

# Music Drama & Richard Wagner: The Lord Of The Ring

**Grade Level or Special Area:** Music: 7<sup>th</sup> Grade

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**Length of Unit:** Seven 50 minute classes

## I. ABSTRACT

This unit is a brief study of Richard Wagner and his revolutionary idea of “Music Drama.” His belief that music was the medium of expression for the drama set his works apart from many others. Wagner believed that the music could influence a text, giving it a unified power to connect to both the human soul and human history. Through the use of listening examples, pantomimes, and student led “music dramas,” classes will discover an exciting new side of Wagner’s world of composition and drama.

## II. OVERVIEW

- A. Concept Objectives
  - 1. Develop an understanding and appreciation for classical music.
  - 2. Learn to recognize an aesthetic connection between music and drama.
  - 3. Recognize that music and literature reflect the inner life of a people.
- B. Content from the *Core Knowledge Sequence*
  - 1. Classical Music: Romantic Composers And Works: Richard Wagner, Overture to Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg (page 171)
  - 2. Music And National Identity (page 171)
  - 3. Elements of Drama (page 161):
    - a. Tragedy and Comedy
    - b. Aspects of conflict, suspense, and characterization
- C. Skill Objectives
  - 1. Listen to selected music with varied instrumentation and voicing, and discuss textures and timbres. *Derived from the Colorado Standards and Grade Level Expectation for Music (CSGLE)*
  - 2. Listen to a musical selection and explain how the composer used specific musical elements. (CSGLE for Music)
  - 3. Read, notate, and perform rhythmic and melodic patterns. (CSGLE for Music)
  - 4. Compose, recite, and explain works related to a composer’s dramatic style.

## III. BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

- A. For Teachers
  - 1. Dahlhaus, C. *Richard Wagner’s Music Dramas*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1979. ISBN# 0-521-22397-0
  - 2. Appendices B and C
- B. For Students
  - 1. Through participation, become familiar with basic elements of music (rhythm, melody, harmony, form, timbre, etc.). (3<sup>rd</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Music, pgs. 76, 99, 121, and 147: *Core Knowledge Sequence*)
  - 2. Produce a variety of types of writing. (5<sup>th</sup> Grade Language Arts, pg 109: *Core Knowledge Sequence*)
  - 3. Compose and read music in quarter and eighth notes on a staff. (2<sup>nd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Music: *Core Knowledge Sequence*)
  - 4. Sing and play simple melodies while reading scores (5<sup>th</sup> Grade Music: *Core Knowledge Sequence*)

#### IV. RESOURCES

- A. CD: Der Ring des Nibelungen Disk 1: Das Rheingold: Scene 1: Garstig glatter glits chriger Glimmer! – Neidlinger (Lessons One and Three)
- B. CD: Overture to Die Meistersinger Von Nurenburg (Lessons Two and Five)
- C. Random rhythm instruments (shakers, drums, tambourines, etc.) (Lesson Three)
- D. Random pitched instruments (xylophones, pianos, bells, etc.) (Lesson Three)
- E. Any recording by Wagner with lyrics (Lesson Four)

#### V. LESSONS

##### Lesson One: Das Rheingold

##### A. *Daily Objectives*

- 1. Concept Objective(s)
  - a. Develop an understanding and appreciation for classical music.
  - b. Learn to recognize an aesthetic connection between music and drama.
- 2. Lesson Content
  - a. Classical Music: Romantic Composers And Works: Richard Wagner, Overture to Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg (page 171)
  - b. Music And National Identity (page 171)
- 3. Skill Objective(s)
  - a. Listen to selected music with varied instrumentation and voicing, and discuss textures and timbres. *Derived from the Colorado Standards and Grade Level Expectation for Music (CSGLE)*
  - b. Listen to a musical selection and explain how the composer used specific musical elements. (CSGLE for Music)
  - c. Compose, recite, and explain works related to a composer’s dramatic style.

##### B. *Materials*

- 1. CD: Der Ring des Nibelungen Disk 1: Das Rheingold: Scene 1: Garstig glatter glits chriger Glimmer! – Neidlinger
- 2. One Copy of Appendix A: Music Drama Brainstorm for each class group (four to five groups)
- 3. One copy of Appendix B: Synopsis of Richard Wagner’s Der Ring des Nibelungen

##### C. *Key Vocabulary*

- 1. Music Drama: an opera in which the action is not interrupted by formal song divisions (as recitatives or arias) and the music is determined solely by dramatic appropriateness

##### D. *Procedures/Activities*

- 1. As the class enters the room, have the recording of Das Rheingold: Scene 1 playing.
- 2. When the class is seated, allow a few minutes for the song to wash over them.
- 3. Turn off the recording and ask the class what they thought.
- 4. Spend a few minutes in discussion over what type of music this is and how it made the students feel.
- 5. Explain that while this music sounds like opera, it is actually considered a “music drama.” The difference is subtle, and worth another unit in itself. For now, leave the following explanation in their minds:
  - a. This composer’s belief that music is the force of expression for the drama set his works apart from many others. He believed that the music

could influence a text, giving it a unified power to connect to both the human soul, and human history.

