Some operas stir the soul. Some chill audiences to the bone. Some are bittersweet, and many are tragic. Don Pasquale is pure, unadulterated farce, set to music that’s sparkling, brainy, and jaw-droppingly demanding—and yet it touches on deeper levels of emotion that make it one of the great humane comedies in opera. Gaetano Donizetti’s tale of an old bachelor and the loved ones who trick him into doing the right thing feels as fresh as any recent movie or TV show, though it’s been charming music lovers for nearly 170 years.

Russian diva Anna Netrebko, previously seen in the Live in HD transmissions of Gounod’s romantic Roméo et Juliette, Offenbach’s fantastical Les Contes d’Hoffmann, and Donizetti’s own tragic Lucia di Lammermoor, now turns to comedy. As the wily Norina, she plays a practical joke on John Del Carlo’s puffed-up Don Pasquale; the plot is masterminded by Mariusz Kwiecien as the devious Malatesta, with help from Matthew Polenzani’s Ernesto. The Met’s Music Director James Levine is on the podium.

The opera’s straightforward story, the exhilarating freshness of its sounds, and the essential comedy of its basic premise all make Don Pasquale highly accessible to a young audience. The main Classroom Activity in this guide takes a look at the opera’s dramatic structure through the lens of the familiar contemporary analogue of the TV sitcom, to spark a discussion about comedy and the use of genre conventions in making art funny. Other activities offer an up-close look at the meticulous artistry with which Donizetti raises Don Pasquale from merely funny to hilarious, humane, and full of genuine feeling. By familiarizing students with the wit and rhythm of Don Pasquale, the guide can prepare students to watch carefully, think critically, and above all, laugh heartily at this Live in HD production.

What to expect from Don Pasquale

The Work:

Don Pasquale

Music by Gaetano Donizetti (1797–1848)
An opera in three acts, sung in Italian
Libretto by Giovanni Ruffini and the composer
First performed on January 3, 1843 at the Théâtre Italien, Paris, France

Production

James Levine, Conductor
Ottor Schenk, Production
Rolf Langenfass, Set and Costume Designer
Duane Schuler, Lighting Designer

Starring

Anna Netrebko (Norina)
Matthew Polenzani (Ernesto)
Mariusz Kwiecien (Malatesta)
John Del Carlo (Don Pasquale)

Production a gift of The Sybil B. Harrington Endowment Fund
Revival a gift of The Dr. M. Lee Pearce Foundation
The activities in this guide address several aspects of Don Pasquale:

- the opera as a model of timeless comedy conventions
- Donizetti’s witty musical depiction of dialogue
- comedy’s ability to convey serious cultural messages
- the universal significance of a story set in a specific era of the past
- the production as a unified work of art, involving creative decisions by the artists of the Metropolitan Opera

The guide is intended to cultivate students’ interest in Don Pasquale whether or not they have any prior acquaintance with opera. It includes activities for students with a wide range of musical backgrounds, seeking to encourage them to think about opera—and the performing arts in general—as a medium of entertainment and as creative expression.

ACT I

Scene 1: Don Pasquale’s home, somewhere in Rome, early one morning long ago. As the overture (Tracks 13, 15, 16, and 18) ends, Don Pasquale da Corneto, a wealthy old bachelor, is waiting for his doctor, Malatesta, who has promised to come with good news: he’s found a wife for Pasquale (Track 1). She’s a lovely, shy young woman—in fact, the doctor’s own sister, Sofronia. But when Malatesta arrives, we see him join in Pasquale’s excitement only to ridicule the old man under his breath. It turns out that Pasquale wants to marry out of spite. He would be ready to leave his entire estate to his nephew Ernesto, if only Ernesto would marry a rich woman. But the nephew has refused, professing his love for the beautiful young widow Norina. Now Pasquale wants to take a wife—and thereby get an heiress to keep Ernesto from inheriting his fortune. Ernesto, of course, is shocked to hear of his uncle’s intentions.

Scene 2: Norina’s home, not far away, a bit later the same morning. Norina, too, is waiting for Malatesta (Tracks 17 and 19–26), who is going to fill her in on a practical joke he’s playing. Meanwhile, she receives a sad letter from Ernesto. He is leaving Rome, disinherited by his uncle Pasquale, now that Malatesta has arranged Pasquale’s marriage. When the doctor arrives, he assures Norina that she and Ernesto have nothing to fear: Pasquale will not marry since there is no Sofronia. Malatesta has made up the whole story. He wants Norina to play the part of Pasquale’s bride. He explains that with his help and some training, Norina will drive Pasquale to desperation to eventually let her and Ernesto get married (Track 2).

ACT II

Pasquale’s home, midday. A disconsolate Ernesto leaves his uncle’s home, unaware of Malatesta’s plans, angry at the doctor for arranging his uncle’s marriage, and grieving the loss of Norina. Malatesta arrives, together with a gentle, demure, veiled woman, whom he introduces as his sister Sofronia. Pasquale is delighted by his bride, who, together with Malatesta, makes fun of him in asides. The doctor brings a notary and a wedding contract has been drawn up, when Ernesto returns, hoping to have a final word with his uncle. He is enlisted as a witness, much to his chagrin—until Malatesta quietly lets him in on the plot. The contract is sealed and, as planned, “Sofronia” instantly turns from a sweet convent girl into a nasty, insulting, controlling shrew, laughing all the way along with Ernesto (Tracks 3–4). She hires more servants, orders up a carriage and horses, announces plans to redecorate Pasquale’s house, and starts to arrange a lavish wedding. In short, she drives Pasquale to comic fury.

ACT III

Scene 1: Pasquale’s home, that afternoon. Merchants and tradespeople come and go in the redecorated parlor, as Pasquale counts his mounting bills. “Sofronia” enters on her way to the theater. Pasquale forbids her to go but she won’t be hindered and slaps him. Pasquale, by now a broken man, permits her to leave, but warns that if she does, he will not allow her back into his house (Tracks 5–7). “Sofronia” insists she
The guide includes four types of activities. Reproducible student resources for the activities are available at the back of this guide.

**CLASSEm ACTIVITY:** a full-length activity, designed to support your ongoing curriculum

**MUSICAL HIGHLIGHTS:** opportunities to focus on excerpts from Don Pasquale to enhance familiarity with the work

**PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES:** to be used during The Met: Live in HD transmission, calling attention to specific aspects of this production

**POST-SHOW DISCUSSION:** a wrap-up activity, integrating the Live in HD experience into students’ views of the performing arts and humanities

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Norina’s home, Act I, Scene 2
PHOTO: MARTY SOHL / METROPOLITAN OPERA
W ho' S W ho in don pasquale
will return. He responds that he’ll divorce her if she leaves—but she does, anyway. When she has gone, Pasquale comes upon a letter apparently sent to her by a lover whom she intends to meet that very evening in Pasquale’s garden. Now angrier than ever, the old man conceives a plan of his own. He heads out to send for Malatesta (not knowing the doctor is in on the trick). With Malatesta’s help, Pasquale believes, he will nip Sofronia’s affair in the bud.

