

For 3,000 years, the names Samson and Delilah have symbolized reckless strength, ruthless cunning, and the inescapability of desire. When Camille Saint-Saëns, one of the leading composers of 19th-century France, decided to bring their story to the operatic stage, he had the perfect musical means to do so. Calling for a huge orchestra and a chorus of nearly 100 singers, Saint-Saëns built a mighty wall of sound that perfectly embodies Samson's miraculous strength. With his gift for lush melodies, Saint-Saëns crafted soaring tunes that give voice to Delilah's exquisite beauty. Sacred, scandalous, and irresistibly seductive, *Samson et Dalila* is now considered the pinnacle of French Romanticism.

Darko Tresnjak's staging, first seen on Opening Night of the Met's 2018–19 season, uses abstract geometric shapes to bridge the ancient Middle East and the modern world. Through extravagant choreography, massive sculptural set pieces, and vibrant colors, this towering production evokes the exotic, the crass, the sensual, and even the sublimely spiritual. These qualities are compounded by the work's conflicting themes of love and duty, belonging and independence, and tenderness and rage, which form the story's beating heart. In Tresnjak's creative vision, *Samson et Dalila* is a sumptuous extravaganza, a spectacle sure to delight and thrill audiences of all ages.

This guide considers *Samson et Dalila* both in the context of its creation and through the many afterlives of its source material. Saint-Saëns's adaptation of the biblical legend provides an opportunity for students to engage with the myriad ways this timeless story has been adapted across time, space, and medium—as well as to create their own versions. The composer's interest in “exotic” musical cultures, meanwhile, becomes a gateway to learning and practicing Arabic musical traditions on their own terms and as they manifest in the opera's score. In addition to preparing students to engage confidently and enthusiastically with Saint-Saëns's opera, these materials will ultimately lead them to reflect on broader questions about faith, desire, and power.

THE WORK

An opera in three acts, sung in French

Music by Camille Saint-Saëns

Libretto by Ferdinand Lemaire

First performed December 2, 1877, at the Grand Ducal Theater, Weimar, Germany

PRODUCTION

Darko Tresnjak Production

Alexander Dodge Set Designer

Linda Cho Costume Designer

Donald Holder Lighting Designer

Austin McCormick Choreographer

Tilman Michael

C. Graham Berwind, III Chorus Director

PERFORMANCE

The Met: Live in HD

December 5, 2026

Encore December 9, 2026

Aigul Akhmetshina Dalila

Clay Hilley Samson

Quinn Kelsey High Priest of Dagon

Alfred Walker Abimélech

Morris Robinson Old Hebrew

Giacomo Sagripanti Conductor

Samson et Dalila Educator Guide

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AKHMETSHINA



HILLEY



KELSEY



WALKER



ROBINSON

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ONLINE ACCESS To access this guide online, including any audio selections and handouts, visit metopera.org/samsonguide. All Met Opera on Demand (MOoD) clips referenced in this guide are from the performance on October 20, 2018.



CHARACTER	PRONUNCIATION	THE LOWDOWN
Samson TENOR	<i>sam-SOHN</i>	Leader of the Israelites. A warrior of legendary strength, Samson must deliver his people from bondage without falling prey to the seductions of his former lover, the Philistine priestess Dalila.
Dalila MEZZO-SOPRANO	<i>dah-lee-LAH</i>	A Philistine priestess. Proud and calculating , Dalila entices Samson into revealing the secret of his strength to seek vengeance for the Philistines—and for herself.
High Priest of Dagon BARITONE		The religious leader of the Philistines, the High Priest conspires with Dalila to ensnare Samson.
Abimélech BASS-BARITONE	<i>ah-bee-may-LECK</i>	A Philistine Satrap (governor), Abimélech is a brash leader whose downfall at the hands of Samson helps launch the Israelite rebellion.
Old Hebrew BASS		The Old Hebrew counsels Samson not to get involved with Dalila—but his advice goes unheeded .

GLOSSARY

Bondage (*n.*): slavery or captivity

Calculating (*adj.*): scheming or self-interested

Ensnare (*v.*): to trap or capture

Brash (*adj.*): aggressive or reckless

Counsel (*v.*): to give advice

Unheeded (*adj.*): not listened to



THE STORY

Synopsis

ACT I. *Gaza, 1150 B.C.E.* The Israelites sing a sorrowful prayer. They are enslaved to the Philistines and beg God for relief from their **torment**. Yet Samson, their leader, tells them not to lose hope. When the Philistine commander Abimélech **denounces** the Israelites and their God, Samson kills him and leads his people away. Under Samson's leadership, the Israelites stage a revolt and burn the Philistines' crops. The High Priest of Dagon comes from the Philistine temple and curses Samson's strength. A group of priestesses, including Dalila, Samson's former lover, emerges from the temple, and Dalila invites Samson to come to her nearby dwelling that night. An Old Hebrew warns Samson to be careful and resist Dalila's **seductive** charm.

ACT II. Dalila, filled with thoughts of revenge, sits in front of her house. The High Priest arrives to speak with her. He offers any price for her help, though she has no desire for money—vengeance is payment enough. She knows Samson will visit her that very night, and she tells the High Priest to lie in wait with his soldiers. Under cover of darkness, Samson arrives and confesses his love to Dalila, who replies with a soaring declaration of her own love. She demands proof of Samson's feelings: He must tell her the secret of his strength. Suddenly, thunder and lightning split the sky. Samson understands the storm as an expression of God's anger. Furious that Samson has not told her his secret, Dalila heads into her house. After a moment of hesitation, Samson follows her and reveals the source of his strength. At that moment, the Philistine soldiers rush in, violently capturing and blinding Samson.

ACT III. In a dungeon, the sightless Samson pushes a **grist mill** in a circle, praying for his people, who have once again been enslaved by the Philistines. He hears their voices **castigating** him.

At the Temple of Dagon, meanwhile, the Philistines have gathered to celebrate Samson's defeat. The festivities **devolve** into a **bacchanal**,

GLOSSARY

Torment (*n.*): extreme pain or distress

Denounce (*v.*): to declare publicly to be wrong or evil

Seductive (*adj.*): alluring or tempting

Grist (*n.*): a grain or batch of grain for grinding

Mill (*n.*): a machine for grinding grain into flour

Castigate (*v.*): to punish or criticize

Devolve (*v.*): to degenerate

Bacchanal (*n.*): a wild party



A scene from Act III of *Samson et Dalila*
KEN HOWARD / MET OPERA

and Dalila and the High Priest taunt Samson. Samson is led into the temple by a servant boy and forced to kneel to Dagon. He asks the boy to bring him to a pillar supporting the roof of the temple, where he can rest. Samson prays to God to restore his strength, and with a mighty effort he pulls down the pillars and the temple, crushing himself and his **foes**.