6. Ask the class if anyone knows what composer this might be.
  7. Tell them that this composer was the first to make the “Lord Of The Rings” story famous, and the song played was part of his version of the “Ring Cycle.”
  8. After a few rounds of guesses, give the answer if the answer has yet to be uncovered by the students.
  9. Explain to the students that Wagner was a Romantic Era composer that was both a great thinker and great composer. Wagner is known as Germany’s great composer.
  10. Tell the class that today they will break into groups and prepare a pantomime to the music they heard as they entered the class.
  11. Break the class into groups of four to five (depending on class size) and pass out Appendix A: Music Drama Brainstorm.
  12. Tell them to put their names on the top of their “brainstorm sheet.”
  13. Explain to the class that you are going to play the recording again.
  14. While listening, the groups should quietly discuss ideas of how to act out a story to the music they are hearing.
  15. Be sure to remind them that this is going to be a pantomime (no talking) that is based on “The Lord Of The Rings.”
  16. Explain to the class that you will only play the first two minutes of the recording. Let them know that they will be responsible for filling that entire time with their pantomime.
  17. Play the recording.
  18. When done, allow about five minutes for brainstorming and group work.
  19. Walk the room, checking in with each group to ensure that they are working towards the proper goal.
  20. When it appears that all groups are working in the right direction, announce that you are going to play the recording again.
  21. Play the recording.
  22. When done, alert the groups that they will now have five minutes to prepare their pantomime for performance. Encourage them to use any available props in the room.
  23. Begin the pantomimes, one group at a time, to the recording. When each group finishes, ask them to explain their pantomime for the class.
  24. Congratulate the group for a job well done and collect their Brainstorm sheet.
  25. Continue this process until all groups finish.
  26. Play the recording again as the students depart for the day.
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
1. Observation of the pantomimes and evaluation of the brainstorm sheets (Appendix A).

## **Lesson Two: Die Meistersinger**

### **A. *Daily Objectives***

1. Concept Objective(s)
  - a. Develop an understanding and appreciation for classical music.
  - b. Learn to recognize an aesthetic connection between music and drama.
2. Lesson Content
  - a. Classical Music: Romantic Composers And Works: Richard Wagner, Overture to Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg (page 171)
  - b. Music And National Identity (page 171)

- c. Elements of Drama (page 161):
        - i. Tragedy and Comedy
        - ii. Aspects of conflict, suspense, and characterization
  - 3. Skill Objective(s)
    - a. Listen to selected music with varied instrumentation and voicing, and discuss textures and timbres. *Derived from the Colorado Standards and Grade Level Expectation for Music (CSGLE)*
    - b. Listen to a musical selection and explain how the composer used specific musical elements. (CSGLE for Music)
    - c. Compose, recite, and explain works related to a composer's dramatic style.
- B. *Materials*
- 1. CD: Overture to Die Meistersinger Von Nurenburg
  - 2. One Copy of Appendix A: Music Drama Brainstorm for each class group (four to five groups)
  - 3. One copy of Appendix B: Synopsis of Richard Wagner's Der Ring des Nibelungen
  - 4. One copy of Appendix C: Richard Wagner's Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
- 1. Meistersinger: a master singer: a member of any of various German guilds formed chiefly in the 15th and 16th centuries by workingmen and craftsmen for the cultivation of poetry and music
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
- 1. Take the first few minutes of class to explain that what they did in the previous lesson was perform a silent drama with music as the driving force.
  - 2. Explain that this process is very similar to Wagner's idea of "music drama." Tell them that operas, in contrast, typically begin with a story that then has music constructed to fit the text.
  - 3. To help round out the process, read Appendix B: Synopsis of Richard Wagner's Der Ring des Nibelungen to the class.
  - 4. Allow for discussions and comparisons to the previous day's class pantomimes.
  - 5. Following the discussions, play the Overture to Die Meistersinger for the class. Let it play for a long enough period of time so that the class gets a good feel for the mood and style.
  - 6. Stop the recording and read inform the class, "this time we will read the story before we create the pantomime."
  - 7. Read Appendix C: Richard Wagner's Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg.
  - 8. Allow for a discussion of the story.
  - 9. Tell the class that today they will break into groups and prepare a pantomime to the Overture to Die Meistersinger; based on the story they just heard (Appendix C).
  - 10. Break the class into new groups of four to five (depending on class size) and pass out Appendix A: Music Drama Brainstorm.
  - 11. Tell them to put their names on the top of their "brainstorm sheet."
  - 12. Explain to the class that you are going to play the recording again.
  - 13. While listening, the groups should quietly discuss ideas of how to act out the story to the music they are hearing.
  - 14. Explain to the class that you will only play the first two minutes of the recording. Let them know that they will be responsible for filling that entire time with their pantomime.
  - 15. Play the recording.