With their master away, the staff in Pasquale’s house gossip about him and his new bride. Malatesta shows up with Ernesto, who agrees to play the part of Sofronia’s secret lover. Ernesto leaves and Pasquale returns to fill the doctor in on the letter from his wife’s lover. Malatesta plays along and agrees to help Pasquale catch the duplicitous Sofronia redhanded. That way, Pasquale figures, he can end his disastrous engagement (tracks 11–12).

Scene 2: The garden of Pasquale’s home, late afternoon. Ernesto and Norina, waiting in the garden to play their parts, declare their love (track 14). Ernesto hides as Pasquale and Malatesta arrive. Confronted by Pasquale, “Sofronia” denies having a lover. She insists on returning to her “home.” Pasquale rebuffs her. Tomorrow, he says, the new lady of the house will arrive: the wife of his nephew Ernesto! He is returning to his original intention. He will let Ernesto inherit his fortune after all, even if his nephew chooses to marry Norina. That should get Sofronia out of his life. But she refuses to leave until Pasquale can prove that Ernesto and Norina have really married.

Malatesta now reveals the truth: he calls Ernesto out from his hiding place, unmasks “Sofronia,” and wins for the couple not only Pasquale’s blessings on their marriage, but a large annual stipend of money (track 8). Embarrassed but grateful, the old bachelor Pasquale has learned to act his age (tracks 9–10).

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR For a quarter of a century, Metropolitan Opera audiences have known Otto Schenk as the creative force behind the Met’s epic production of Richard Wagner’s Ring cycle (among many other operas he has staged for the Met). But in his native Austria, Schenk also has long been recognized as a deft comic actor. When he turned those comedic talents toward Donizetti’s effervescent Don Pasquale, the New York Times called the result “brilliant,” “insightful,” and “wonderful.” “Mr. Schenk,” said the Times, “prods us to see this work in a provocatively new way.”

Schenk has proved time and again that a classic setting can be as thrilling and as contemporary as any music video. For this, his valedictory production at the Met, the 80-year-old director created a Don Pasquale that hilariously spans the generation gap. Pasquale himself moves with utmost seriousness of purpose through a comic bedlam that is, in the end, of his own making. Schenk imbues the old bachelor with honest feeling, unearthing not only the humor but also the humanity in Donizetti’s score. Add a hefty helping of physical comedy, and this 1843 comic opera feels like a TV sitcom. As the Times wrote, “the only way to make a rich comedy truly funny is to take it seriously.” It’s hard to conceive of a director more prepared to meet that standard than the indefatigable Otto Schenk.

**CHARACTER**
- **Don Pasquale:** An elderly bachelor  
  **Voice Type:** bass  
  **The Lowdown:** Old Pasquale is wealthy, stubborn, and vain.
- **Dr. Malatesta:** Pasquale’s physician and advisor  
  **Voice Type:** baritone  
  **The Lowdown:** Malatesta is the mastermind of the practical joke at the heart of the opera—tricking Pasquale into thinking he has found a young bride.
- **Ernesto:** Pasquale’s nephew  
  **Voice Type:** tenor  
  **The Lowdown:** Pasquale won’t leave Ernesto his fortune if Ernesto marries his beloved Norina. Malatesta’s scheme is meant to fix that.
- **Norina:** A young widow, in love with Ernesto  
  **Voice Type:** soprano  
  **The Lowdown:** Norina loves Ernesto but she plays the part of “Sofronia,” a woman in search of a husband, in order to trick Pasquale.
- **Carlino:** Malatesta’s cousin, a notary  
  **Voice Type:** bass

**VOICE TYPE**
- **Soprano:** the highest-pitched general type of human voice, normally possessed only by women and boys
- **Mezzo-soprano:** the female voice whose range lies between the soprano and the contralto (Italian “mezzo” = middle, medium)
- **Contralto:** the lowest female voice, also called an alto
- **Tenor:** the highest naturally occurring voice type in adult males
- **Baritone:** the male voice lying below the tenor and above the bass
- **Bass:** the lowest sounding male voice

**PRONUNCIATION GUIDE**
- **Pasquale:** “pahss-KWAHL-ay”
- **Malatesta:** “mah-lah-TEST-ah”
- **Ernesto:** “ehr-NEST-oh”
- **Norina:** “no-REE-nah”
- **Sofronia:** “so-FRO-nee-ah”
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Comedic Blueprint: A Close Look at Comedic Structure

Don Pasquale is one of those operatic masterworks that require little introduction. Students may not be familiar with this work in particular, but they'll recognize its format right away. With a comically flawed central character and a supporting cast determined to teach him a lesson, Donizetti's tale follows a timeless set of genre conventions. In this Classroom Activity, students will study those conventions and the effectiveness of their application in this opera. They will:

• be introduced to a set of categories for analyzing situation comedy
• listen closely to excerpts demonstrating the elements of sitcom in Don Pasquale
• identify qualities in music and libretto that support character-driven and situational humor
• apply their understandings by developing their own situation comedy plots

STEPS

There may be no single literary or dramatic form as familiar to young people in the 21st century as the TV sitcom. Familiarity however doesn't necessarily equal insight into its structure. Students may recognize Don Pasquale, with its self-deceiving old bachelor and his tricky but well-meaning associates, as a situation comedy, but nonetheless lack the analytical categories and critical thinking skills to explain what makes this sitcom tick. This activity offers one approach to analyzing situation comedy, applies it to Don Pasquale, then invites students to create their own comedies using the model.

Step 1: Introduce the topic of Donizetti’s Don Pasquale, an opera about an old bachelor who decides he’s going to find a young bride. Ask your students what kind of a story this sounds like.

• Might it be sad?
• Inspiring?
• Funny?

What do students think the differences might be between these three different approaches to the same basic situation? For instance,

• Might the story show the old man being rejected and heartbroken again and again?
• Might the old man and the young woman find they have many things in common—and even more to learn from each other?
• Might it present the old man up as ridiculous for wanting something that he no longer should hope for?

Note that there are no right or wrong answers here. The point is to generate student observations about the effects creative decisions and conventions can have on dramatic genres.

Step 2: Introduce the term “situation comedy” or “sitcom.” Give students the opportunity to develop a definition of the term, based on their own viewing experiences.

TIP

Have students think about the TV shows they watch or are familiar with. Which would they identify as sitcoms? Why? (See the sidebar: Comedic Situations)

Step 3: Review the basic plot and characters of Don Pasquale, writing the key, bold-faced terms on the board: A foolish old man decides to find a young bride. His tricky friend wants to teach him a lesson, so he arranges for a clever young woman to pretend to agree to marry the old man, then make his life miserable. The plot is made a bit thicker by the fact that the young woman is actually engaged to a young man, the old man’s nephew, and they’re going to use the trick to get his blessing for their marriage.

You may want to distribute copies of the synopsis provided in this guide, then discuss it to lay stress on the bold-faced terms.

