

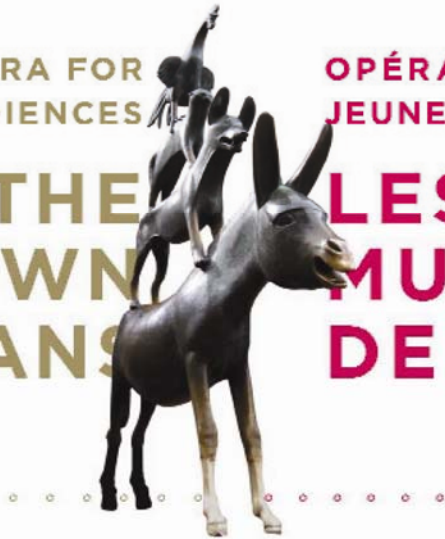
**OPERA  
LYRA**  
OTTAWA

OPERA FOR  
YOUNG AUDIENCES

OPÉRA  
JEUNE PUBLIC

**THE  
BREMEN TOWN  
MUSICIANS**

**LES  
MUSICIENS  
DE BRÊME**



Opera Lyra Ottawa Study Guide Series



**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

*Opera Lyra Ottawa would like to gratefully acknowledge Bell Canada for its support of our Children's Opera program and continued support of the mainstage season.*



*Opera Lyra Ottawa gratefully acknowledges the financial support given by the following:*



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# OPERA LYRA OTTAWA

Studio Programme Presents:

## THE BREMEN TOWN MUSICIANS

### The Cast and Production Crew

Mark Gough	<i>baritone</i>	Donkey
Graham Thomson	<i>tenor</i>	Rooster/ Mouse / Townsfolk
Christina Tannous	<i>soprano</i>	Cat / Townsfolk
Sarah Christina Steinert	<i>mezzo</i>	Dog / Townsfolk
Brian Wehrle	<i>bass</i>	Miller (Donkey's master) Wolf (Dog's adversary) Poet (Cat's master) Witch (Rooster's master) / Robber

Composer/Librettist  
Music Director/Accompanist  
Stage Director  
Set & Costume Design  
Stage Manager  
Costumes Supervisor  
Accompanist

Dean Burry  
Judith Ginsburg  
Ann Hodges  
Michael Rutland  
Gerry Egan  
Pat Nuell  
Evelyn Greenberg

## The Magic Begins

Do you remember how exciting it was the first time you experienced an opera? The magical experience of the music, voices, and story can be one that stays with you forever.

This workbook will allow your students in kindergarten to grade 6 to learn more about the opera, *The Bremen Town Musicians*, so that they will have an even better experience during the production.

Opera Lyra Ottawa believes in the importance of nourishing and cultivating young people's appreciation of music and the fine arts. So much can be learned about the world and about ourselves from our experiences with music, art and theatre.

### ***The Value of the Arts:***

The arts provide an excellent experience for its audience, often leaving very vivid memories that sometimes have a long and lasting impact. As a first exercise with your students, have a group discussion using the following prompts.

Have you ever been to a live performance?: (Music, Theatre, Art Museum, Concert, Ballet or Dance...)

Tell me about it:

Does anyone know what an opera is?

## **The Bremen Town Musicians: THE STORY**

Once upon a time, a Miller had a donkey who was a good, obedient worker. After years of hard work carrying sacks of grain to the mill, the donkey had slowed down and was getting weaker. This made his master mad. "Tail dragger!", yelled the Miller. "Brainless brute!" No matter how many names he was called, the donkey was too old to work any harder.

One day, the donkey overheard the Miller planning to get rid of him. "Why should I keep feeding him? I'll give him away, that's what I'll do."

The donkey, sensing an ill wind blowing, gathered up all his courage and ran away from his master.

While walking along the road, the donkey came across a hunting dog; howling mournfully.

"Good day Madame," said the donkey, "Why are you so sad?"

"I am old," wailed the hunting dog, "When I was young, I was a swift and strong hunter known far and wide as 'Iron Fang'. My master wanted me to find the Great Wolf and I chased him for years. Last night we finally met face to face but I was too weak to catch him. Master was furious and wanted me gone. When he went to get his rifle, I ran away before he could do anything to me."

"I have an idea," said the donkey. "Let's travel to the town of Bremen. I've heard everyone there is free. We can be town musicians."

The dog and donkey happily set off together. Before long they saw a cat walking along the road, looking as gloomy as three days' rain.

"Why so glum?" asked the donkey.

"I am aging fast," the cat replied, "My job was to keep the mice away from my master's poetry books. It's was a lovely life. They used to call me the 'Phantom Shadow' because I was so quiet and quick. But now my mind wanders and the mice can out run me! Master said I was useless to him and threatened to throw me in the river. What am I to do?"

"Come with us to Bremen," said the donkey, "to start a new life and live in freedom. We can all be town musicians."

## *The Bremen Town Musicians Explained*

The cat leaped at the chance. Soon the three came to a farm and sitting on the gate was a rooster, upset and crowing loudly. Soon the rooster was telling them why he was never going to sing again.

“My mistress is a witch,” the rooster explained, “who relied on me to wake her up early each and every morning so she could tend her magic vegetable garden. Because of my singing voice, I’m called the Scarlet Chanticleer. The other day I slept in, which meant the witch slept in and her magic garden was ruined. She was furious and told me she was going to put me in a pot to make chicken soup. So, I’m crowing while I still can.”

“Why don’t you come with us,” said the donkey. “We’re going to Bremen to be free” said the dog. “To be town musicians,” said the cat. The rooster eagerly joined them and three became four.



But Bremen was too far away and the animals couldn’t walk there in one day.

