



# Young Audiences of Massachusetts

255 Elm Street, Suite 302, Somerville, MA 02144

(617) 629-YAMA (9262)

<http://www.yamass.org>

9/28/2010

## **ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE:**

**Opera Boston: "Little Red Riding Hood" by Seymour Barab**

**Grades: PreK-4**

The classic tale of Little Red, Mother, Grandmother and the Wolf sparkles with energy and humor in this updated musical version by composer Seymour Barab.

In this popular program, Little Red and Grandmother join forces to outwit the Wolf and send him packing! Besides the story, children will learn important lessons about the value of listening to parents, not talking to strangers and healthy eating habits. This interactive program includes a complete performance of the classic story, imaginative sets, plus an engaging introduction to the elements of opera and musical theater.

## **LEARNING GOALS:**

1. To introduce children to opera in a way that is meaningful to them, in order to discover that it is an accessible, engaging, powerful form of story telling.
2. To gain an appreciation for the unique experience of a live performance, as opposed to TV or film.

## **PRE-ACTIVITY SUMMARY: Telling a Story & Introducing Opera Manners**

Ask students for examples of different forms of storytelling. How are these distinct forms similar and different from each other? In what ways is opera different from other types of storytelling?

As part of a live audience, there are special rules to follow so that everyone can really enjoy the performance. Unlike TV and movies, the performers on stage can see and hear you, so it's important to stay in your seat and not talk to your neighbor. You may laugh and applaud during the show. Being an excellent audience helps performers do their best!

## **POST-ACTIVITY SUMMARY: What Makes Opera Special?**

Ask students if the Opera was similar or different from what they had expected. How might the experience of the story have felt if it had been spoke instead of sung? What other familiar stories might they imagine being turned into an opera?

**CURRICULUM LINKS: English Language Arts, Foreign Languages, Social Studies, Music, Theater**

# PRE-ACTIVITY: *Telling a Story*

**LEARNING GOAL:** To encourage students to recognize the similarities and differences between various forms of storytelling that are most familiar to them.

**MATERIALS/PREPARATION:**  
None Required

**TIME:**  
15 – 20 minutes

## **STEP 1:**

Ask students to name the various forms of story telling that they are familiar with and list them horizontally on the board. This might include books, movies, television shows, plays, musicals, dances, video games, songs etc. Ask students for examples of each type, and list the examples under each genre on the board.

## **STEP 2:**

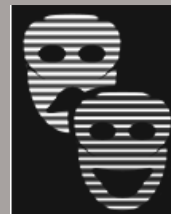
Ask students to identify as many characteristics as they can for each genre. Which story telling forms include words and which do not? Are the words spoken or sung? Which forms with spoken words use music to help tell the story? Are there many characters or just a few? Do many things happen, or just a few? Do we need to imagine a lot or a little to experience the story? How does each form let the audience in on what the characters are thinking and feeling?

## **STEP 3:**

What do they think opera is? What reason or reasons might there be for the words to be sung in an opera? Why do the singers sing so loudly in an opera?

## **EXTENSIONS:**

- 1) Choose a familiar song, and speak the words. Then have the class sing the song. Which version did they prefer, and why?
- 2) Choose a familiar poem and recite it. If the poem were set to music, what mood should the music have? Are there any instruments that would sound best?



# POST-ACTIVITY: *What Makes Opera Special?*

## LEARNING GOAL:

To appreciate how a story set to music enhances the impact of the story.

## MATERIALS/PREPARATION:

None required

## TIME:

15 – 20 minutes

## STEP 1:

What did students think of the opera, “Little Red Riding Hood”? Was it different or similar to what they expected?

## STEP 2:

Ask them to imagine the opera being spoken instead of sung. Would it have been as energetic, funny or scary?

## STEP 3:

What were the different emotions that Little Red, Grandmother, Mother and the Wolf each felt during the course of the performance? How could they tell what the characters were feeling?

## STEP 4:

Have students name other stories with music, such as films or musicals. What would some of their favorite movies be like without the music? Which of their favorite TV shows, movies or books could they best imagine being sung and why?

## EXTENSIONS:

- 1) List a number of familiar melodies such as folk or pop tunes. Are the songs fast, slow, happy, scary, sad etc?
- 2) Choose a story familiar to the students and list the main characters.
- 3) Choose which melodies might be used to by each character to tell their part of the story.
- 4) Why did they pick the songs that they did?