Step 4: Pose the following questions for students to think about:

• Could you develop a comedy with the same characters in different roles?
• Might the young woman want to teach the young man a lesson?
• Might the old man want to teach his tricky friend a lesson?
• How is it possible that you could switch things around and still have a comedy?

Step 5: Introduce a set of terms for describing the phases in the plot of a sitcom:

• the set-up: introducing the audience to the “situation” that gives context to the comedy
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• the plan in action: the heart of the comedy
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TIP
You may want to distribute copies of the synopsis provided in this guide, then discuss it to lay stress on the bold-faced terms.
• the climax: a turning point, often when the main character understands what’s happening.
• the resolution: assuring the audience that good will has been re-established at the end of the comedy.

The next part of the class will use Don Pasquale to demonstrate how these phases work together.

**Step 6: Distribute the reproducible activity sheets for Comedic Blueprint (pages 19–24), which provide texts and translations for Tracks 1 through 10. These tracks present moments in Don Pasquale corresponding to the sitcom structure presented above. Play the tracks one at a time, and invite the students to comment. They should be as specific as possible in identifying qualities in the music, in the sound of the Italian dialogue, and in the meaning, that give each scene its particular effect.**

**LISTENING/DISCUSSION GUIDES**

**THE SET-UP [TRACK 1]**

First things first. A situation comedy needs a situation. The writer needs to create a context for the events to follow. From the very start of Don Pasquale, it’s obvious to the audience that the old bachelor feels like he has a new lease on life because he’s going to get married. Donizetti’s music moves quickly in short bursts—conveying Don Pasquale’s newfound energy. The libretto raises the stakes by letting us hear exactly how he imagines his life changing for the better.

**THE PLAN [TRACK 2]**

Generally, situation comedies let the audience in on the plan ahead of time. This helps to build anticipation: we know something Don Pasquale doesn’t. We can imagine what will happen to him once the action gets underway.

It’s fun to be in on the plan, but the excerpt contained in Track 2 is also entertaining in and of itself. The musical exchange between Norina and Malatesta is snappy and energetic, as the two figure out exactly how Norina should act in the part of Sofronia. The rhyme scheme adds an extra dose of merriment. By contrast, students can imagine how this scene would play if the music were spooky and ominous—if it suggested that the pair really intended to harm Don Pasquale.

**THE PLAN IN ACTION [TRACKS 3, 4, 7]**

The heart of any situation comedy is watching the plot unfold. Without the context of a set-up and plan, some of these events might be upsetting in the extreme. But we can laugh because we know it’s all a charade. Knowing the plan takes the sting out of the plan in action.

In the case of Don Pasquale, this double-edged phase of comedy involves Norina acting the part of Sofronia and Don Pasquale bearing the burden. Tracks 3 and 4 present an exchange between “Sofronia” and her new husband moments after the wedding contract has been signed. The tracks have been split so students can appreciate the rapid—and therefore comic—change in musical styles.

It’s possible to imagine Track 3 as a very serious argument between “Sofronia” and Pasquale. Tension and a genuine sense of jeopardy can play a part in comedy, largely because they create the possibility of release and comic relief.

Norina’s dramatic bel canto flourishes at the end of Track 3 instantly give way to the jolly, over-the-top continuation of her demands in Track 4. Her words are no less scornful and shrill, but in Track 4, Donizetti sets them to music that lets the audience giggle both at her exaggeration and at the effect it must be having on Pasquale.

That effect is heard most dramatically in Track 5, as Don Pasquale bemoans his fate. Donizetti’s music here is genuinely sad, with hardly any humor in evidence.

At this point, even Norina experiences a moment of regret (Track 6). All of a sudden, she—and the audience—empathize with Pasquale. Donizetti doesn’t want the audience to miss this character turn, so, although both of the characters are talking to themselves, he combines their thoughts in one soaring line.

While it’s not unusual for heartbreak to peek through the surface of comedy, Donizetti knows how to artfully pull the audience right back into a lighter mood, as he does in Track 7. Norina snaps back into snippy character, and Don Pasquale pulls himself together with the bold response that will begin the last round of action: he’s not going to let her back into the house.

**COMEDIC SITUATION:** Situation comedies, or sitcoms, are among the most common of TV shows, yet many students may not ever have thought about them. The essence of a sitcom is a cast of characters in a clearly defined set of relationships—for instance, the group of friends in Seinfeld or Friends, the workplace companions in The Office or Scrubs, or the married couples in shows like Everyone Loves Raymond and I Love Lucy. Viewers get to know the characters’ personalities and the ways they relate to one another. The humor emerges from variations on the themes of the ongoing situation.

TV sitcoms are far from being the first genre of comedy to depend on a set of related characters. The Punch and Judy puppet shows of 17th-century England involved stock characters in standard situations. So did the commedia dell’arte (comedy of art) of the European Renaissance. In fact, some of the basic commedia dell’arte characters resemble characters in Don Pasquale: Pasquale is recognizable as the blustery Pantalone, Ernesto as the lovesick Pierrot, Malatesta as the scheming Scapino, and Norina as a wily Columbina. Like Don Pasquale, the plots of commedia dell’arte often began with a situation in which someone or something gets in the way of the lovers. Donizetti’s opera plainly holds a place in a longstanding tradition of comedy—one that students can see unfold every day on television.
• the climax: a turning point, often when the main character understands what's happening.
• the resolution: assuring the audience that good will has been re-established at the end of the comedy.

The next part of the class will use Don Pasquale to demonstrate how these phases work together.

**Step 6:** Distribute the reproducible activity sheets for Comedic Blueprint (pages 19–24), which provide texts and translations for Tracks 1 through 10. These tracks present moments in Don Pasquale corresponding to the sitcom structure presented above. Play the tracks one at a time, and invite the students to comment. They should be as specific as possible in identifying qualities in the music, in the sound of the Italian dialogue, and in the meaning, that give each scene its particular effect.

**LISTENING/DISCUSSION GUIDES**

**THE SET-UP (TRACK 1)**

First things first. A situation comedy needs a situation. The writer needs to create a context for the events to follow. From the very start of Don Pasquale, it’s obvious to the audience that the old bachelor feels like he has a new lease on life because he’s going to get married. Donizetti’s music moves quickly in short bursts—conveying Don Pasquale’s newfound energy. The libretto raises the stakes by letting us hear exactly how he imagines his life changing for the better.

**THE PLAN (TRACK 2)**

Generally, situation comedies let the audience in on the plan ahead of time. This helps to build anticipation: we know something Don Pasquale doesn’t. We can imagine what will happen to him once the action gets underway.

It’s fun to be in on the plan, but the excerpt contained in Track 2 is also entertaining in and of itself. The musical exchange between Norina and Malatesta is snappy and energetic, as the two figure out exactly how Norina should act in the part of Sofronia. The rhyme scheme adds an extra dose of merriment. By contrast, students can imagine how this scene would play if the music were spooky and ominous—if it suggested that the pair really intended to harm Don Pasquale.