16. When done, allow about five minutes for brainstorming and group work.
  17. Walk the room, checking in with each group to ensure that they are working towards the proper goal.
  18. When it appears that all groups are working in the right direction, announce that you are going to play the recording again.
  19. Play the recording.
  20. When done, alert the groups that they will now have five minutes to prepare their pantomime for performance. Encourage them to use any available props in the room.
  21. Begin the pantomimes, one group at a time, to the recording. When each group finishes, ask them to explain their pantomime for the class.
  22. Congratulate the group for a job well done and collect their Brainstorm sheet.
  23. Continue this process until all groups finish.
  24. With the remaining few minutes in class, discuss the process of creating a drama to music with and without knowledge of the actual story.
  25. Remind the class that Wagner typically thought of the story first, but rarely settled on the idea until the music was composed to bring the story to life.
  26. Dismiss the class when time is up.
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
1. Observation of the pantomimes and evaluation of the brainstorm sheets (Appendix A).

### **Lesson Three: A Worldly Message**

#### A. *Daily Objectives*

1. Concept Objective(s)
  - a. Develop an understanding and appreciation for classical music.
  - b. Learn to recognize an aesthetic connection between music and drama.
  - c. Recognize that music and literature reflect the inner life of a people.
2. Lesson Content
  - a. Classical Music: Romantic Composers And Works: Richard Wagner, Overture to Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg (page 171)
  - b. Music And National Identity (page 171)
  - c. Elements of Drama (page 161):
    - i. Tragedy and Comedy
    - ii. Aspects of conflict, suspense, and characterization
3. Skill Objective(s)
  - a. Listen to selected music with varied instrumentation and voicing, and discuss textures and timbres. *Derived from the Colorado Standards and Grade Level Expectation for Music (CSGLE)*
  - b. Listen to a musical selection and explain how the composer used specific musical elements. (CSGLE for Music)
  - c. Read, notate, and perform rhythmic and melodic patterns. (CSGLE for Music)
  - d. Compose, recite, and explain works related to a composer's dramatic style.

#### B. *Materials*

1. CD: Der Ring des Nibelungen Disk 1: Das Rheingold: Scene 1: Garstig glatter glits chriger Glimmer! – Neidlinger
2. One Copy of Appendix D: “Gold Ring” Music Drama for each class group (four to five groups)
3. Three or more random rhythm instruments (shakers, drums, tambourines, etc)

4. One or more random pitched instruments (xylophones, pianos, bells, etc.)
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
1. Societal: of or relating to society
  2. Political: involving or charged or concerned with acts against a government or a political system
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
1. As the class enters, have the CD of Das Rheingold: Scene 1 playing.
  2. Ask the class to recap the story of Der Ring Des Nibelungen. Help out as needed.
  3. Explain to the class that Wagner often used his characters and situations to represent real life situations. For instance, the struggle with the ring in Der Nibelungen is a very intentional comparison to the self-destructive nature of power and greed in government. Even though this story was conceived years ago, it is very applicable today.
  4. Spend a few minutes discussing the “societal and political gold rings” (or the political or societal forces that wield power to suppress a people or an environment) in our world today.
  5. When the discussion loses momentum, break the class into new groups and pass out Appendix D: “Gold Ring” Music Drama.
  6. Tell the class that they will be creating a “music drama” of their own today based on a “gold ring” in the modern world.
  7. In order to complete the assignment, each group will need to do the following:
    - a. Select a modern day “gold ring.”
    - b. Select a set of instruments (pitched and non-pitched) to represent their “gold ring.”
    - c. Write a short drama (two to three paragraphs) about the “gold ring.”
    - d. Choose a pitch on the pitched instruments to be the pitch that all text will be sung to (a drone effect – meaning that all vocals will be sung on that same note).
    - e. Script the performance in outline form on Appendix D.
    - f. Include reasons for the instrumentation on Appendix D (for instance, the tambourine may represent the laughter of the World Com executive).
  8. Encourage the use of props if any are available.
  9. Every member of the group must play a part in the music drama.
  10. Allow a solid twenty minutes for the writing and creation of the dramas.
  11. Walk the classroom from group to group helping to solve any problems and keep the momentum moving forward.
  12. When the groups appear close to being ready, calm the chaos and announce that you are ready to begin with the dramas.
  13. Allow each group to perform, explaining their performance when finished.
  14. Congratulate each group for a job well done and collect the copies of Appendix D.
  15. Discuss the development process with the class.
    - a. Did they develop a story before music?
    - b. Did they need music to tell the story?
    - c. Did the music make the story even better?
    - d. Could they have told the story without the words?
  16. Dismiss the class at the appropriate time.
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
1. Observation of the individual music dramas and evaluation of the copies of Appendix D: “Gold Ring” Music Drama