GLOSSARY

Foe (*n.*): an enemy or opponent



The Book of Judges, Chapter 16



Georg Pencz, *Samson and Delilah*,
ca. 1500–50, engraving

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, ROGERS FUND

GLOSSARY

Exodus (*n.*): a mass departure

Entangle (*v.*): to involve in a
difficult or complicated situation

“Samson and Delilah” is one of the most famous stories of all time and yet is extremely brief: It takes up less than a single chapter in the Old Testament. It appears in the Book of Judges, which recounts the Israelites’ efforts to establish a kingdom of their own after their **exodus** from Egypt. The land where the Israelites hoped to settle was already home to numerous tribes, and in staking out their territory, the Israelites were inevitably **entangled** in the region’s wars. Time and again, the Israelites—who had only just escaped slavery in Egypt—found themselves conquered and enslaved by rival tribes; each time, God would send a leader, or “judge,” to help them regain their freedom.

Samson was the judge sent by God to deliver the Israelites from the Philistines, and Chapters 13–16 of the Book of Judges are devoted



to his life. Chapters 13, 14, and 15 relate **anecdotes** about Samson's childhood and miraculous strength, which is the physical expression of his relationship with God. Yet it is Chapter 16, which recounts Samson's **ill-fated** affair with Delilah, that has made him a household name. Delilah's appearance in the story is brief. The Bible provides no information about her background nor details about how she and Samson met: After she delivers Samson to the Philistines, she is never heard from again.

Camille Saint-Saëns initially set out to write an **oratorio**, rather than an opera, based on this biblical legend. The idea was suggested to him by a friend who admired a *Samson* libretto by Enlightenment writer Voltaire that was set to music (now lost) by the composer Jean-Philippe Rameau in 1734. Saint-Saëns shared plans for the project with poet Ferdinand Lemaire, who convinced him to write an opera instead. According to the composer, he provided his librettist with a detailed plan of the opera's characters, scenes, and overall plot, which Lemaire then rendered in verse. The resulting work **hews** closely to its biblical source, but some creative liberties were taken. The character of Abimélech, for example, derives from a separate section of the Bible and has no connection to the story of Samson. Most crucially—especially for the events of Act II—Lemaire and Saint-Saëns frame the **titular** characters as former lovers who reunite in the opera. What ensues is thus the **culmination** of a romantic drama that far precedes the action depicted on stage.

FUN FACT

Dalila is one of opera's ultimate diva roles, and composer Camille Saint-Saëns was a bit of a diva himself. He supposedly performed recitals in drag, often as a neoclassical sorceress. Around the time he was composing *Samson et Dalila*, he sometimes appeared as the title character of Gluck's *Armide* (1777).

GLOSSARY

Anecdote (*n.*): a short story with biographical details

Ill-fated (*adj.*): destined for misfortune or bad luck

Oratorio (*n.*): a large-scale work for voice and orchestra, usually on a religious subject

Hew (*v.*): to follow something closely

Titular (*adj.*): denoting a person for whom an artistic work is named

Culmination (*n.*): the final, highest, or climactic point



FUN FACT

Camille Saint-Saëns loved to travel, and he spent considerable time abroad. His career, both as a composer and as a pianist and organist, took him to North Africa, Latin America, the United States, and East Asia—27 countries in total. While interested in foreign cultures, Saint-Saëns also liked to disappear from public life, even sometimes assuming a fake name while traveling internationally.

GLOSSARY

Majestic (*adj.*): impressively beautiful

Incomprehensible (*adj.*): unable to be understood

The Creation of *Samson et Dalila*

1835 Camille Saint-Saëns is born in Paris on October 9. The child's extraordinary musical gifts are evident from an early age; he receives his first music lessons from his maternal grandmother at the age of three and can read music before he can read words.

1846 At only ten years old, Saint-Saëns makes his debut as a pianist at the Salle Pleyel, one of the most important concert halls in Paris.

1848 Saint-Saëns enters the Paris Conservatory, where he studies piano, organ, and composition. Hector Berlioz and Franz Liszt, two of the most important composers of the day, express their amazement at the young boy's talent. Three decades later, Liszt will play a pivotal role in the creation of *Samson et Dalila*.

1857 Saint-Saëns is hired as chief organist at the Church of Saint Mary Magdalene (or La Madeleine), a **majestic** church in the center of Paris. He will remain in the post for 20 years.

1867 Saint-Saëns continues to compose despite his busy schedule as an organist. His cantata *Les Noces de Prométhée* wins the composition prize of the Grande Fête Internationale du Travail et de l'Industrie (the World's Fair of Work and Industry). The jury includes some of the most famous composers in the world: Berlioz, Giuseppe Verdi, Gioachino Rossini, Charles Gounod, and Daniel-François-Esprit Auber.

Around this time, Saint-Saëns approaches the poet Ferdinand Lemaire about crafting a libretto for an oratorio. The young poet suggests collaborating on an opera instead, one based on the story of Samson and Delilah. Saint-Saëns is thrilled with the idea and begins composing right away. Unfortunately, he gets little encouragement from his friends, who find the opera's music **incomprehensible**, and Saint-Saëns abandons the project.



1870 At a centennial celebration for the composer Ludwig van Beethoven, Saint-Saëns once again crosses paths with Liszt. When Saint-Saëns mentions his abandoned opera on Samson and Delilah, Liszt encourages him to complete the work.

1876 Saint-Saëns finally finishes composing *Samson et Dalila*. Unfortunately, he cannot find an opera house in Paris willing to host the premiere. Operas based on biblical subjects are considered taboo in France, and the Parisian producers have no desire to run **afoul** of censors.

1877 In contrast to the Parisian impresarios, Liszt, who lives in the German city of Weimar, is tremendously enthusiastic about Saint-Saëns's new opera. He organizes *Samson et Dalila*'s premiere at Weimar's Grand Ducal Theater on December 2, where it is performed in German.

1890 *Samson et Dalila* receives its first performance in France, in the city of Rouen. It is finally performed in Paris in October, almost 13 years after its premiere.

1892 *Samson et Dalila* receives its New York premiere in concert form, with the singers performing in front of the orchestra rather than onstage with scenery and costumes.

1921 Saint-Saëns dies on December 16 in Algiers. His body is returned to Paris, and his funeral is celebrated at La Madeleine, where Saint-Saëns spent his career as an organist. He is buried in his family's tomb in the city's Montparnasse Cemetery, where his grave may still be visited today.

GLOSSARY

Afoul (*adv.*): in conflict with



Sampling Samson



Guercino, *Samson Captured by the Philistines*, 1619, oil on canvas

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

Giambologna, *Samson Slaying a Philistine*, 1560–62, marble

VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, LONDON

The legend of Samson and his supernatural strength—and his betrayal by the seductive Delilah—is one of the most famous tales in all Western culture. It's no surprise that images of the Israelite warrior and Philistine **temptress** have been circulated and adapted across diverse media for centuries, from Renaissance paintings to political cartoons to contemporary films.

The great artists of the early modern period took a special interest in biblical subjects, and the story of Samson was no exception. Artemisia Gentileschi, the Italian Baroque painter, depicted Delilah snipping Samson's hair while he sleeps (c. 1630–38). The painting's focus is Delilah, who occupies the center of the canvas and is bathed in light against a dark background. Her contemporary Guercino depicted another episode of the legend in *Samson Captured by the Philistines* (1619), which highlights the **musculature** of the hero's back, his face turned away from the viewer. Other artists like Lucas Cranach the Elder (1472–1553) and Luca Giordano (1634–1705), meanwhile, took inspiration from Samson's heroic feats of strength, as when he defeated a lion with his bare hands or killed 1,000 Philistine troops with just a donkey's jawbone.