## VOCABULARY:

**Opera** - A story set entirely to music. The actors and actresses sing throughout the performance.

**Soprano** - The highest singing voice of a woman or young boy

**Tenor** - The highest adult male voice

**Alto** - A female singing in a low range sometimes called a contralto.

**Bass** - The lowest adult male voice

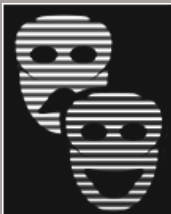
**Baritone** – A male singing voice whose range is higher than a bass and lower than a tenor

**Aria** – An elaborate song which expresses a character’s innermost feeling. It is sung with an orchestral accompaniment.

**Recitative** – A passage in which the words are sung, but in a manner that is similar to speech. It is typically used for dialogue between characters and has very little accompaniment.

**Libretto** – The text or script of an opera.

**Orchestra** - A large group of musicians who play together on various instruments, usually including strings, woodwinds, brass instruments, and percussion instruments.



## **RESOURCES:**

Children Tell Stories: A Teaching Guide by Martha Hamilton and Mitch Weiss, Beauty & the Beast Storytellers.

Bravo! Brava! A Night at the Opera: Behind the Scenes with Composers, Cast, and Crew by Anne Siberell

<http://www.operaitaliana.com/start.asp>

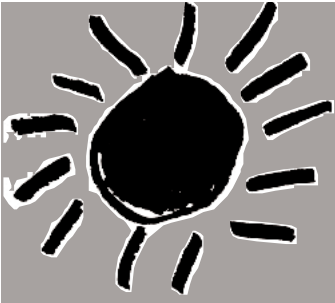
**ABOUT THE PERFORMERS:** Opera Boston is a unique opera company producing staged opera and special events at the Cutler Majestic Theatre in Boston and elsewhere in the city. The company presents new productions of innovative repertoire and rarely-heard works, along with groundbreaking opera education and outreach programs. Opera Boston productions have earned "Best of Boston" honors from the Boston Globe every year for the last eight years.

## **ABOUT YOUNG AUDIENCES:**

Young Audiences/ Arts for Learning (YA), America's largest arts in education nonprofit, transforms the lives and education of our youth through the arts. The organization connects professional artists with schools, libraries, community organizations, and hospitals to provide artistically excellent assembly programs that further develop Creative Learning and Life Skills.

All YA artists are professional artists who have completed a rigorous interview and audition process and are evaluated annually on their work. Through in-school assembly performances, workshops, master classes and artist-in-residence programs, teachers and coordinators integrate the arts in their academic and enrichment programs while directly addressing national and state content standards.

Healing Arts for Kids expands YA's mission to make the arts a part of EVERY child's education. A group of professional artists provide assembly programs, small presentations, and residencies to acutely and chronically ill children, physically and emotionally challenged children, and other special education populations in K-12 schools, hospital schools, hospitals, and homeless shelters.



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## MASSACHUSETTS CURRICULUM FRAMEWORKS CONNECTIONS

<i>Foreign Languages 4</i>	Students will demonstrate an understanding of the traditions, perspectives, practices, and products of the culture studied, including human commonalities as reflected in history, literature, and the visual and performing arts.
<i>Foreign Languages 7</i>	Connections...use target language to reinforce and expand their knowledge of other disciplines.
<i>Language Arts 2</i>	...pose questions, listen to the ideas of others, and contribute their own information or ideas in group discussions.
<i>Language Arts 9</i>	...identify the basic facts and essential ideas in what they have read, heard, or viewed.
<i>Arts-Music 1</i>	Singing...sing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
<i>Arts-Music 5</i>	Critical Response...describe and analyze their own music and the music of others using appropriate music vocabulary.
<i>Arts-Music 6</i>	Purpose and Meaning in the Arts...describe the purpose for which works of dance, music, theatre, visual arts, and architecture were and are created.
<i>Arts-Music 8</i>	Concepts of Style, Stylistic Influence, and Stylistic Change... demonstrate understanding of styles, influence, change.
<i>Arts-Music 10</i>	Interdisciplinary Connections...apply knowledge of the arts to the study of English language arts, foreign languages, health, history, and social science, mathematics, science and technology/engineering
<i>Arts-Theatre 2</i>	Reading and Writing Scripts...read, analyze, and write dramatic material.
<i>Arts-Theatre 5</i>	Critical Response...describe and analyze their own theatrical work and the work of others using appropriate theatre vocabulary.