## Lesson Four: A Song of Great Emotion

### A. *Daily Objectives*

1. Concept Objective(s)
  - a. Develop an understanding and appreciation for classical music.
  - b. Learn to recognize an aesthetic connection between music and drama.
  - c. Recognize that music and literature reflect the inner life of a people.
2. Lesson Content
  - a. Classical Music: Romantic Composers And Works: Richard Wagner, Overture to Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg (page 171)
  - b. Music And National Identity (page 171)
  - c. Elements of Drama (page 161):
    - i. Tragedy and Comedy
    - ii. Aspects of conflict, suspense, and characterization
3. Skill Objective(s)
  - a. Listen to selected music with varied instrumentation and voicing, and discuss textures and timbres. *Derived from the Colorado Standards and Grade Level Expectation for Music (CSGLE)*
  - b. Listen to a musical selection and explain how the composer used specific musical elements. (CSGLE for Music)
  - c. Read, notate, and perform rhythmic and melodic patterns. (CSGLE for Music)
  - d. Compose, recite, and explain works related to a composer's dramatic style.

### B. *Materials*

1. Copies of Appendix E: A Personal Guide For Your Song Of Great Emotion for each group
2. Any available single recording composed by Wagner (with lyrics)

### C. *Key Vocabulary*

1. Purity: the quality or state of being pure
2. Corruption: inducement to wrong by improper or unlawful means (as bribery)
3. Emotion: a psychic and physical reaction (as anger or fear) subjectively experienced as strong feeling and physiologically involving changes that prepare the body for immediate vigorous action

### D. *Procedures/Activities*

1. As the class enters the room, have a select single recording composed by Wagner playing.
2. Take time to discuss the recording with the class.
3. Recap the previous three lessons: the two pantomimes and the original music dramas.
4. Recap the idea of the "Gold Ring" in the modern world (political or societal forces that wield power to suppress a people or an environment), and inquire if there are any more examples to be discussed.
5. At the conclusion of discussion, explain that Wagner's music dramas were very emotional and often dealt with great love, great sacrifice, great deception, magic, and tragedy. And, there was typically a struggle between purity and corruption.
6. Let the class know that today's assignment is a fun one. They are to break into groups and compose a "Song of Great Emotion" using a modern day "Golden Ring." Be careful! This title will turn off many seventh graders if presented in a serene and loving manner. Make sure to present it as a fun, light-hearted look at some of the extremes in "music drama."

7. Break the class into new groups.
  8. To complete this assignment, the students will need a copy of Appendix E: A Personal Guide For Your Song Of Great Emotion.
  9. Students will need to follow the rules exactly as they are listed on Appendix E.
  10. Remind students that this music drama must be performed to a familiar tune (see Appendix E).
  11. Explain that they will have twenty minutes to prepare.
  12. Encourage the groups to have fun with the assignment. This is an exercise that will help them understand the relationship between music and dramatic emotion. The more extreme the differences of emotion, the more fun the exercise is to perform (as well as experience).
  13. Once groups appear to be ready, allow them to perform one at a time for the rest of the class.
  14. Congratulate each group on a job well done and collect the copies of Appendix E from each group when they are finished. As usual, have each group explain their performance for the rest of the class when they are finished.
  15. If time permits, play the Wagner recording once again for the class to exit to.
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
1. Observation of the individual music dramas and evaluation of the copies of Appendix E: A Personal Guide For Your Song Of Great Emotion.

### **Lesson Five: Wagner's Own Music Drama**

- A. *Daily Objectives*
1. Concept Objective(s)
    - a. Develop an understanding and appreciation for classical music.
    - b. Learn to recognize an aesthetic connection between music and drama.
    - c. Recognize that music and literature reflect the inner life of a people.
  2. Lesson Content
    - a. Classical Music: Romantic Composers And Works: Richard Wagner, Overture to Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg (page 171)
    - b. Music And National Identity (page 171)
    - c. Elements of Drama (page 161):
      - i. Tragedy and Comedy
      - ii. Aspects of conflict, suspense, and characterization
  3. Skill Objective(s)
    - a. Listen to selected music with varied instrumentation and voicing, and discuss textures and timbres. *Derived from the Colorado Standards and Grade Level Expectation for Music (CSGLE)*
    - b. Listen to a musical selection and explain how the composer used specific musical elements. (CSGLE for Music)
    - c. Read, notate, and perform rhythmic and melodic patterns. (CSGLE for Music)
    - d. Compose, recite, and explain works related to a composer's dramatic style.
- B. *Materials*
1. One copy of Appendix F: Timeline And Synopsis of Richard Wagner's Life
  2. One Copy of Appendix A: Music Drama Brainstorm for each class group (four to five groups)
  3. One copy of Appendix E: A Personal Guide For Your Song Of Great Emotion
  4. CD: Overture to Die Meistersinger Von Nurenburg
  5. One Overhead projector or easel (optional)