GLOSSARY

Temptress (*n.*): a woman who tries to attract men

Musculature (*n.*): the position and structure of the muscles

Eroticism (*n.*): the quality of a work of art relating to desire or pleasure

Beseechingly (*adv.*): in an emotional way that shows someone wants or needs something very much

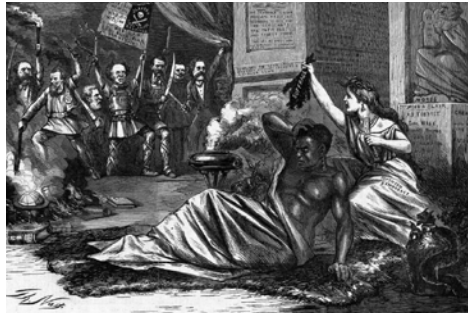


In the 19th century, French visual art followed the exoticist tendencies of contemporary composers like Saint-Saëns, Georges Bizet, Jules Massenet, and Léo Delibes, who were fascinated by the cultures of the Middle East and Asia. Henri-Léopold Lévy's *Samson et Dalila* (1898) is a case in point. The work is flush with vivid color, especially deep reds and golds, and there is a deep sense of **eroticism**. Delilah is kneeling, her fingers caressing Samson's hair, her gaze **beseechingly** turned upward at him.

Around the same time, the figure of Samson began to take on broader political significance,



especially as he was seen as the leader of an oppressed people rebelling against their conquerors. In the United States, Samson was frequently depicted as Black, personifying the struggle first against slavery and then political



disenfranchisement in the aftermath of the Civil War. Eminent cartoonist Thomas Nast's "The Modern Samson" (1868), published in *Harper's Weekly*, one of the country's leading magazines, shows a Black man whose hair has been cut off by a white woman. His hair has the word "**suffrage**" written on it, the woman's dress "Southern democracy." She holds up her prize to a crowd of cheering men representing the Confederate States of America, who had fought to preserve slavery in the American south, and the Ku Klux Klan. Nast thus uses biblical allegory to critique how white supremacists sabotaged Black political power by targeting its source—the right to vote.

Samson also made his way to Hollywood, as in Cecil B. DeMille's blockbuster *Samson and Delilah* (1949) starring Hedy Lamarr and Victor Mature. In the 1970s, amid the craze for "Blaxploitation," a subgenre of action films focused on the urban poor, *Black Samson* (1974) told the story of a nightclub owner trying to rid his neighborhood of drugs and crime. Bridging popular culture and high art, New York-based artist Jean-Michel Basquiat incorporated the figure of Samson into his *Obnoxious Liberals*, a critique (in the artist's distinctive graffiti-esque style) of the contemporary art scene. And as recently as 2009, the biblical story forming the basis of Saint-Saëns's opera has been adapted as a film set in an Australian aboriginal community, a clear indication of the staying power of this legend and the **indelible** characters at its center.

Thomas Nast's cartoon "The Modern Samson," 1868. The Delilah of "Southern Democracy" (i.e. the southern Democratic party) displays the cut hair of "Suffrage" to the approaching Philistines at left, while a black Samson figure slowly awakes.

COURTESY RUTH AND ELMER WELLIN MUSEUM OF ART, HAMILTON COLLEGE



Cecil B. DeMille's film *Samson and Delilah* (1949) starred Hedy Lamarr and Victor Mature.

WIKICOMMONS

GLOSSARY

Disenfranchisement (*n.*): being deprived of a right or privilege, especially the right to vote

Suffrage (*n.*): the right to vote in political elections

Indelible (*adj.*): not able to be forgotten

**Think about it!**

At one point, Camille Saint-Saëns considered calling his opera simply *Dalila*. Does that change your understanding of the opera? How so? How might the opera be different if she were the protagonist? If she were the hero, would Samson be the villain? How might the conflict between the Israelites and Philistines be depicted?

GLOSSARY

Topple (*v.*): to cause to fall

Semitic (*adj.*): relating to a family of languages including Hebrew, Aramaic, Arabic, and Amharic or the peoples who spoke those languages

Fertility (*n.*): the ability to conceive children

Subjugate (*v.*): to bring under control

Dagon but Not Forgotten

Samson et Dalila can be understood as a story about desire, strength, and the struggle for freedom from oppression. It is also a story about religious conflict between two warring peoples: the Israelites, led by Samson, and the Philistines, led by the High Priest of Dagon, Dalila, and Abimélech, among others. The Israelites worship Yahweh or Jehovah, the God of the Bible, whereas the Philistines worship Dagon, whose temple Samson ultimately **topples** at the conclusion of the opera.

Dagon (pronounced *DAY-gahn*), sometimes written as Dagan, was a deity among **Semitic** groups of the ancient Near East—including those in Syria, Mesopotamia, and Canaan. Dagon is variously described as a god of grain, vegetation, or crops. His name derives from *dgn* in Ugaritic (an extinct Semitic language from the coastal city of Ugarit) and *dagan* in Hebrew, both meaning “grain.” He was also known as the inventor of the plow and a **fertility** god. Dagon is even mentioned in the Code of Hammurabi, the ancient Babylonian legal text dated c. 1750 B.C.E. Biblical evidence, which is largely not supported by archaeological data, suggests that there were temples to Dagon in Gaza, Ashdod, Beth-Dagon (all in modern-day Israel and Palestine), and Ugarit (in modern-day Syria).

This association between Dagon and grain adds to the significance of individual scenes in *Samson et Dalila*. In Act I, after Samson slays Abimélech, the High Priest of Dagon learns from a group of Philistine soldiers that, “Samson’s angry mob is destroying our harvest.”

Immediately upon gaining their liberation, however temporary, the Israelites target the domain of Dagon himself: the Philistines’ crops. In Act III, meanwhile, after Samson has been captured and blinded, he is forced to push a grist mill, grinding grain into flour. Once **subjugated** again by the Philistines, the Israelite hero must suffer by performing backbreaking labor in service to Dagon.



In the centuries after Dagon reigned in the ancient Near East, from approximately 3000–1000 B.C.E., the deity took on different—and sometimes strange—forms. A Jewish Bible commentator in the 13th century **errantly** claimed that Dagon was half-man, half-fish, an apparent misreading of the fact that the Hebrew *dag* means “fish.” In his biblical epic *Paradise Lost* (1667), English poet John Milton describes Dagon as a “Sea Monster, upward Man / And downward Fish.” His later *Samson Agonistes* (1671), a retelling of the Samson legend ultimately adapted as an oratorio by George Frideric Handel in 1741, calls Dagon the Philistines’ “Sea-Idol.”



