Part I

What is an overture?
What does it mean?

- The word “overture” comes from the French word “ouverture” which means opening.
What is it?

- An overture is an instrumental work
- It is an introduction to something bigger
What is an Opera overture?

- An Opera Overture is an introduction to an opera.
- It, "sets the stage", for what you will see and hear later.
Where did it come from?

- The idea of an overture dates all the way back to the 17th century
- Do you know the years of the 17th century?
What’s in an overture?

- 17th century overtures did not use music you would hear again in the opera
- There was a slow section and a fast section
What’s in an overture?

• More recent opera overtures use musical themes from the opera as an introduction to the opera.

• When you hear the overture from, “The Marriage of Figaro”, listen to hear if it uses a slow section followed by a fast section.
Overture from “The Marriage of Figaro”

• In this overture you will hear music from the opera

• The melodies (themes) are passed from instrument to instrument

• Can you name the instrument that has the melody as you listen?
The Marriage of Figaro
Setting the mood

- One of the jobs of an overture is to set the mood for whatever it introduces.
- If the music is light and happy, it is a sign that the opera may be happy or funny.
Setting the mood

- If the music is heavy and dark, it is a sign that what is coming up may be very dramatic
Are overtures only for opera?

- Overtures are used for many things.
- They can introduce a musical.
- They can be a stand alone piece of music called a “concert overture”.
Where else will I hear an overture?

• Many things use overtures - musicals, movies, and TV shows all use overtures.

• The Academic Overture by Johannes Brahms is usually heard at graduation ceremonies.
Where else will I hear an overture?

- “2001: A Space Odyssey” is really, “Also Spake Zerathustra from an opera

- Can you think of examples of overtures? Can you sing the melody?
Who plays an overture?

• Traditionally an overture is a piece for orchestra, but it doesn’t have to be.

• What instruments do you hear in the “overture” to your favorite TV show?

• What about your favorite video game?
Questions to answer

- What is an overture?
- What is its purpose?
- Who plays an overture?
- Where did the word come from and what does it mean?
- When did people start writing overtures?
- What kinds of things use an overture?
IT'S OVER!

The End