- C. *Key Vocabulary*
1. Narrative: the representation in art of an event or story; also: an example of such a representation
  2. Synopsis: a condensed statement or outline
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
1. As the class enters, have the Overture to Die Meistersinger playing.
  2. Ask the class if they can identify the recording.
  3. Recap the story of Die Meistersinger.
  4. Congratulate the class on the completion of the previous lesson, and tell them that today's lesson is very similar.
  5. Explain that they will be breaking into groups to design another music drama about another "Gold Ring": Wagner's life.
  6. Let them know that Wagner, as is true with many artists, projected his own personal struggles with power, greed, and truth into his stories.
  7. Explain that Wagner was a warrior about his work. He wasn't overly friendly due to his extreme possessive passion about his music and his passion for philosophy.
  8. Break the class into groups once again and pass out the brainstorm sheets (Appendix A) to each group.
  9. Pass out the Appendix F: Timeline And Synopsis of Richard Wagner's Life to each group as well (an overhead or easel can be used here to save paper).
  10. Explain to the groups that they must write a short (two to three paragraphs) narrative about Wagner's life. This narrative must then be performed to select instruments (as described in Appendix E in the previous lesson) and performed to a familiar tune.
  11. Allow twenty to thirty minutes for preparation, and then allow each group to perform their music drama for the rest of the class.
  12. Upon completion of each performance, collect the brainstorm sheets and have each group explain their performance.
  13. Play the CD Overture to Die Meistersinger for the class to wind down and exit to.
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
1. Observation of the individual music dramas and evaluation of the brainstorm sheets.

## VI. CULMINATING ACTIVITY

- A. **Unit Exam (Appendix G) and Dramatic Movie Ending With Soundtrack**
1. The unit exam should be given prior to the Culminating Activity, and should take up to approximately twenty to thirty minutes.
  2. The Culminating Activity is once again a group activity involving groups of four to five students.
  3. Following the exam, inform the students that the last assignment will be the creation of a dramatic movie ending with a soundtrack.
  4. Let them know that they get to invent their ending, but that the theme and subject matter must be pre-approved by the teacher before a group may begin preparing.
  5. Groups must be made aware that the music must be the driving force for the drama. This means that no major action can happen in the dramatic ending without the music seemingly helping it along.
  6. Groups should be given extra latitude concerning the use of props and instrumentation.

7. Groups should be encouraged, as in Lesson Four, to find extremes in emotion for their ending as this helps boost the effect of the connected role of music and drama.
8. Preparation should take up the remainder of the class time for the day. This project should, however, finish on the next available class period.

## **VII. HANDOUTS/WORKSHEETS**

- A. Appendix A: Music Drama Brainstorm
- B. Appendix B: Synopsis of Richard Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen*
- C. Appendix C: Richard Wagner's *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*
- D. Appendix D: "Gold Ring" Music Drama
- E. Appendix E: A Personal Guide For Your Song Of Great Emotion
- F. Appendix F: Timeline And Synopsis of Richard Wagner's Life
- G. Appendix G: Unit Exam
- H. Appendix H: Unit Exam Key
- I. Appendix I: Manuscript Paper

## **VIII. BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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**Appendix A**  
**Music Drama Brainstorm**

Names \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Class \_\_\_\_\_

Musical Selection \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Your Original Music Drama \_\_\_\_\_

Brief plot possibilities/descriptions:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Characters involved:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Props needed:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

In the space below, provide a detailed description of music drama as it relates to specific events in the music:

Musical event 1:

Musical Event 2:

Musical Event 3:

Musical Event 4:

## Appendix B Synopsis of Richard Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen*

Wagner's four-part *Ring* cycle describes the lives of many mythical characters that battle greed and betrayal to reach a final utopia. In the first part of the cycle, *Das Rheingold*, the Nibelung dwarf Alberich renounces love to gain possession of the mysterious Rhine gold, from which he fashions the ring that gives him mighty powers.