Pendant figure of a merman, baroque pearl mounted in enamelled gold, set with pearls, diamonds, and rubies, probably made in Europe, about 1850–60
VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM

This mythology lingered well into the 19th century, when British novelist George Eliot included in her *Middlemarch* (1871) that the **pedantic** scholar Mr. Casaubon had arrived at “an entirely new view of the Philistine god Dagon and other fish-deities.” More recently, H. P. Lovecraft, the popular American author of horror and science fiction, published a short story called “Dagon” (1919), about a gigantic sea monster that haunts a shipwrecked sailor—an association that has led to a surprising proliferation of video games, graphic novels, and internet memes featuring the figure first **attested** more than 5,000 years ago.

GLOSSARY

Errantly (*adv.*): incorrectly or by mistake

Pedantic (*adj.*): giving too much attention to formal rules or small details

Attest (*v.*): to show or prove that something is true





Samson and Delilah: The Original Tale

Shortly before Samson's birth, his mother was visited by an angel. The Israelites had suffered 40 years of enslavement by the Philistines, and the angel declared that the as-yet unborn child would be a "judge" sent by God to deliver the Israelites from bondage. To this end, the boy would grow into a warrior of unsurpassed strength. There was just one catch: He could never cut his hair. Even as a child, Samson displayed a strength verging on the miraculous. When **menaced** by a lion, he slaughtered the beast with his bare hands. When attacked by a Philistine **regiment**, he slew 1,000 soldiers with the jawbone of a single donkey. And yet, for all his physical strength, Samson was not without certain weaknesses. He was **impetuous**, prone to angry outbursts, and totally uninterested in delayed **gratification**. When he wanted something, he took it—with little or no concern for the consequences.

One day, Samson saw Delilah, a woman from the Valley of Sorek, and promptly fell in love. Delilah's interest in Samson, however, was considerably less romantic: The Philistine elders, **weary** from being **vanquished** by Samson on the battlefield, had offered her a large quantity of silver if she could uncover the secret of Samson's strength. Throwing caution to the wind, Samson started an affair with the unknown woman. Soon thereafter, Delilah's manipulation began. Repeatedly, she told Samson that if he truly loved her, he would tell her the secret of his great strength. First, Samson told Delilah that he would lose his power if bound with seven fresh bowstrings. That night, Delilah called the Philistines to bind Samson with fresh bowstrings; waking up the next morning, Samson simply flexed his muscles and the bowstrings snapped. Delilah was furious that Samson had lied to her. Again, she demanded to know the secret of Samson's strength, and again Samson lied. Finally, however, **beguiled** by Delilah's charms—or, in some versions of the story, simply worn down by Delilah's persistence—Samson told Delilah the truth: If his hair were cut, he would be as weak as any other man.

GLOSSARY

Menace (*v.*): to threaten or aim to harm

Regiment (*n.*): a group of soldiers

Impetuous (*adj.*): impulsive and emotional

Gratification (*n.*): satisfaction or pleasure

Weary (*adj.*): exhausted or without strength

Vanquish (*v.*): to defeat or conquer

Beguile (*v.*): to lead by deception



The next morning, he awoke to find himself **shorn**, blinded, and imprisoned by the Philistines.

The Philistines congratulated themselves on defeating the great warrior. Samson, meanwhile, was left to **languish** in prison. One night, the Philistine elders threw a great banquet. They called for Samson to be brought to the banquet hall, where he was tied to a pillar and forced to listen to the laughs and jeers of the crowd. During the long weeks of Samson's captivity, however, his hair had inevitably begun to grow back, and his lost strength had slowly returned. Now, amid the reveling Philistines, Samson realized that his opportunity for revenge had come. He leaned forward and, pulling with all his might, broke the stone pillar in two. The roof of the building came crashing down, crushing everyone below.

Above: Pair of scissors, Tang dynasty, 675–750, chased silver

VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, PURCHASED WITH ART FUND SUPPORT, THE VALLENTIN BEQUEST, SIR PERCIVAL DAVID AND THE UNIVERSITIES CHINA COMMITTEE

Below: Johan Joseph Zoffany, *Samson Overcome by the Philistines*, c. 1758, etching

YALE CENTER FOR BRITISH ART, PAUL MELLON FUND



GLOSSARY

Shear (v.): to cut off hair, wool, or fur

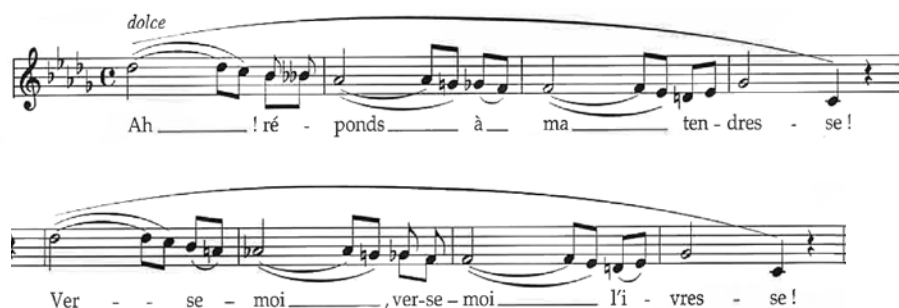
Languish (v.): to suffer from neglect or become weak



Hey There Dalila

The centerpiece of Act II, “*Mon cœur s’ouvre à ta voix*” (**Track 1** or **MOoD clip 21**) is arguably the most famous—and hotly debated—moment in *Samson et Dalila*. For starters, the piece has become standard concert repertoire for mezzo-sopranos, even though “*Mon cœur*” is not a solo aria but rather one section of an extended duet between the two title characters. Second, critics and commentators have yet to reach **consensus** regarding Dalila’s perspective expressed in the work: Is she truly confessing her love for Samson, or is she deceiving him to learn the secret of his superhuman strength?

The piece begins with soft staccato strings in unison on A $\flat$, arching up and back down several octaves before resolving to D $\flat$ major, when Dalila enters. Proceeding in largely stepwise motion, the end of the first phrase is echoed by the English horn (**Track 2**). Following the A section, Dalila beseeches Samson to respond to her confession with a slow, chromatic descent that lends an air of the exotic (**Track 3**).



She repeats her **entreaty**, leaping up a minor seventh interval on successively higher pitches across three consecutive phrases (**Track 4**).