**THE PLAN IN ACTION (TRACKS 3-7)**

The heart of any situation comedy is watching the plot unfold. Without the context of a set-up and plan, some of these events might be upsetting in the extreme. But acting the part of Sofronia and Don Pasquale bearing the burden. Tracks 3 and 4 present an exchange between “Sofronia” and her new husband moments after the wedding contract has been signed. The tracks have been split so students can appreciate the rapid—and therefore comic—change in musical styles.

It’s possible to imagine Track 3 as a very serious argument between “Sofronia” and Pasquale. Tension and a genuine sense of jeopardy can play a part in comedy, largely because they create the possibility of release and comic relief.

Norina’s dramatic bel canto flourishes at the end of Track 3 instantly give way to the jolly, over-the-top continuation of her demands in Track 4. Her words are no less scornful and shrewish, but in Track 4, Donizetti sets them to music that lets the audience giggle both at her exaggeration and at the effect it must be having on Pasquale.

That effect is heard most dramatically in Track 5 as Don Pasquale bemoans his fate. Donizetti’s music here is genuinely sad, with hardly any humor in evidence. At this point, even Norina experiences a moment of regret (Track 6). All of a sudden, she—and the audience—empathize with Pasquale. Donizetti doesn’t want the audience to miss this character turn, so, although both of the characters are less scornful and shrewish, but in Track 4, Donizetti sets them to music that lets the audience giggle both at her exaggeration and at the effect it must be having on Pasquale.

While it’s not unusual for heartbreak to peek through the surface of comedy, Donizetti knows how to artfully pull the audience right back into a lighter mood, as he does in Track 7. Norina snaps back into snippy character, and Don Pasquale pulls himself together with the bold response that will begin the last round of action: he’s not going to let her back into the house.

**COMEDIC SITUATION:** Situation comedies, or sitcoms, are among the most common of TV shows, yet many students may not ever have thought about them. The essence of a sitcom is a cast of characters in a clearly defined set of relationships—for instance, the group of friends in Seinfeld or Friends, the workplace companions in The Office or Scrubs, or the married couples in shows like Everyone Loves Raymond and I Love Lucy. Viewers get to know the characters’ personalities and the ways they relate to one another. The humor emerges from variations on the themes of the ongoing situation.

TV sitcoms are far from being the first genre of comedy to depend on a set of related characters. The Punch and Judy puppet shows of 17th-century England involved stock characters in standard situations. So did the commedia dell’arte (comedy of art) of the European Renaissance. In fact, some of the basic commedia dell’arte characters resemble characters in Don Pasquale: Pasquale is recognizable as the blustery Pantalone, Ernesto as the lovesick Pierrot, Malatesta as the scheming Scapino, and Norina as a wily Columbina. Like Don Pasquale, the plots of commedia dell’arte often began with a situation in which someone or something gets in the way of the lovers. Donizetti’s opera plainly holds a place in a longstanding tradition of comedy—one that students can see unfold every day on television.
Just like any serious drama, every comedy has a turning point: the moment where things become clear, where the characters are undeceived. The moment is gener-
ally humorous in itself, because it puts the main character’s comic embarrassment
on display. In Don Pasquale, it comes when Malatesta reveals Sofronia’s true identity.
Pasquale has already agreed to let Ernesto and Norina marry, in order to rid himself
of his “wife”; in the music heard in Track 8, he learns exactly what that means.
Malatesta reveals the truth with the line “Norina è questa”—“this is Norina.” It
couldn’t be more straightforward, but it gains a merry air by rhyming with the earlier
“presta” (“right here”). This moment of revelation could be unpleasant for Pasquale,
except that Donizetti unleashes the same kind of peppy back-and-forth we heard in
Track 2. Notice that Donizetti and his librettist, Ruffini, don’t let the old fellow catch
on right away. The delay gives the audience a chance to relish the moment, which
they’ve been expecting for nearly two hours. The bouncing melody allows them to
enjoy what might otherwise be a humiliating moment for Pasquale.

It isn’t enough for Don Pasquale to accept the truth. For situation comedy to work, the
audience needs to know he’s comfortable with it—that good will has been restored
among the characters. This is the function of the music heard in Tracks 9 and 10.
Norina provides the comic moral in Track 9, in magnificent, if slightly parodic, bel
canto style. More importantly, Pasquale endorses the moral in Track 10, singing in
perfect harmony with Malatesta, who caused him so much trouble. All is forgiven,
something is learned, and the comedy is complete.

PATTERN SINGING:
A Close Look at Donizetti’s Comic Dialogue

One of the delights of Don Pasquale is Donizetti’s technique of setting two charac-
ters talking simultaneously in a precise, rhythmic chatter that both elucidates their
feelings and delights the ear. The opera world calls this parlando, Italian for speaking,
or “patter singing”—it may even remind your students of contemporary hip-hop.

One such sequence occurs in the middle of Act III. After Don Pasquale has reached
the breaking point in his feelings about Sofronia, he enlists Malatesta in a plan of his
own—to sneak into the garden and catch her redhanded with her lover. Malatesta,
of course, knows that Sofronia is Norina and that there is no phantom lover, only
Ernesto. Still, he plays along, helping Pasquale refine his plan until it suits both their
purposes.

Track 11 presents the culmination of this dialogue, giving students a taste of
parlando. Don Pasquale and Malatesta take careful aim, then jump in, six beats to
the measure, two syllables per beat, skittering along, each on a single note, while
the orchestra carries the melodic waltz underneath.

Track 12 takes the scene to its logical conclusion, as both men burst into laughter
at their own cleverness before pulling themselves up to a big bel canto finish.

After listening, students may enjoy composing their own rhymes, individually or in
pairs like Pasquale and Malatesta.
THE CLIMAX (TRACK 8)
Just like any serious drama, every comedy has a turning point: the moment where things become clear, where the characters are undeceived. The moment is generally humorous in itself, because it puts the main character’s comic embarrassment on display. In Don Pasquale, it comes when Malatesta reveals Sofronia’s true identity. Pasquale has already agreed to let Ernesto and Norina marry, in order to rid himself of his “wife”; in the music heard in Track 8, he learns exactly what that means.
Malatesta reveals the truth with the line “Norina è questa”—“this is Norina.” It couldn’t be more straightforward, but it gains a merry air by rhyming with the earlier “presta” (“right here”). This moment of revelation could be unpleasant for Pasquale, except that Donizetti unleashes the same kind of peppy back-and-forth we heard in track 2. Notice that Donizetti and his librettist, Ruffini, don’t let the old fellow catch on right away. The delay gives the audience a chance to relish the moment, which they’ve been expecting for nearly two hours. The bouncing melody allows them to enjoy what might otherwise be a humiliating moment for Pasquale.