Meanwhile Wotan, king of the gods, regrets his promise to trade Freia, goddess of youth and beauty, for the giants' help in building Valhalla, home of the gods. Wotan dupes Alberich and steals the magic Ring, giving it to the giants in place of Freia. But Alberich has cursed the ring and all who touch it, and Wotan has brought this curse upon the gods.

As *Die Walküre* opens, Siegmund staggers into the hut where Sieglinde fearfully awaits the return of Hunding, whom she was forced to marry. The two fall in love, unaware that both are Wotan's human children. Wotan commands his favorite daughter, Brünnhilde of the fierce Valkyries, to defend Siegmund against Hunding, but his wife, the goddess Fricka, reminds him that Siegmund has violated Sieglinde's marriage vows and must die. Heartbroken and still under the Ring's curse, Wotan orders Brünnhilde to help Hunding defeat Siegmund in battle. Brünnhilde admires the strength of Siegmund's passion and defies her father, but at the last moment Wotan furiously intervenes, causing Siegmund's death. To punish his Valkyrie daughter, Wotan puts her to sleep on Brünnhilde Rock, inside a ring of fire that only a true hero would dare to defy. Brünnhilde tells her father that Sieglinde has hidden in the forest to give birth to Siegfried, who will help the gods defeat their enemies.

*Siegfried* relates how Sieglinde's baby is rescued from his dead mother's side and raised by Mime, a Nibelung dwarf who plots that Siegfried will grow up to slay the giant Fafner and reclaim the magic ring. Siegfried fearlessly welds the halves of his father Siegmund's splintered sword and slays Fafner, but kills Mime for his treachery, while Alberich's evil laugh is heard in the background. Meanwhile, the exhausted god Wotan gives up his kingship, abandoning the world to the rule of human love. A bird guides brave Siegfried to Brünnhilde Rock, where he battles through the ring of flames to reach the sleeping maiden. Inspired by his passion, Brünnhilde renounces her magical Valkyrie powers, and the cursed ring joyfully unites the lovers.

But the gods' final reckoning awaits them in the fourth drama, *Götterdämmerung*. Hagen, son of the evil Alberich, devises a devilish plot to kill Siegfried and steal the Ring from Brünnhilde's finger. He convinces his half-sister Gutrune to feed Siegfried a potion that erases the hero's memory of Brünnhilde and makes him lust after Gutrune. The besotted Siegfried agrees to kidnap his former love as a bride for Gutrune's brother Gunther, and as Brünnhilde vainly defends herself, Siegfried seizes the ring from her. Unaware of the treachery afoot, Brünnhilde denounces Siegfried's betrayal, but he can remember nothing and denies all guilt. After the double wedding, the Rhine maidens, who are rightful owners of the Ring, beg Siegfried to return it to them, but he refuses, not realizing that he is under its curse. In his lust for the Ring, Hagen drives his spear into Siegfried's back. But when Hagen reaches to steal the Ring from Siegfried's corpse, the dead man's hand raises itself to shake him off, and Brünnhilde appears on her magic charger. Seizing the ring, she lights a funeral pyre and rides into the flames, immolating the corrupt reign of the gods forever. Brünnhilde's sacrifice returns the cursed ring to the Rhine maidens and purifies the world for the new rule of human love.

## Appendix C

### Richard Wagner's *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*

ACT I. As the congregation of St. Katherine's Church sings a closing hymn, the young knight Walther von Stolzing tries to catch the eye of Eva Pogner. After the parishioners have filed out, she informs her suitor that she is to be betrothed the next day to the winner of a song contest sponsored by the local Mastersingers. Eva's companion, Magdalene, tells her sweetheart, David, apprentice to the cobbler and poet Hans Sachs, to explain the rules of song composing to Walther, who is taken aback by the complicated ins and outs of master singing. David's fellow apprentices set up for a preliminary song trial, and the Masters arrive; but before the group's secretary, Kothner, can call the roll, Walther applies for the contest, making an enemy of fellow contestant Beckmesser, the town clerk - a spiteful, jealous pedant, suspicious of anything new. As proof that tradesmen value art, Pogner offers his daughter's hand as prize for the next day's contest. When Sachs suggests that Eva - and the people - should have some say in the matter, Pogner announces she may reject the winner but must marry a Mastersinger. Now Walther introduces himself, describing his self-taught, natural methods of composition. Going on to his trial song, Walther sings an impulsive, free form tune, breaking all the Masters' rules, punctuated by Beckmesser's chalk and slate to count the errors. Rejected by the Masters, the young knight stalks out, leaving Sachs to muse on the distinctive appeal of Walther's melody.