GLOSSARY

Consensus (*n.*): general agreement

Entreaty (*n.*): an earnest or humble request



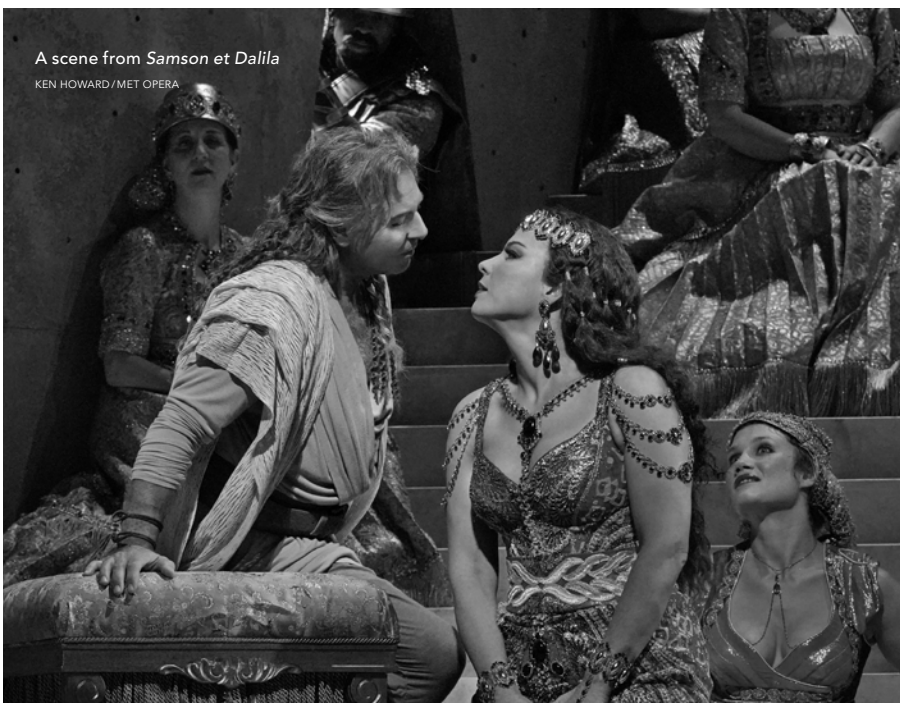


At this point, Samson rejoins the duet. The clarinet **recapitulates** Dalila's previous melody while Samson exclaims "*Dalila! Je t'aime!*" ("Delilah! I love you!") (**Track 5**). The two lovers are not yet singing together, but they are getting closer to doing so—the clarinet a faint echo of Dalila's own voice.

When the A section returns, Saint-Saëns adds a new element: descending chromatic sextuplets, alternating among the woodwinds (**Track 6**). Really, this is an old element, having already been heard during the section of orchestral tone painting that opens Act II.



These chromatic flourishes remain open to interpretation. They could suggest the fluttering of Dalila's heart, the exotic atmosphere elsewhere evoked through chromaticism, or the irony—and danger—of the priestess's deceitful **proclamation** of love.



GLOSSARY

Recapitulate (*v.*): to repeat or restate

Proclamation (*n.*): a public announcement or declaration



FUN FACT

Though widely known as a 19th-century composer, Saint-Saëns actually lived (and worked!) long enough to compose a film score. His work on the silent film *L'Assassinat du Duc de Guise* (1908), one of the first movies to feature an original score, was later developed into a symphonic poem for piano, harmonium, and strings.

When Dalila resumes the A section, Saint-Saëns beefs up the orchestration so that her melody is echoed both by the English horn and the bassoon, with rapid harp arpeggios added for dramatic effect. The composer extends this technique into the second B section, with Dalila's vocal line doubled by the violins. Here, "*Mon cœur*" becomes a true duet as Samson joins in full force, his melody nearly mirroring hers (**Track 7**) as the piece draws to a close. And like an echo of Dalila's **successive** leaps on the word "*Reponds*" ("Respond"), Samson's jumps a third, and then a fifth, and then an octave on his final cry, "*Dalila! Je t'aime!*" (**Track 8**). Although it seems the lovers have finally achieved musical **consummation**, their union is necessarily short-lived. As soon as Samson's voice dies out, we hear creeping trills and blaring brass—a clear sign that danger lies waiting at Dalila's doorstep.

GLOSSARY

Successive (*adj.*): following one another

Consummation (*n.*): the ultimate end



Philosophical Chairs

Philosophical Chairs is an activity designed to foster critical thinking, active inquiry, and respectful dialogue among students. To play, participants agree or disagree with a series of statements, but the game doesn't end there. The most crucial element is what happens next: Participants discuss their point of view and can switch sides if their opinions change during the discussions. Each topic statement is deliberately open ended yet ties into several of the themes present in *Samson et Dalila*—including love, faith, shared struggle, and battles for power. Offer students a brief overview of the opera's plot, setting, and context, and remind them how to build a safe space for productive conversation. Some of the topics might be confusing or challenging—that's okay! As you and your students explore and learn about *Samson et Dalila*, you can return to these statements: What do they have to do with the opera's story? How might these questions help us explore the opera's story, history, and themes?

A NOTE TO FACILITATORS: Between statements, provide some clarity as to why that statement was chosen. Explain to students where and how each theme shows up in the opera or invite students to offer their own explanations.

STEP 1. INQUIRE

Distribute the included handout with guidelines and statements, making sure to review the rules of engagement as a group. Next, invite students to read one of the statements—out loud as a class, to themselves, or in small groups. As they read, they should ask themselves:

- Do I understand the statement?
 - If not, what questions might clarify it for me?
- What immediately comes to mind when I read the statement?
 - What is my initial reaction: Do I agree or disagree?
 - What led me to that decision?
- What opinions do I hold about this statement?
 - What life experiences may have led me to think this way?

STEP 2. RESPOND

Read the statements again out loud and ask students to commit to one side. They can agree or disagree, but there is no middle ground. (Many will not be completely comfortable committing to one side over the other—that's part of the game. It will help foster conversation and debate.)

MATERIALS

- Handouts

OBJECTIVES

Learners will be able to:

- Express and defend their point of view on a given topic.
- Listen to thinking different from their own and respond with examples and evidence.

CONNECTIONS

- Delineate and evaluate arguments and claims.
- Evaluate a speaker's reasoning.
- Express ideas persuasively.



STEP 3. DISCUSS

Start a conversation! Use the following questions to guide discussion:

- Does anyone feel very strongly either way? Why or why not?
- Does anyone feel conflicted? Why or why not?
- Give voice to what you thought about in the first step:
 - What led me to make my decision?
 - What opinions do I hold about this statement?
 - What life experiences may have led me to think this way?
- What might you not have considered that others are now bringing up in the discussion?
- Did any new questions arise during the discussion?

As the conversation continues, students are free to change their minds or develop more nuanced perspectives.

Repeat steps 1 through 3 for each statement.

SILENT OVERTURE If you have timid students and/or a class with several emerging language learners, consider allowing time for students to silently reflect prior to diving into the activity. Post the statements around the room, provide each student with a small stack of sticky notes of two different colors, and have them complete a gallery walk silently reading the statements. As they read the statements, students should write down questions (one color sticky note) and thoughts that came to mind (other color sticky note) and place them around the posted statement.

Set a ten-minute timer for students to complete this activity. Then, set a five-minute timer for students to read their peers' thoughts and questions prior to completing the active class discussion part of Philosophical Chairs.



All That Hijaz

Camille Saint-Saëns was one of many composers of the 19th century—particularly in France—who took musical inspiration from foreign cultures. He also spent considerable time abroad, especially in Algeria (then under French control), where he was introduced to Arabic musical traditions that would inform the score of *Samson et Dalila*, an opera set in the ancient Middle East.

This activity uses the famous “Danse Bacchanale” from *Samson et Dalila* as a gateway for students to explore global music traditions and deepen their understanding of how cultures organize sound and melody. Focusing on the *maqam hijaz*, students will learn about melody and improvisation within the context of Arabic musical traditions, connect those practices to Saint-Saëns’s opera, and experience the qualities of the *maqam* through an ensemble activity.