THE RESOLUTION (TRACKS 9 AND 10)
It isn’t enough for Don Pasquale to accept the truth. For situation comedy to work, the audience needs to know he’s comfortable with it—that good will has been restored among the characters. This is the function of the music heard in Tracks 9 and 10. Norina provides the comic moral in Track 9, in magnificent, if slightly parodic, bel canto style. More importantly, Pasquale endorses the moral in Track 10, singing in perfect harmony with Malatesta, who caused him so much trouble. All is forgiven, something is learned, and the comedy is complete.

FOLLOW-UP: For homework, students may enjoy creating their own variations on the Don Pasquale situation-comedy formula. Using the set of character types outlined in Step 3, they can invent a situation and decide which character should be “taught a lesson,” as well as what roles the others will play. Then they should sketch out the five phases of their sitcom plot, using the model discussed in Steps 5 and 6.

As an alternate assignment, students can watch video recordings of one favorite sitcom, identify the ongoing traits of the main characters, then analyze the plot of one episode, using the model discussed in Steps 5 and 6.

Patter Singing:
A Close Look at Donizetti’s Comic Dialogue

One of the delights of Don Pasquale is Donizetti’s technique of setting two characters talking simultaneously in a precise, rhythmic chatter that both elucidates their feelings and delights the ear. The opera world calls this parlando, Italian for speaking, or “patter singing”—it may even remind your students of contemporary hip-hop.

One such sequence occurs in the middle of Act III. After Don Pasquale has reached the breaking point in his feelings about Sofronia, he enlists Malatesta in a plan of his own—to sneak into the garden and catch her redhanded with her lover. Malatesta, of course, knows that Sofronia is Norina and that there is no phantom lover, only Ernesto. Still, he plays along, helping Pasquale refine his plan until it suits both their purposes.

Track 11 presents the culmination of this dialogue, giving students a taste of parlando. Don Pasquale and Malatesta take careful aim, then jump in, six beats to the measure, two syllables per beat, skittering along, each on a single note, while the orchestra carries the melodic waltz underneath.

Track 12 takes the scene to its logical conclusion, as both men burst into laughter at their own cleverness before pulling themselves up to a big bel canto finish.

After listening, students may enjoy composing their own rhymes, individually or in pairs like Pasquale and Malatesta.

MUSICAL HIGHLIGHTS ARE BRIEF OPPORTUNITIES TO:
• help students make sense of opera
• whet their interest in upcoming transmissions of The Met: Live in HD
Each focuses on audio selections from Don Pasquale available online at metopera.org/education or on the accompanying CD. Texts and translations are available in the back of this guide.

These “mini-lessons” will in practice take up no more than a few minutes of class time. They’re designed to help you bring opera into your classroom while minimizing interruption of your ongoing curriculum. Feel free to use as many as you like.
Secret Messages: A Close Look at the Don Pasquale Overture

Don Pasquale is a generally jovial affair, but you might not know it from the first notes of its overture. After a brief, busy start, most of the orchestra steps back to let a lone cello sing a sweetly heartbreaking tune (Track 13). This melody is associated not with Pasquale himself, but with his nephew, Ernesto. We hear it again late in Act III (Track 14): it’s the love song Ernesto sings with Norina.

Why would the overture begin with Ernesto’s sadness? Could Donizetti be reminding audiences of the offstage moment when Pasquale rejected Ernesto’s intention to marry the young, poor Norina?

More clues follow. The wind section picks up the cello’s melody, albeit in a livelier, more hopeful treatment (Track 15). What might give poor Ernesto this touch of pep?

Track 16 offers an orchestral bridge with the feeling of a grand introduction. To guess who’s on the other side, listen first to Track 17, from the middle of Act I, then to Track 18, the overture’s second theme. It’s Norina who has brightened Ernesto’s day!

The tracks presenting the beginning of the overture in proper sequence are 13, 15, 16, and 18.

Students might wonder why the overture’s two melodic themes are associated with the lovers and not Don Pasquale. What secret message might Donizetti have been sending about his own sense of what this opera is about?

Lessons Not In Books: A Listening Guide to Norina’s Aria

Anyone who thinks the concept that you shouldn’t believe everything you see, hear, or read, is a new idea hasn’t experienced Don Pasquale. At the beginning of Act I, Scene 2, we meet a young woman who we soon will learn is Norina. She is reading a book. With that book as a touch point, Donizetti and Ruffini turn the traditional cavatina–cabaletta double aria form into a lesson in exactly why you shouldn’t believe everything you read with “So anch’io la virtù magica”—“I also know the magic power.”

The cavatina is traditionally a slow, thoughtful piece in which a character expresses his or her feelings. The style is well suited to Norina’s activity here, reading a tale of chivalry and passion (Track 19). What does Norina make of this storybook romance? Students can hear her wordless response in Track 20: derisive laughter. Norina has her own ideas, flawlessly expressed in the cabaletta, the traditionally lilting second part of a double aria. The faster-paced cabaletta might reflect a character’s joy after hearing good news, enthusiasm about an action he or she is about to take, or resolve in making a decision. In Norina’s case, the cabaletta is an expression of pure self-confidence.

And Mosso

Anna Netrebko as Norina

Photo: Marty Sohl/Metropolitan Opera

Fun Fact: The original libretto of Don Pasquale was written by Giovanni Ruffini. But Donizetti himself made so many changes to it that Ruffini insisted the Parisian producers take his name off the program at the premiere.
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The cello solo in the Don Pasquale overture

Anna Netrebko as Norina
PHOTO: MARTY SOHL/METROPOLITAN OPERA

Fun Fact: The original libretto of Don Pasquale was written by Giovanni Ruffini. But Donizetti himself made so many changes to it that Ruffini insisted the Parisian producers take his name off the program at the premiere.
Norina’s cabaletta has been broken into six successive tracks so students can catch the subtleties of characterization Donizetti wrote into the song. **Track 21** opens with the gentle tune heard as a theme in the overture (see Musical Highlight: Secret Messages). As Norina chants her catalogue of feminine wiles, she knowingly stretches the reference to love’s “lento fuoco”—its slow-burning fire. She switches moods rapidly from a little smile (“un breve sorrisetto”), to crocodile tears, to “un subito languor”—sudden indifference. But in **Track 22** she slows down a bit, becoming appropriately more serious as she sings about the heartless use of romantic trickery “per adescare un cor”—to lure in a heart.

In **Track 23** Norina returns with relish to her list of effective facial expressions. The word “l’effetto” (effect, or effectiveness) is garnished with a crescendo—a measured increase in volume; then Norina repeats “conosco” (“I know”), both times with crescendos, as if to assure us that she does indeed know, before coming back to that “subito languor.”

In **Track 24** with audible excitement, she summarizes her thoughts. Here, however, she introduces a new phrase, her first reference to feeling, rather than mere conquest: “per ispirare amor” (“to inspire love”). The idea seems to sound right to her, as she exclaims “si” (“yes”). She bursts into a song of pure feeling, perhaps even personal pleasure.