ACT II. That evening, as David's fellow apprentices playfully end their day, David tells Magdalene how badly Walther fared. Eva, arriving with her father, gets the sad news from Magdalene. Across the street, Sachs sets up shop in his doorway; the scent of lilacs and the memory of Walther's song, however, distract him. Eva visits the cobbler, and though she confesses she would be glad if Sachs himself won the contest, her dismay at his pretended disapproval of Walther betrays her true feelings. Running off in a huff, she is intercepted by Walther, who begs her to elope with him, and they hide when the Night Watchman passes. Sachs lights the street with a lantern, forcing the lovers to stay hidden while Beckmesser arrives to serenade Eva, whom Magdalene impersonates in Pogner's window. When the clerk begins his tune, however, Sachs launches into a lusty cobbling song, pleading a need to finish his work. At length they agree that Sachs will drive a nail only when Beckmesser breaks a rule of style. The ensuing racket increases when David jealously attacks the clerk for apparently wooing Magdalene, and the night shirted neighbors join in a free-for-all until the Watchman's horn disperses them. Pogner leads Eva inside while Sachs drags Walther and David into his shop; the Watchman intones the hour.

ACT III. Reading a book in his study the next morning, Sachs forgives David his unruly behavior and bids him recite his St. John's Day verses. Alone, the cobbler ponders the world's madness, and then greets Walther, who tells of a wondrous dream. Sachs recognizes a potential prize song; taking down the words, he helps the knight fashion them with an ear for form and symmetry. When they depart, Beckmesser limps in and noses around. Pocketing Walther's poem, he is caught by Sachs, who tells him to keep it. Beckmesser, certain of victory, rushes out. Eva now visits Sachs on the pretext of a pinching shoe; Walther returns dressed for the festival and repeats his prize song for her. She is torn between the two men, but the wise older man turns her to the younger. When Magdalene comes in, Sachs promotes David to journeyman with a box on the ear and asks Eva to bless the new song, which all five join in praising. Then they go off to the contest.

In a meadow outside the city, guilds and citizens assemble under festive banners. After a joyful waltz, the Masters file in, Sachs getting a spontaneous hand from his people, which in turn inspires moving thanks from him. The contest opens as Beckmesser nervously tries to fit Walther's verses to his own music but forgets the words and distorts them, earning laughter from the crowd. The clerk turns furiously on Sachs and stumbles off. After rightful delivery of the song by Walther, the people are entranced, but Walther refuses the Masters' medallion. Sachs, however, convinces him otherwise, extolling tradition and its upholders as well as its fresh innovators. Youth makes its pact with age, Walther has won Eva, and the people hail Sachs once more as Eva crowns him with Walther's wreath.

**Appendix D**  
**“Gold Ring” Music Drama**

Names \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Class \_\_\_\_\_

Select a modern day “gold ring”: \_\_\_\_\_

Instruments to be used. Include reasons for the instrumentation (for instance, the tambourine may represent the laughter of the World Com executive):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Write a short drama (two to three paragraphs) about this “gold ring” in the space below:

Choose a pitch on the pitched instruments to be the pitch that all text will be sung to (a drone effect – meaning that all vocals will be sung on that same note).

Script the performance in outline form in the space below:

1. Introduction
  - a. First Action
    - i.
    - ii.
  
  - b. Second Action (etc.)
    - i.
    - ii.

2. Conclusion

**Appendix E**  
**A Personal Guide For Your Song Of Great Emotion**

Names \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Class \_\_\_\_\_

Select your modern day “gold ring”: \_\_\_\_\_

Select a title for your song: \_\_\_\_\_

Folk song used: \_\_\_\_\_

Props used: \_\_\_\_\_

**Rules:**

1. The song must be sung to the tune of a folk song (Twinkle Twinkle, etc.)
2. The song must represent the “gold ring” and contain a definite beginning and ending.
3. The song must involve the entire group. (Members may sing, act, or both)
4. The song must contain extremes of emotion (Tragedy and comedy, life and death, fear and happiness, captivity and freedom etc.)
5. All songs must be ready for performance in 20 minutes.

---

Write out the lyrics for your song in the space below.

## Appendix F Timeline And Synopsis of Richard Wagner's Life

May 22, 1813-Born to Johanna Rosine Wagner, who at the time was married to Carl Friedrich Wagner

December, 1822-Enters the Dresden Kreuzschule

1826-Attempts to write an epic poem entitled *The Battle of Parnassus*, also started a five-act tragedy *Leubald*

1829-First compositions: two piano sonatas and one string quartet

June 10, 1834-First essays on aesthetics of opera, *On German Opera*, published in Laube's journal

November 24, 1836-Marries Minna Planer at Königsberg-Tragheim

April 13, 1845-Completes score of *Tannhäuser*

January 9, 1848-Mother dies in Leipzig

May 16, 1849-Warrant for Wagner's arrest issued

March 10, 1864-Eighteen year old King Ludwig II of Bavaria summons Wagner, pays off his debts, and gives him housing