STEP 1. EXPLORE

In Arabic music, *maqamat* (plural of *maqam*), like scales in Western music, serve as musical road maps, telling performers which notes to play or sing in a given piece. They also provide information on musical colors or mood. Some *maqamat* sound joyful, others peaceful, and still others mysterious or sad. Arabic music has many different *maqamat*, and each one has its own unique sound that helps musicians express emotions and tells stories through music.

For secondary students, use the “Maqam and Mode” handout included with this guide to introduce *maqamat* and situate the *maqam hijaz*—a *maqam* of the *hijaz* family—in both Arabic and Western music traditions. Next, play the provided video clip of Abdul-Wahab Kayyali modeling what the *maqam hijaz* sounds like on the oud (pronounced ood), a Middle Eastern fretless instrument similar to the European lute and modern guitar.

For younger students, share that a *maqam* is a scale used in Arabic music traditions. Next, play the provided video clip. It may be helpful to share additional maps and images here to help students understand where Arabic music originated compared to other types of music with which they are more familiar. You can find some of these materials in the “Additional Resources” section of the *HD Live in Schools* Educator Hub (metopera.org/educator-hub).

Use the following questions—and consider consulting the Musical Toolbox, Mood Meter, and Opera Orchestra resources also available in the Educator Hub—to help guide student listening:

MATERIALS

- Handouts
- Audio tracks
- Video clips
- Orff instruments (optional)
- Musical Toolbox (optional)
- Mood Meter (optional)
- Opera Orchestra (optional)

OBJECTIVES

Learners will be able to:

- Identify and sing/play the *maqam hijaz*.
- Engage in guided improvisation using the qualities of *maqam hijaz*.

CONNECTIONS

- Develop and organize musical ideas.
- Explain how social, cultural, and historical contexts result in different musical interpretations.



- What colors do you imagine when you hear this music?
- What emotions or feelings does this music evoke for you?
- Does the music sound choppy, smooth, light, dark, heavy, or something else?
- What instruments from the Opera Orchestra sound or look like the oud?
- If this music were part of a story, what might be happening?
- Does this music remind you of anything you've heard before?

You may also extend the activity with drawing or movement:

- Do the notes sound smooth, sharp, twisty, or flowing? Draw the shape of the melody.
- Create a movement that matches the mood of the melody.

A scene from *Samson et Dalila*
KEN HOWARD / MET OPERA



STEP 2. PLAY

For teachers using Orff instruments in the classroom, replace the Fs with F#s and Bs with Bbs on your instruments. This setup allows for a group of pitches that mirror the *maqam hijaz*. On traditional Orff instruments that do not have an Eb, have students also remove the E. You should end up with the following set of pitches: D–(Eb)–F#–G–A–Bb–C–D. Guide students through both the Phrygian mode and *maqam hijaz*. You can use the “Maqam and Mode” handout included with this guide, if necessary.

In an ensemble setting, assign some voices/instruments to the drone and allow others to improvise with *maqam hijaz*. All students should have a chance to improvise on their own on their Orff instrument, recorder, instrument, or voice.

🕒 **A NOTE TO INSTRUCTORS:** This is a great place to pause the lesson. Steps 3 and 4 can be completed during a different session, as long as students (or you!) hold onto their handouts.

STEP 3. CONNECT

Once students are familiar with the *maqam hijaz*, play the melody from the Act III “Danse Bacchanale” (Track 9 or MOoD clip 26). Using the “Melody and Arrangement” handout included with this guide, teach students the melody of the “Danse Bacchanale,” breaking the ABAB structure into segments. Optional English text is included below:



Gathering together,
Dancing all around.
Voices raise in singing,
Make a joyful sound!

Hear the drums and laughter,
Let our voices fly!
Celebrate together,
Music fills the sky!

Teach the arrangement by layering one part at a time. Once students learn the melody and accompaniment, intersperse singing or playing the melody with three subsequent improvisations of eight measures each, resulting in the following ritornello form:

- “Bacchanale” melody (eight measures)
- Three improvisations (eight measures x3)
- “Bacchanale” melody (eight measures)
- Three improvisations (eight measures x3)
- “Bacchanale” melody (eight measures)

Continue the pattern as needed.

For additional options, consider vamping the drone in between improvisations as needed, using the timpani part extracted from Saint-Saëns’s score as a cue to begin the melody, or using contrabass bars in lieu of timpani.

STEP 4. REFLECT

Remind students that, for the “Danse Bacchanale” from *Samson et Dalila*, composer Camille Saint-Saëns drew inspiration from Middle Eastern musical traditions through his use of melodic patterns resembling the Arabic *maqam hijaz*. Written during a period when many Western composers were fascinated by distant cultures (a practice we call “exoticism”), the piece uses augmented intervals, ornamented melodies, and colorful orchestration to evoke an imagined Middle Eastern atmosphere for European audiences. Convene an open discussion with students on this topic, using the following questions to guide their thinking:

- Do you think music can accurately represent a culture if the composer has never experienced it firsthand? Why or why not?
- What is the difference between being inspired by another culture and stereotyping it? Where should we draw the line?
- How can music shape people’s ideas about places and cultures they have never seen or experienced?



- What responsibilities do artists have when representing cultures outside their own?
- How can we tell whether a piece of music respectfully honors another culture or simply imitates it?
- What does the word “authentic” mean in music?
- How might people from the represented culture feel when hearing music written about them by outsiders?
- What are some benefits of cultures sharing musical ideas with one another?
- What problems might arise when one culture inaccurately represents another?
- How is learning directly from musicians within a culture different from imagining that culture from far away?
- Why is it important to learn about the history and culture behind music and not just its sound?

Oud, made by Manol
(Emmanuel Venios), 1916
METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART,
PURCHASE, AMATI GIFTS, 2014



SCAFFOLD

- Write your own text for the “Danse Bacchanale” melody.
- Listen to “El Helwa Di,” a well-known Egyptian song composed in 1912 by Sayed Darwish with lyrics by Badi’ Khayri. Darwish was one of the most influential figures in modern Arabic music. Born into a working-class family in Alexandria, Egypt, Darwish worked as a laborer before becoming a celebrated composer. His music often reflected the lives of ordinary people and supported Egyptian nationalism during the early 20th century. ([youtube.com/watch?v=h9rTzP2ILq0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h9rTzP2ILq0))
- High school choir directors may be interested in Edward Torikian’s SATB a cappella arrangement of “El Helwa Di” published by Earthsongs Choral Music.

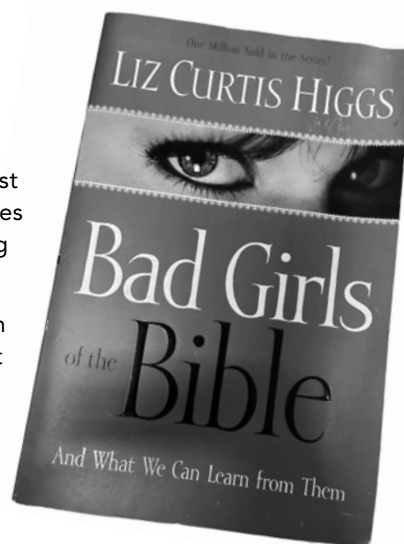


SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Whom Can I Trust?