But Norina isn’t done yet. In **Track 25** she turns self-reflective. “I have a strange head,” she sings, with idiosyncratic shifts in emphasis and a new, quirkier rhythm. (Her strongly stressed “mi piace”—“I like!”—is worth noting.) She doesn’t just admit to mood swings; she enacts them in song. But there’s no insecurity here, as we hear in the decisive way she repeats “testa bizzarra” (“strange head”), balances it with “cuore eccellente” (“excellent heart”), then lets forth another self-satisfied trill, as the orchestra dances away.

At last, catching up with the orchestra, Norina begins a richly ornamented reprise of the entire cabaletta (**Track 26**). Appropriately, the aria that began with Norina’s rejection of romance-novel clichés concludes with elaborately ornamented repetitions of the phrase “mi piace scherzar”—“I love to kid around.” This first encounter with Norina leaves listeners with no doubt about that.

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**Supporting Students During**

**The Met: Live in HD Transmission**

Thanks to print and audio recording, much about opera can be enjoyed long before a performance. But performance itself brings vital layers of sound and color, pageantry and technology, drama, skill, and craft. Performance activities are designed to help students tease apart different aspects of the experience, consider creative choices that have been made, and sharpen their own critical faculties.

Each Performance Activity incorporates a reproducible activity sheet. Students bring the activity sheet to the transmission to fill out during intermission and/or after the final curtain. The activities direct attention to characteristics of the production that might otherwise go unnoticed.

Ratings matrices invite students to express their critique: use these ratings to spark discussions that call upon careful, critical thinking.

The basic activity sheet is called My Highs & Lows. Meant to be collected, opera by opera, over the course of the season, this sheet points students toward a consistent set of objects of observation. Its purposes are not only to help students articulate and express their opinions, but to support comparison and contrast, enriching understanding of the art form as a whole.

For **Don Pasquale**, the other activity sheet, Extreme Makeover, directs students’ attention to the classic set design of this *Live in HD* production.

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IN PREPARATION
This activity requires no preparation other than attendance at The Met: Live in HD transmission of Don Pasquale.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS
Social Studies/Global cultures

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
• to identify similarities and differences in the ways different cultures express the same purpose
• to explore the effects of cultural difference on an observer from outside the culture
• to assess the extent to which a creator can legitimately control interpretations of his or her work

The Wrong Trousers?
A Discussion of Set and Costumes

Students will enjoy starting the class with an open discussion of the Met performance. What did they like? What didn’t they? Did anything surprise them? What would they like to see or hear again? What would they have done differently? This discussion will offer students an opportunity to review the notes on their My Highs & Lows sheet, as well as their thoughts about the set design in this Met production—in short, to see themselves as Don Pasquale experts.

In the Extreme Makeover Performance Activity for Don Pasquale, students paid close attention to Rolf Langenfass’s design for this production. The set and costumes place the production in a 19th-century European setting, the era when the opera was written and in which it is traditionally set. But much against Donizetti’s will, its first production in 1843 was set in the 18th century. The composer argued against dressing his singers in powdered wigs and velvet waistcoats. Not only did he feel that his characters should dress in contemporary, 19th-century outfits, but he insisted that the 18th-century style was ill-suited to the music he’d written.

Today’s students might not have a strong sense of the difference in dress and décor between the 18th and 19th century. To get a sense of costumes throughout the ages, have students conduct some online research. A useful place to begin is the Metropolitan Museum’s Costume Institute Web site. As they assemble images, students may enjoy creating a display, such as a bulletin board, a Web site, or a hard-copy booklet, comparing the look of various time periods, for instance the 1700s, 1800s, and 1900s.

Donizetti lost the argument over set and costume design—but do your students think he had a point?

• Do old-fashioned costumes undermine Donizetti’s intentions? Why or why not?
• What about current-day productions? If Donizetti were still alive, do students think he would still want the opera to be set in the 19th century or something more contemporary?
• What about changing the setting completely—perhaps to the Roaring 1920s, the Wild West, or the 21st century?

Students can express their opinions in persuasive essays. As evidence, they can use the images they’ve found, together with their recollections of the performance.

Issues to consider include:
• How do costume and set design affect an audience’s experience at the opera?
• Should the composer always have the last word on how his work should be presented?
• On the other hand, should the artists assembled for a production, including the director, the costume and set designers, and the conductor, be free to interpret and present an opera as they see fit?
• If Donizetti did deserve the last word, should a 21st-century production of Don Pasquale be staged in contemporary dress?
• Ultimately, all these aspects amount to a single question: How universal is the story of Don Pasquale? Is it entirely specific to the culture of Europe in 1843? How might it translate to another time and place?

Fun Fact: Legend has it that Donizetti wrote Don Pasquale in only two weeks. In fact, it wasn’t that quick, but the opera did premiere less than three months after he first put pen to paper, in October 1843.
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Costume sketch by Rolf Langenfass for Dr. Malatesta
Here you’ll find reproducibles of the activity sheets and resource pages for each Don Pasquale activity. Feel free to print these out and distribute them in your classroom.

My Highs & Lows and Extreme Makeover are activity sheets to be used during The Met: Live in HD transmission. The latter is designed to focus student attention during the transmission and to support your post-transmission classroom work. My Highs & Lows is a collectible prompting closer attention to specific aspects of the opera. Use it to spark students’ critical thinking about the production they’ve seen. You may also want to provide copies of My Highs & Lows to friends, family, and other members of the community attending the transmission.

The Set-Up

TRACK 1 (ACT I)

DON PASQUALE: I feel an unusual fire inside, I can’t resist it anymore. At an old age, I forget my infirmities and I feel as young as a 20-year old. Ha! A dear, spunky, sweet little wife! Then I see half a dozen kids born, growing up, playing all around me.

Un fuoco insolito mi sento addosso, ormai resistere io più non posso. Dell’età vecchia scordo i malanni, mi sento giovine come a vent’anni. Deh! cara, affrettati, dolce sposina! Ecco di bamboli mezza dozzina, veggo già nascere, veggo già crescere, a me d’intorno veggo scherzar.

As you listen along, write your comments/notes below. Be as specific as possible in identifying qualities in the music, in the sound of the Italian dialogue, and in the meaning, that gives this scene its particular effect.

Music

Dialogue

Overall meaning and effect of scene
Here you’ll find reproducibles of the activity sheets and resource pages for each Don Pasquale activity. Feel free to print these out and distribute them in your classroom.

My Highs & Lows and Extreme Makeover are activity sheets to be used during The Met: Live in HD transmission. The latter is designed to focus student attention during the transmission and to support your post-transmission classroom work. My Highs & Lows is a collectible prompting closer attention to specific aspects of the opera. Use it to spark students’ critical thinking about the production they’ve seen. You may also want to provide copies of My Highs & Lows to friends, family, and other members of the community attending the transmission.

