nanita does. Have students count on their fingers to each other or count of as a class to demonstrate their mastery.

1 - Uno

2- Dos

3- Tres

4- Cuatro

5- Cinco

6- Seis

7- Siete

8- Ocho

9- Nueve

10- Diez

Here are some Spanish words you heard during the performance. Review what they mean.

Do you know how to say these words in any other languages?

¡Dígalos a su clase! Tell them to your class!

Las palabras (the words):

las botas	boots
buenos dias	good day
buenas noches	good night
casa	house
delicioso	delicious
fiesta	party
el flan	flan, a traditional dessert
gran	grand
loco	crazy
la luna	the moon
maravilloso	marvelous
muy	very
niño	child
papá	father
siesta	nap
el sol	the sun
el zapatería	shoe shop
los zapatos	shoes

¡Un paso más!

Turn your classroom into Nanita's world by labeling classroom objects in Spanish. Be sure to include colors and numbers, too!

Los colores

Explore the colors in Spanish and have fun identifying classroom objects' colors!

Rojo

Amarillo

Verde

Azul

Anaranjado

Rosa

Morado

Blanco

Marrón

Negra

Connections en la clase

Use these lesson templates for connecting the opera back into your classroom curriculum!

Walking in Nanita's shoes

Take it one storytelling step further!

Have students create and share their own story to detail the enchanted journey their shoes take them on.

- Write a narrative or poem
- Draw a story map
- Or have them listen, record, and share another classmate's story

How Nanita Learned to Make Flan is about her journey through growing up. Lead students on a journey in walking in someone else's shoes through creating their own story about their experiences in growing up!

- Explain the idiom "walking in someone else's shoes".
- Have students think of a journey in their growing up they can remember. The story should involve overcoming a challenge.

In the opera, Nanita creates her own pair of shoes from scraps of leather in her father's shop.

- Discuss why Nanita's shoes look the way they do.
- How do they tell us about Nanita? Do they represent her character (determined, spirited)? Do they communicate that she makes the best of what she has?
- Ask each student to think about what their own pair of shoes might look like if they made them. How would their shoes tell us a story about themselves? Or a story about another culture or community?
- Have students draw their shoes and share orally or through narrative why they look the way they do, what they tell us about the student, and what kind of journey they might lead the student on.

Maravilloso States of Matter

Take it one maravilloso mathematical step further!

Have students research flan recipes and play with the proportions of the recipe to explore fractions and decimals at work in the kitchen.

Be sure to have some students reduce the recipe (by $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{1}{3}$, etc.) and have some add to the recipe (make $1\frac{1}{2}$ the recipe or even more!).

Cooking is full of science, and even baking el flan lets us see science in action. Explore the states of matter with your students as Nanita learns to make flan:

- Explain that matter is classified into three states: solids, liquids, and gases.
 - **Solids:** able to be held, occupy a constant volume, and can hold their shape when force is applied. Examples include an apple, a book, an iPad.
 - **Liquids:** runny and often wet, occupy a constant volume but change their shape to fit the container they are in. Examples include milk, gasoline, paint.
 - **Gases:** cannot be held or seen and can occupy any shape, space, or container. Examples include helium, air, carbon dioxide.

Have students research a video on how to make flan. After watching the video, have them identify each ingredient's state of matter, and the state of matter for the flan mixture before it is cooked and after it is cooked.

- What do you think caused it to change states of matter? Temperature? Pressure? Magic?
- Explain that states of matter can be changed by temperature and pressure, and in the kitchen most changes occur because of temperature.
- What other examples of changes of matter in the kitchen can students come up with to demonstrate their understanding?

En mi opinion:

*Just like film, operas
are reviewed by critics.*

Use the form below to share your thoughts about your opera experience. Be sure to share them with Opera Carolina!

Mail: 1600 Elizabeth Avenue, Charlotte, NC 28204

Email: Ashley@operacarolina.org

_____ 's review of: _____

My favorite part of this opera was _____

because _____.

I also liked _____ because _____

_____.

One thing I would change in this opera is _____

because _____.

The best character was _____ because _____

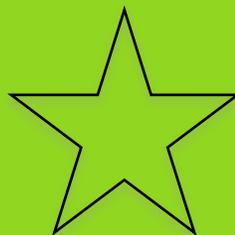
One thing I learned from this opera is _____

_____.

I would like to share this opera with _____ because _____

_____.

My rating of this opera is



Oh no! ----- So so ----- Maravilloso!