Samson et Dalila recounts how Samson, the Israelite leader gifted with supernatural strength, is deceived by the Philistine priestess Dalila into revealing the secret of his power. Though others warn Samson not to trust Dalila, he is weakened by her charm and confesses that his strength comes from his uncut hair. One night as he sleeps, Dalila cuts off his hair, leaving him powerless and betrayed.

When making friends, it can be difficult to know whom you can trust with private thoughts and feelings. How can you decide which friends to trust with your secrets so that you don't end up feeling betrayed? Look at the checklist below. The "green light" items are signs that this friend is trustworthy; the "yellow light" items are signs that you should proceed with caution in trusting this person; the "red light" items are signs that this person—like Dalila!—is not worthy of your trust.



GREEN LIGHT:

- **Actions that match words:** They do what they say they will do.
- **Respecting boundaries:** They stop immediately when you say "no."
- **Honesty:** They tell the truth, even when it is hard.
- **Celebrating wins:** They are happy for your successes.

YELLOW LIGHT:

- **Gossiping:** They talk badly about others to you.
- **On-and-off-again friendship:** Some days they treat you like a best friend, others they ignore you.
- **Social arm-twisting:** They pressure you to engage in risky behaviors.

RED LIGHT:

- **Telling lies:** They frequently lie or change stories.
- **Mean jokes:** They mock you or others publicly and say it was "just a joke."
- **Conditional friendship:** They only treat you well when they want something from you.
- **Isolation tactics:** They try to distance you from your family or other friends.



ACTIVE EXPLORATION

Zero to Hero

MATERIALS

- Handouts
- Illustrated synopsis (optional)
- Synopsis (optional)
- “Samson and Delilah: The Original Tale” Closer Look (optional)
- “Sampling Samson” Closer Look (optional)

OBJECTIVES

Learners will be able to:

- Identify main themes, plot points, and characters in the opera.
- Adapt the opera into a new context.

CONNECTIONS

- Create a story, artwork, or other response to a text.
- Analyze multiple adaptations of a source text presented in different formats.

With his superhuman strength, tremendous charisma, and long luscious hair, Samson can easily be seen as a sort of superhero. Indeed, images of Samson have frequently been used in the service of various political and social movements, personifying collective struggle against forces of oppression. The biblical legend shares this quality with superheroes seen everywhere from the pages of *Marvel* comic books to the stage of the Metropolitan Opera.

This lesson will deepen students’ understanding of *Samson et Dalila* by asking them to reimagine its primary themes in a new context. After exploring the lore of Samson and his superhero qualities, students will have the chance to create and present their own version of the Samson and Delilah story in a medium of their choosing.

STEP 1. EXPLORE

Begin by inviting your students to think of superheroes they already know. These examples may come from comic books, movies, video games, or any other medium your students enjoy. Some examples might include Black Panther, Wonder Woman, Spider-Man, or Kamala Khan. Your students may also think about characters who are not officially “superheroes” but possess an exceptional ability, such as Sherlock Holmes, Simone Biles, Yo-Yo Ma, or Banksy. You can chart or list student responses to reference later.

Next, either in small groups or as a larger group, ask your students to consider what makes their chosen hero “super.” Consider using the following questions to prompt students’ thinking:

- What is their superpower and where does it come from?
- Is their superpower caused by something magical or superhuman (like Spider-Man’s spider bite–induced abilities) or is it a basic human trait that the hero employs exceptionally well (like Sherlock Holmes’s powers of deduction)?
- Who is the hero’s nemesis? Or do they fight more than one villain?
- What is their goal or cause? What problem are they called to solve? On whose behalf do they act?

Guide students to focus on the three elements common to all superheroes: an exceptional or superhuman skill, a nemesis or enemy, and a goal or cause. Explore these three key elements for some of the hero examples students provided earlier in the lesson.



STEP 2. ANALYZE

Once students are familiar with what makes a hero “super,” apply their learning to the biblical legend of Samson. Use your favorite reading strategy to review the opera’s synopsis or illustrated synopsis (metopera.org/samson-illustrated) and Closer Look essay “Samson and Delilah: The Original Tale” included with this guide. The goal is to consider Samson in terms of his superhero qualities.

- What is Samson’s superpower and where does it come from?
- Who is Samson’s nemesis? Is it Abimélech? The High Priest of Dagon? Dalila? All three?
- What is his goal or cause? On whose behalf does he act?

Encourage students to cite evidence using text-to-text, text-to-world, and text-to-self connections. Be sure to review the opera’s main characters and essential plot points. Familiarity with these elements will be essential when students start their adaptation process. You can distribute the “Samson Superhero Profile” handout included with this guide to aid student thinking.

🕒 **A NOTE TO INSTRUCTORS:** This is a great place to pause the lesson. Steps 3, 4, and 5 can be completed during a different session, as long as students (or you!) hold onto their handouts.

STEP 3. ADAPT

With their new understanding of Samson as a superhero, students will adapt the Samson legend into a new context. Students can choose a new hero and outline what makes them super, who their nemesis is, and what their goal or cause is. Answers can be as realistic or silly as students like. The goal is to apply the story concepts to a new context. Use the “Super Adaptation” handout included with this guide to help organize students’ thinking. Some examples are suggested below:

- **HERO:** Jane Goodall / school counselor / Banksy
- **SUPERPOWER:** Communicating with animals / resolving conflicts / anonymity
- **GOAL/CAUSE:** Protect wildlife / help students succeed / make political graffiti
- **NEMESIS:** Habitat destruction / bullies / gallery curator
- **SETTING:** Habitats worldwide / your school / 2000s London



The cover of a 1941 comic book that imagines Samson as a superhero
INTERNET ARCHIVE

STEP 4. SHARE

Choose a way for students to realize and share their adapted concepts. They could create a comic book or poster, a pitch deck for a movie or television show, a script, a mini play or musical, an epic poem, an aria, or simply share their new idea as a speech. You can refer to the Met's Lesson Plan Library (metopera.org/lessonplan) to find specific activities for comic script writing, patter aria writing, creating a pitch deck, and more.

STEP 5. REFLECT

Once students have adapted and shared their work, revisit the following questions, either in writing or a group discussion.

- What makes a superhero super?
- Does it matter where their power comes from?
- How can one person be a hero to some and an enemy to others?
- How does power and ego play into the creation and demise of a superhero?
- If you were a superhero, how would you determine what causes were worth fighting for?

SCAFFOLD

- Skip steps 3 and 4 to simply analyze the opera in the context of superheroes.
- Explore a case study repeating steps 2 and 3 for specific heroes chosen by you, the educator. These could be members of the community, characters from literature, or historical figures.

Philosophical Chairs

Active listening, critical thinking, and respectful dialogue (even when we disagree about something) are learned skills. Everyone can learn them, and no one can perfect them without practice. Philosophical Chairs is designed to help us develop these skills while also learning about the opera.