April 10, 1865-Wagner and Cosima's first child, Isolde, born

December, 1865-Wagner banished from Munich

January 25, 1866-Minna dies in Dresden

February 17, 1867-Wagner and Cosima's second daughter, Eva, born

June 21, 1868 -World Premiere: *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* Munich, Hoftheater

June 6, 1869-Wagner and Cosima's son, Siegfried, born

August 25, 1870-Wagner and Cosima marry in Lucerne

November 21, 1874-Completes entire *Ring* cycle

August 13-30, 1876-First Bayreuth Festival

August 1876 -First performance of the whole *Ring* cycle at Bayreuth

**Appendix F, page 2**  
**Timeline And Synopsis of Richard Wagner's Life**

February 13, 1883-Wagner dies of a heart attack

January 4, 1886 -U.S. Premiere: Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg Metropolitan Opera

**Appendix G  
Unit Exam**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Homeroom \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Multiple Choice:**

**Please select the correct answer by circling one letter in the questions below.**

1. Which country was Richard Wagner born in?
  - a. Germany
  - b. Austria
  - c. Sweden
  - d. Russia
  
2. The Ring Cycle is typically divided into sections. How many sections are there?
  - a. Two
  - b. Five
  - c. Four
  - d. Three
  
3. Richard Wagner's Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg deals with what main activity?
  - a. Greek Mythology
  - b. Religion
  - c. Singing contests
  - d. Feuding families
  
4. What is Valhalla?
  - a. An angel.
  - b. A home for the gods.
  - c. A weapon.
  - d. The ring.
  
5. Which of the following is "NOT" an example of a "gold ring"?
  - a. The government
  - b. The mafia
  - c. A Gang
  - d. A Planet

**True/False:**

**Mark a "T" for true or an "F" for false to the left of each statement.**

6. \_\_\_\_\_ Wagner was a composer in the 1600's.
  
7. \_\_\_\_\_ Richard Wagner invented the story of the ring cycle.
  
8. \_\_\_\_\_ "Music Drama" is a form of art where, along with the drama, the music helps to tell the story.
  
9. \_\_\_\_\_ Meistersinger means, "Master singer."

**Appendix G, page 2**  
**Unit Exam**

10. \_\_\_\_ Richard Wagner's *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* has four acts.
  11. \_\_\_\_ Operas rarely deal with great extremes in emotion.
  12. \_\_\_\_ Richard Wagner's "Music Dramas" often dealt with the political issues of his time.
  13. \_\_\_\_ Richard Wagner is considered Austria's "Great Composer."
  14. \_\_\_\_ Richard Wagner composed *Der Ring des Nibelungen* at age 12.
- 

**Essay:**

In the space below, explain one of the following in great detail:

1. The story of "Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg"
2. The story of "Der Ring des Nibelungen"

**Appendix H**  
**Unit Exam: Key**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Homeroom \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Multiple Choice:**

**Please select the correct answer by circling one letter in the questions below.**

1. Which country was Richard Wagner born in?

- e. Germany
- f. Austria
- g. Sweden
- h. Russia

2. The Ring Cycle is typically divided into sections. How many sections are there?

- e. Two
- f. Five
- g. Four
- h. Three**

3. Richard Wagner's Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg deals with what main activity?

- e. Greek Mythology
- f. Religion
- g. Singing contests**
- h. Feuding families

4. What is Valhalla?

- e. An angel.
- f. A home for the gods.**
- g. A weapon.
- h. The ring.

5. Which of the following is "NOT" an example of a "gold ring"?

- e. The government
- f. The mafia
- g. A Gang
- h. A Planet**

**True/False:**

**Mark a "T" for true or an "F" for false to the left of each statement.**

15.   F   Wagner was a composer in the 1600's.

16.   F   Richard Wagner invented the story of the ring cycle.

17.   T   "Music Drama" is a form of art where, along with the drama, the music helps to tell the story.

18.   T   Meistersinger means, "Master singer."

**Appendix G, page 2**  
**Unit Exam: Key**

19. F Richard Wagner's Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg has four acts.
20. F Operas rarely deal with great extremes in emotion.
21. T Richard Wagner's "Music Dramas" often dealt with the political issues of his time.
22. F Richard Wagner is considered Austria's "Great Composer."
23. F Richard Wagner composed Der Ring des Nibelungen at age 12.

---

**Essay:**

In the space below, explain one of the following in great detail:

1. The story of "Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg"
2. The story of "Der Ring des Nibelungen"

**See Appendices B or C**

**Appendix I**  
**Manuscript Paper**

The image displays ten sets of blank musical staves, arranged vertically. Each set consists of five parallel horizontal lines, providing a template for musical notation. The staves are evenly spaced and occupy the central portion of the page.