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**Music**

**Dialogue**

**Overall meaning and effect of scene**
### The Plan

#### TRACK 2 (ACT I)

**NORINA:** I get it. I’ll now take on the task.

**MALATESTA:** Now I’ll teach you to play the part.

**NORINA:** Do you want me to be proud?

**MALATESTA:** No.

**NORINA:** Do you want me to be sad?

**MALATESTA:** No, that’s not the part.

**NORINA:** Do I cry?

**MALATESTA:** No.

**NORINA:** Or yell?

**MALATESTA:** No, that’s not the part.

**NORINA:** Hold still a minute and listen. It’s better to be simple.

**MALATESTA:**-neck twisted, tight mouth-

**NORINA:** (with biting emotion)

I’m ashamed that I’m an old maid.

**MALATESTA:** Great! Great, you little rascal! That’ll be terrific.

---

### The Plan in Action

#### TRACK 3 (ACT II)

**NORINA:** A man as decrepit, heavy, and fat as you cannot decently guide a young woman. I need an escort.

(She points to Ernesto.)

He’ll be my knight!

**DON PASQUALE:** Oh, that—excuse me—that cannot be.

**NORINA:** Cannot be? Why?

**DON PASQUALE:** Because I don’t want it.

**NORINA:** You don’t want it?

**DON PASQUALE:** No.

**NORINA:** My darling, I beg you, forget that word.

---

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</table>
The Plan in Action (continued)

**TRACK 5 (ACT III)**

**DON PASQUALE:** Ah! It's all over, Don Pasquale. You've really blown it this time! Nothing is left for you but to go and drown yourself.

**TRACk 6**

**NORINA:** It's a tough lesson, but we want it to work. We have to make sure the project succeeds.

**NORINA:** I'm leaving then.

**DON PASQUALE:** Fine then, leave. But don't ever come back.

**TRACK 7**

**NORINA:** I'm leaving then.

**DON PASQUALE:** Fine then, leave. But don't ever come back.

**TRACk 8 (ACT III)**

**DON PASQUALE:** Run and get Norina, and I'll marry you right now.

**MALATESTA:** You needn't go far. The bride is here.

**DON PASQUALE:** What? Explain yourself!

**MALATESTA:** This is Norina.

**DON PASQUALE:** This? Norina? I'm betrayed! And Sofronia?

**MALATESTA:** Still in the convent.

**DON PASQUALE:** And the wedding?

**MALATESTA:** I had the idea of using an open net as a way of closing the trap over you. The rest of the little story isn't clear.

**DON PASQUALE:** Ah, you tricksters! (It can't be true! I'm thanking Heaven) To deceive me like that! You deserve...

---

As you listen along, write your comments/notes below. Be as specific as possible in identifying qualities in the music, in the sound of the Italian dialogue, and in the meaning, that gives this scene its particular effect.

**Music**

**Dialogue**

**Overall meaning and effect of scene**

---

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**Music**

**Dialogue**

**Overall meaning and effect of scene**
The Plan in Action (continued)

TRACK 5 (ACT III)

DON PASQUALE: Ah! it's all over, Don Pasquale. You've really blown it this time! Nothing is left for you but to go and drown yourself.

Ah! è finita, Don Pasquale, hai bel rompersi la testa! Altro affare non ti resta che d'andarti ad affogar.

TRACK 6

NORINA: It’s a tough lesson, but we want it to work.

E duretta la lezione, ma ci vuole a far l’effetto.

We have to make sure the project succeeds.

Or bisogna del progetto la riuscita assicurar.

TRACK 7

NORINA: I’m leaving then.

Parto dunque.

DON PASQUALE: Fine then, leave. But don’t ever come back.

Parte pure. Ma non faccia più ritorno.

The Climax

TRACK 8 (ACT III)

DON PASQUALE: Run and get Norina, and I’ll marry you right now.

Corri a prendere Norina, e d’un’ora io m’impegno in sul momento,

MALATESTA: You needn’t go far. The bride is here.

Senz’andar lungi la sposa è presta,

DON PASQUALE: What? Explain yourself!

Come? Spiegatevi…

MALATESTA: This is Norina.

Norina è questa.

DON PASQUALE: This? Norina? I’m betrayed!

Quella?… Norina?… Che tradimento!

And Sofronia?

Dunque Sofronia?…

MALATESTA: Still in the convent.

Dura in convento.

DON PASQUALE: And the wedding?

E il matrimonio?…

MALATESTA: I had the idea of using an open net as a way of closing the trap over you. The rest of the little story isn’t clear.

Fu un mio pensiero stringervi in nodi di nullo effetto, il modo a torvi di farne un vero.

E chiaro il resto del romanzeretto.

DON PASQUALE: Ah, you tricksters!

Ah bricconissimi…

(Verò non parmi! Ciel ti ringrazio!)

As you listen along, write your comments/notes below. Be as specific as possible in identifying qualities in the music, in the sound of the Italian dialogue, and in the meaning, that gives this scene its particular effect.

Music

Dialogue

Overall meaning and effect of scene

As you listen along, write your comments/notes below. Be as specific as possible in identifying qualities in the music, in the sound of the Italian dialogue, and in the meaning, that gives this scene its particular effect.

Music

Dialogue

Overall meaning and effect of scene
The Resolution

TRACK 9 (ACT III)

NORINA: The moral of all this is easy enough to find. I’ll say it quickly if you want to hear. It’s stupid to get married in old age—you’re looking for lots of misery and suffering.

La moral di tutto questo è assai facil trovarsi. Ve la dico presto presto se vi piace d’ascoltar. Ben è scemo di cervello chi s’ammoglia in vecchia età, va a cercar col campanello noie e doglie in quantità.

TRACK 10

DON PASQUALE: The moral is very well applied to me. You are very clever, you little scamp, you’ve shown me how things really are.

La morale è molto bella applicarla a me si sta. Sei pur fina, o bricconcella, m’hai servito come va.

MALATESTA AND ERNESTO: The moral is very well applied to Don Pasquale. This dear little scamp is far wiser than we know.

La morale è molto bella, Don Pasqual l’applicherà. Quella cara bricconcella lunga più di noi la sa.

TRACK 11 AND 12 (ACT III)

DON PASQUALE: You will see if I use tricks and secrets, tender smiles, sighs and tears. I want to take my revenge. You are now in my trap and you will not escape.

Vedrai se giovino raggiri e cabale, sorrisi teneri, sospiri e lagrime. Or voglio prendere la mia rivincita sei nella trappola v’hai da restar.

MALATESTA: In vain, he keeps coming up with projects and plans. Doesn’t he know he’s building castles in the air? The simpleton can’t see he’s setting a trap for himself.

Si accumula progetti e calcoli; non sa che fabbrica castelli in aria; non vede il semplice che nella trappola da sé medesimo si va a gettar.

DON PASQUALE: My revenge. He’s locked in a cage. He can’t escape.

La mia vendetta. È chiuso in gabbia, non può scappar.

DON PASQUALE: I’ll make them pay all at once.

Tutte in un punto l’hai da scontar.

As you listen along, write your comments/notes below. Be as specific as possible in identifying qualities in the music, in the sound of the Italian dialogue, and in the meaning, that gives this scene its particular effect.