Directions

1. Read the Rules of Engagement
2. Read the Statements
3. Discuss

The Rules of Engagement

Be sure you understand the statement. If something is unclear, ask!

Face each other. Body language helps show that you're listening carefully and respectfully.

Only one speaker at a time. Everyone will get their turn to speak.

Think before you speak. Be sure that what you're going to say is what you really mean.

Summarize the previous person's comments before adding your own.

Address ideas, not the person. Challenging ideas or statements is good only if we respect the individuality and inherent value of the person who expressed them.

Three before me. To make sure everyone's voice is heard, you may not make another comment until three others have shared their thoughts.

Philosophical Chairs (CONTINUED)

The Statements

You might find these statements challenging—and you might find it challenging to talk with someone who has a different answer from your own. That’s okay! Remember, changing your mind when you learn new information is a sign of strength, not weakness.

1. Adversity is a universal human experience. (OR: To struggle is to be human.)
2. Trials are inevitable.
3. Love has more influence on one’s actions than logic.
4. Desire clouds one’s judgment.
5. Love is manipulative.
6. Beliefs influence behavior.
7. People need faith in something greater than themselves.
8. Strength is only physical.
9. Faith provides strength.
10. Faith is unshakable.

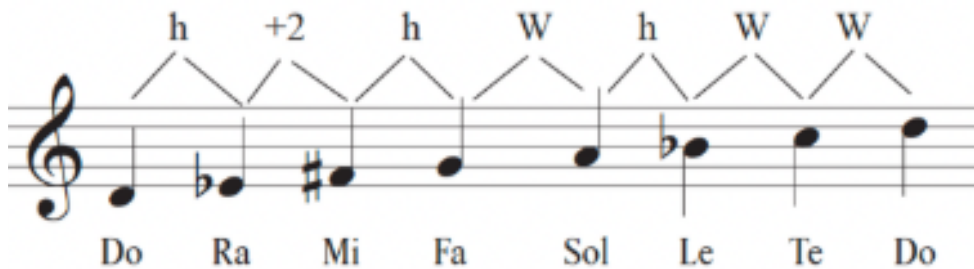
All That Hijaz | Maqam and Mode

Maqam Hijaz

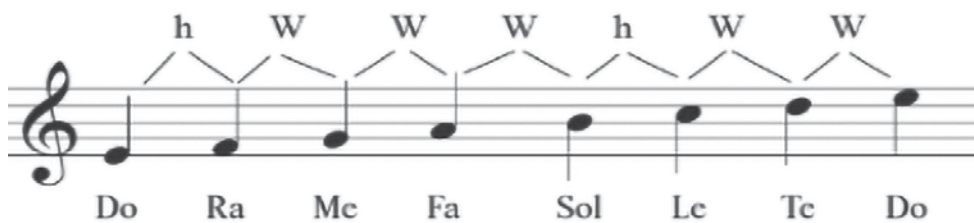
A *maqam* (pronounced *mah-KAHM*, plural *maqamat* pronounced *mah-kahm-MAHT*) is a melodic system used in traditional Arabic music. Like the major and minor scales we see in Western music, a *maqam* provides a framework for a melody. In Arabic music, however, a *maqam* reaches beyond simply organizing notes into a scale. Each *maqam* includes characteristic note patterns, melodic pathways, and expressive qualities that guide performers in creating music with its specified notes.

Maqamat are central to improvisation and composition in many Middle Eastern musical traditions, and they are often associated with particular moods, seasons, or poetic motifs. One of the most recognizable *maqamat* is *maqam hijaz*, whose unique quality is created by an augmented interval between the second and third scale degrees. Analyzing *maqam hijaz* from the perspective of Western classical music, we can see that it has a similar structure to the Phrygian mode. (Note that, in common performance practice, the second scale degree of *maqam hijaz* is often slightly sharp and the third is often slightly flat).

Maqam hijaz



Phrygian mode



All That Hijaz | Melody and Arrangement

Ga - ther - ing to and - ge - ther, dan - cing our all a - round.
Hear the drums and laugh - ter, let our voi - ces fly!

Soprano Glockenspiel

Soprano Xylophone

Alto Xylophone

Bass Xylophone

Bass Xylophone

Timpani/CBB

Voi - ces raise in to sing - ing, make a joy - ful sound.
Cel - e - brate to sing - ing, ther, mu - sic fills ful the sky!

SG

SX

AX

BX

BX

Timp.

All That Hijaz | Melody and Arrangement (CONTINUED)

9

TRANSITION

IMPROV ACCOMPANIMENT

SG

SX

AX

BX

BX

Timp.

13

13

SG

SX

AX

BX

BX

Timp.

CUE FOR RETURN OF MELODY

Zero to Hero | Samson Superhero Profile

Directions

Fill in each row below to show how Samson acts like a superhero in *Samson et Dalila*.

Superpower and Where It Comes From	
Goal or Cause	
Nemesis	
Examples of Superpower in Action	
Weaknesses	

Zero to Hero | Super Adaptation

Directions

Use the planning guide below to create your own hero. You can choose a real person or historical figure, a character from a work of art, or create one from scratch!

Hero: _____

Superpower and Where It Comes From	
Goal or Cause	
Nemesis	
Examples of Superpower in Action	
Weaknesses	

Post-Opera Review | *Samson et Dalila*

Directions

For each character, think about the following: **Main Goal:** What does the character want? **Key Moment:** What was their most impactful moment or scene on stage? **Performance Choice:** How did the singer(s) show the character through voice, movement, and expression?

Use specific evidence from the opera—such as a scene, vocal choice, movement, or interaction with another character—to explain your thinking.

Samson

MAIN GOAL:

KEY MOMENT:

PERFORMANCE CHOICE:

Dalila

MAIN GOAL:

KEY MOMENT:

PERFORMANCE CHOICE:

Abimélech

MAIN GOAL:

KEY MOMENT:

PERFORMANCE CHOICE:

High Priest of Dagon

MAIN GOAL:

KEY MOMENT:

PERFORMANCE CHOICE:

Old Hebrew

MAIN GOAL:

KEY MOMENT:

PERFORMANCE CHOICE:

Post-Opera Review | *Samson et Dalila*

Rate the following elements of the opera on their effectiveness in communicating the plot and core theme of the opera, five being extremely effective, one being not effective at all. Justify your rating with at least one example from the opera.

CHOREOGRAPHY AND ACTION DIRECTION RATING: ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

JUSTIFICATION: _____

SET AND LIGHTING DESIGN RATING: ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

JUSTIFICATION: _____

COSTUME, HAIR, AND MAKEUP DESIGN RATING: ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

JUSTIFICATION: _____

OVERALL IMPRESSION What is your overall impression of the opera *Samson et Dalila*? How effectively did it communicate the main themes and emotions?

STANDOUT SCENE Which scene was most impactful? How did the music, performance, and staging work together to make it effective?

PERSONAL CONNECTION
Choose a theme (desire, revenge, faith, oppression). How does it connect to your own life or the world around you?

