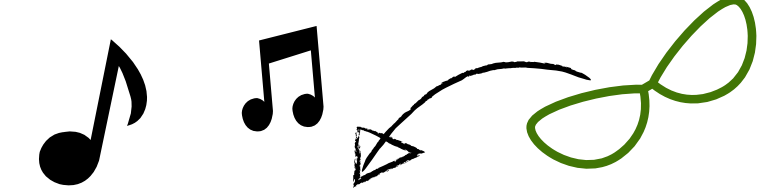




Luciano Pavarotti, Maria Callas and Enrico Caruso are among the greatest opera singers that ever lived.



Maria Callas had poor eyesight. She once mistook radishes thrown onto the stage for flowers.

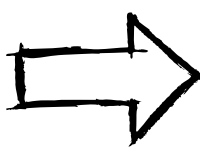
The careers of many great opera singers have been launched by the Cardiff Singer of the World competition at St David's Hall.



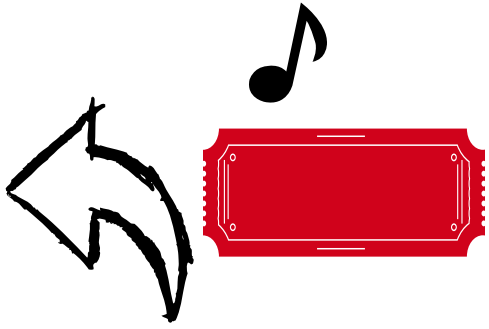
One of the most legendary stories of opera "going wrong" is a 1960 performance of Tosca, where stagehands cunningly substituted a mattress with a trampoline so that when Tosca jumped to her death she bounced right back up again.



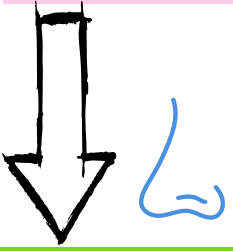
Wagner's Ring Cycle is more than fifteen hours long.



Puccini's full name was Giacomo Antonio Domenico Michele Secondo Maria Puccini.



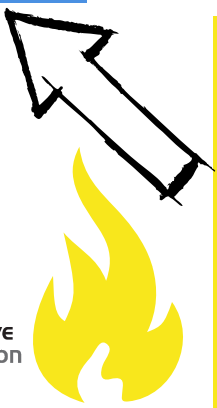
The earliest known opera is called *La Dafne* and was written in 1597 by Jacopo Peri. Unfortunately the music has been lost so we don't know what it sounded like.



Shostakovich wrote an opera about a wayward nose.



The final of the 1989 Cardiff Singer of the World at St David's Hall was dubbed "The Battle of the Baritones" as Siberia's Dmitri Hvorostovsky and Wales' Bryn Terfel engaged in intense competition for the title.



The name of Venice's famous opera house, La Fenice, means "The Phoenix". It is an appropriate name, given that phoenixes are known for rising from the ashes and La Fenice has burned down three times.