

presents
Opera Soup Productions'
Opera Soup

International opera singer, music educator, and parent, Lori Brown Mirabal, created Opera Soup Productions to introduce opera essentials to young audiences and families. To that purpose, the shows have been designed to entertain, to inform, to encourage creative thinking skills, and to spark an interest for an on going and more in depth relationship between the learning community, the field of opera, and other areas of life and the performing arts. Accordingly, the music for these presentations has been carefully selected and prepared to incorporate national standards in music such as:

- *(1) "Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music;*
- *(3) "Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments;*
- *(6) "Listening to, analyzing, and describing music;"*
- *(7) "Evaluating music and music performances;"*
- *(8) "Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts;" and*
- *(9) Understanding music in relation to history and culture."*

The "Opera Soup" show was created for children in kindergarten through second grade and family audiences. This audience interactive show begins with an explanation of opera fundamentals (the "main ingredients"). The presentation culminates into an operatic version of the "Itsy, Bitsy Spider" song, which is performed by the singer along with participants from the audience. The show is approximately 45 minutes long, after which time will be allotted for questions and answers.

Brief Opera Background:

An opera is a drama which combines soliloquy, dialogue, scenery, action, and continuous (or nearly continuous) music. The first opera was presented in Florence, Italy around the end of the sixteenth century. However, the style of setting dramatic works to music evolved from such traditions as: the choruses of Greek and Roman plays; the medieval liturgical dramas and passion plays; and in between acts (an intermezzo) of the tragedies and comedies presented during the Renaissance era. (Grout; *A History of Western Music*, 3rd Edition, 1980, pp. 304 – 408).

Essential Words:

- (1) Opera – An Opera is a **story** told through **music**
 - (2) Composer – The music is created by the composer
 - (3) Score – The music in an opera is also called a score
 - (4) Libretto – The story in an opera is also called the libretto
 - (5) Orchestra – A group of 50 to 100 musicians who play the music in an opera
 - (6) Opera Singers – A group of people who sing in operas
 - (7) Soprano – A high female singer
 - (8) Mezzo-Soprano – A singer who sings high and low but mostly uses the middle part of her voice
 - (9) Contralto – A low female singer
 - (10) Tenor – A high male singer
 - (11) Baritone – A male singer who sings high and low but mostly uses the middle part of his voice
 - (12) Bass – A low male singer
 - (13) Characters – The many different types of people who appear in an opera
 - (14) Aria – Songs in opera are called arias. They help a singer to show what they are feeling
 - (15) Recitative – The words that are sung just before an aria
 - (16) Brava – “Good job!” (female)
 - (17) Bravo – “Good job!” (male)
 - (18) Bravi – “Good job!” (more than one person)
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Post Program Activities:

- (1) Learn to sing the “Hello Song” in Italian:

Italian:

Bonjourno, tutti (“bon-jor-no, tootee”)
si da vero, (“see-dah-vair-o”)
si da vero,
si, si, si
Bonjourno, tutti
si da vero
si, si, si,
miei cari (“see..mi-yay-ee, k-ah-ree”)

English translation:

Good day, everyone
Yes it’s true.
Yes it’s true.
Yes, yes, yes.
Good day, everyone.
Yes it’s true.
Yes, yes, yes,
My dear ones.

- (2) Using the basic elements of Opera learned during the program, students can create an “Itsy Bitsy Spider” opera.
- (3) Create a recitative/aria about your favorite daily activity.
 - a. Perform your aria for your class.
 - b. Combine all of the class arias and create a “Class Opera.”
 - c. Video tape your creation for family and friends to view.

Related Books:

- *Bravo! Brava! A Night at the Opera: Behind the Scenes with Composers, Cast, and Crew*, by Anne Siberell
- *Sing Me a Story: The Metropolitan Opera's Book of Opera Stories for Children*, by Jane Rosenberg
- *Opera Cat*, by Tess Weaver
- *When Marian Sang*, by Pam Munoz Ryan
- *Carnival of the Animals*, composed by Camille Saint-Saens (Book and CD) by Barrie C. Turner and Sue Williams
- *The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra (Book & CD)*, by Anita Ganeri

Fun YouTube links:

- For Teachers: Watch All the great operas in 10 minutes (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5vNReqUGtsc>)
- For Students: Watch an Opera Dog singing the famous aria “Largo Al Factotum” from Rossini’s *The Barber of Seville*. The dog “baritone” is on stage in front of a live audience while a different pooch is disguised in a Conductor's wig. The “conductor’s” baton becomes a magic wand that makes the singing pup do silly things. This might be a great way to assess student knowledge of basic opera elements. Students might also analyze and compare opera with the other styles sung in the cartoon. (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q63ZihNG_BU)