Music

Dialogue

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The Resolution

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La moral di tutto questo è assai facile trovarsi. Ve la dico presto presto se vi piace d’ascoltar. Ben è scemo di cervello chi s’ammoglia in vecchia età; va a cercar col campanello noie e doglie in quantità.

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MALATESTA AND ERNESTO: The moral is very well applied to Don Pasquale. This dear little scamp is far wiser than we know.

La morale è molto bella, Don Pasqual l’applicherà. Quella cara bricconcella lunga più di noi la sa.

MALTÊSTA: In vain, he keeps coming up with projects and plans. Doesn’t he know he’s building castles in the air? The simpleton can’t see he’s setting a trap for himself.

Invano accumula progetti e calcoli; non sa che fabbrica castelli in aria; non vede il semplice che nella trappola da sé medesimo si va a gettar.

DON PASQUALE: My revenge.

La mia vendetta.

DON PASQUALE: I’ll make them pay all at once.

Tutte in un punto l’hai da scontar.

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Music

Dialogue

Overall meaning and effect of scene
Don Pasquale

SECRET MESSAGES

TRACK 13
(instrumental)

TRACK 14 (ACT III)

ERNESTO: How lovely is a mid-April night—
the sky is blue, the moon clear and bright.

TRACKS 15 AND 16
(instrumental)

TRACK 17 (ACT I)

NORINA: I also know the magic power
of a glance in the right time and place;
I also know how hearts can burn with a slow fire.

TRACK 18
(instrumental)

TRACK 19 (ACT I)

NORINA: “That look pierced the knight’s heart; he fell to his knees and said, ‘I am your knight!’ And in that look there was so much of the taste of paradise that Sir Richard, entirely conquered by love, swore that his thoughts would never turn to another.”

TRACK 20
(Norina’s Wordless Response)

TRACK 21

NORINA: “That look pierced the knight’s heart; he fell to his knees and said, ‘I am your knight!’ And in that look there was so much of the taste of paradise that Sir Richard, entirely conquered by love, swore that his thoughts would never turn to another.”

TRACK 22

I also know the thousand types of fraudulent love,
the charms, and the simple arts of luring a heart.

TRACK 23

I also know the effect
of a quick smile—
I know, I know,
about sudden weakness.

Lessons Not in Books

TRACK 19 (ACT I)

NORINA: “That look pierced the knight’s heart; he fell to his knees and said, ‘I am your knight!’ And in that look there was so much of the taste of paradise that Sir Richard, entirely conquered by love, swore that his thoughts would never turn to another.”

TRACK 20
(Norina’s Wordless Response)

RICHARD: “I am your knight!”

NORINA: “That look pierced the knight’s heart; he fell to his knees and said, ‘I am your knight!’ And in that look there was so much of the taste of paradise that Sir Richard, entirely conquered by love, swore that his thoughts would never turn to another.”

TRACK 22

CONOSCO I MILLE MODI
DELL’AMORE SECOLO,
I VEZZI, I L’ARTI FACILI
PER ADESSARE UN COR.

TRACK 23

D’UN BREVES SORRISETTO
CONOSCO ANCH’IO L’EFFETTO,
CONOSCO, CONOSCO,
D’UN SUBITO LANGUOR.
SECRET MESSAGES

TRACK 13
(instrumental)

TRACK 14 (ACT III)
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the sky is blue, the moon clear and bright.

TRACKS 15 AND 16
(instrumental)

TRACK 17 (ACT I)
NORMA: I also know the magic power
of a glance in the right time and place;
I also know how hearts
can burn with a slow fire.

TRACK 18
(instrumental)

TRACK 19 (ACT I)
NORMA: “That look pierced
the knight’s heart;
he fell to his knees and said,
‘I am your knight!’

And in that look there was
so much of the taste of paradise
that Sir Richard,
entirely conquered by love,
swore that his thoughts
would never turn to another.”

TRACK 20
(Norina’s Wordless Response)

TRACK 21
I also know the magic power
of a glance in the right time and place;
I also know how hearts can burn
with a slow fire.
I also know the effect
of a quick smile,
of lying tears,
of a sudden weakness.

TRACK 22
I know the thousand types
of fraudulent love,
the charms, and the simple arts
of luring a heart.

TRACK 23
I also know the effect
of a quick smile—
I know, I know,
about sudden weakness.
Resource Page for Musical Highlight
Lessons Not in Books (continued)

TRACK 24

Norina: I also know the magic power
That inspires love.
I know the effect—yes, yes—that inspires love.

So anch’io la virtù magica
Per ispirare amor
Conosco l’effetto, sì, sì
Per ispirare amor.

TRACK 25

Norina: I have a strange head.
I’m quick, and lively.
I love to shine.
I love to kid around.
If I become angry,
I seldom show it,
but anyway, my anger
quickly changes to laughter.
I have a strange head,
but an excellent heart, ah!

Ho la testa bizzarra;
Son pronta, vivace,
Brillare mi piace,
Mi piace scherzar.
Se monto in furore
di rado sto al segno,
Ma in riso lo segno
Fo presto a cangiare.
Ho la testa bizzarra,
Ma cuore eccellente,
Ma cuore eccellente, ah!

TRACK 26

(Reprise of cabaletta, see Tracks 21–25)

Performance Activity: Extreme Makeover

Set design is important in any theatrical production, but it plays a special role in Don Pasquale. Between Acts II and III, Norina/Sofronia redecorates Pasquale’s bachelor home from top to bottom. You have the first two acts to take in as many details as you can about the classic mid 19th-century home that designer Rolf Langenfass created for this Metropolitan Opera production—before the curtain rises on Act III, when everything has changed.

Sofronia’s extreme makeover is sure to make an extreme impression—but how many detailed changes can you spot? Mark them down in this chart.

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<th>WHAT DON PASQUALE HAD (ACTS I &amp; II)</th>
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Resource Page for Musical Highlight
Lessons Not in Books (continued)

Track 24
Norina: I also know the magic power that inspires love. I know the effect—yes, yes—that inspires love.

So anch’io la virtù magica
Per ispirare amor
Conosco l’effetto, sì, sì
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Norina: I have a strange head. I’m quick, and lively. I love to shine. I love to kid around. If I become angry, I seldom show it, but anyway, my anger quickly changes to laughter. I have a strange head, but an excellent heart, ah!

Ho la testa bizzarra;
Son pronta, vivace,
Brillare mi piace,
Mi piace scherzar.
Se monto in furore
di rado sto al segno,
Ma in riso lo sdegno
Fo presto a cangiare.
Ho la testa bizzarra,
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Ma cuore eccellente, ah!

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**Don Pasquale: My Highs & Lows**  
NOVEMBER 13, 2010  
CONDUCTED BY JAMES LEVINE

REVIEWED BY ____________________________________________

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<th>STAR POWER</th>
<th>MY COMMENTS</th>
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<td>MATTHEW POLENZANI AS ERNESTO</td>
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