After the sun set, the four friends found themselves lost in the woods and feeling very afraid of the dark. After gathering his courage, the donkey assured them they would feel better in the morning after a good night of sleep.

So the donkey and the hunting dog lay down under a big tree. The cat climbed into the branches. When the rooster flew up to the very top, he spied a dim light in the distance. “I see a light,” he called to his companions.

“I see it, it’s a small cabin in the woods,” said the cat.

“Let’s go there,” said the donkey.

So they walked and walked and finally found the house where a light was shining bright.

The donkey, being the biggest, peeked in the window.

The rooster whispered, “What do you see?”

“I see a fellow. I think he’s a robber. He has sacks of gold at his feet. He’s sitting at the table set with lots to eat and drink and he’s stuffing his belly full.”

“Our bellies could use some stuffing too,” the cat said.

“We are too old to fight for the food,” said the dog.

“Since we are going to be the Bremen Town Musicians, we shall sing for our supper,” the donkey decided.

## *The Bremen Town Musicians Explained*

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So they got ready to sing. The donkey stood with his front legs on the window sill. The dog jumped on the donkey's back. The cat climbed on top of the hound. And the rooster fluttered up and sat on the cat's head.

“And a one and a two and a ....” said the donkey.

“Hee-haw, woof-woof, meow-meow, er-er-er-er-er!” And – SMASH!-the four accidently fell through the window and landed inside the house.

The robber was so frightened; he jumped up from the table, ran out the door and disappeared into the woods.

The four musicians picked themselves up, sat down at the table and ate and drank until their bellies were full.

Then, they turned out the light and using the table cloth for a cover, fell asleep.

Sometime after midnight the robber looked back at the house and said to himself, “The light isn't on, and I don't hear noises coming from there. Maybe there's nothing to be afraid of. I'm going back to get my gold.”

The robber tip-toed into the dark house but he wasn't quiet enough. The four animals woke up. Still under the table cloth, working together, they slowly stood up and started wailing.

The robber froze with fear, sure that he was looking at a big monster growing in front of him. The animals quickly threw the table cloth over the robber, sat him in a chair and bopped him on the head.

“Shall we get revenge and treat him like our masters treated us?” growled the dog?

“Shall we boil him in a pot of water?” crowed the rooster.

“Or throw him in a river?” purred the cat.

Just then the robber, who thought he was still talking to a monster, offered to be its slave if it let him live.

The dog, cat and rooster liked the idea that they would be masters and have their own slave but the donkey surprised them and said, “No!”

“It is wrong to treat him the way we were treated by our masters and mistresses. We agreed to travel to Bremen and be free. We now have to free ourselves by forgiving and forgetting the anger and our old lives.”

They agreed that the donkey was right and decided to help the robber change his ways. They made him promise not to rob again, to treat animals with respect and never return to the house again. The robber quickly agreed and was only too happy to be kicked out the door and sent on his way.

The four friends moved into the cabin. They didn't need to travel to Bremen to be free. They found their new home and live there to this day.

## **Ask the Experts!**

**THIS STORY HAS MANY CHARACTERS BUT ONLY 5 ACTORS,  
HOW DID YOU HANDLE THIS CHALLENGE?**

### **Ann Hodges – Stage Director**

When directing a play or an opera, I work with many different people. The Composer writes music that makes each character sound different - some sound loud and scary, some sound funny, and so on. Another person is the Designer. We decide together what the costumes look like so that each character looks different. Another person is the Costume Supervisor who makes or finds the costumes.

In rehearsal, I work with the Singers to help them make each character different through their acting, voice, and how they use their bodies. And when we perform the show, we have a Stage Manager backstage who helps the singers change their costumes, sometimes with only a few seconds to spare! So there are many people involved in creating the different characters, even though you may see only 5 singers onstage.



### **Dean Burry – Composer**

In some ways, I think the composer has the easiest job of turning five actors into many different characters. Music is incredibly good at creating emotion and mood – a march can sound very strong and war-like while a waltz can be soft and romantic. I just needed to decide what each character was like and then have them sing music that reflects that to the audience. Donkey is laid back and rather goofy so his music is jaunty and light. Dog's music is strong and intense. Cat is fancy and refined while the Rooster is pompous and overly dramatic. When you hear each character's musical style, you know exactly who they are. As the librettist, I was able to choose the words that each character would speak – that tells great deal about who they are as well.

### **Alix Sideris - Acting Consultant**

The performers in this opera are very talented and simply love to play! Every time a new character came along, I would ask them ... how does this character stand, how do they walk? When you play the witch, explore how she holds her spine and allow her to be fun and scary. And when you switch to the thief, change the way you hold your spine. Let his walk be different ... how does he sneak around, hide, and how does he react when he's caught?

And I would remind them ... it's ok to be big ... remember, this is the grand world of opera ... but you must keep it believable at the same time. Don't fake it. Really believe you are who you are. And the most important challenge was always this: Can you bring all of that physical and emotional discovery into your singing and be clearly understood and free in your vocal breath. Opera singers need a lot of air in their bodies to get that delicious sound out and fill a theatre. Throughout it all ... we kept it fun and explored and played and took tons of risks. And that's the beauty of opera and storytelling!

### **Mark Gough - Donkey**

When I am preparing a role to sing I always try to think of what my character looks like. When I look at the music and the lyrics of an opera or a song I can get an impression of what the person singing the words would look like. I think about what his posture and his body language. Does he stand up straight with his chest stuck out and his chin held high? Does he slump over and look at the floor? Does he walk quickly or slowly? Does he stand very still and quietly or is he very energetic or nervous? These kinds of questions help me understand how my character would act in everyday situations. It also helps the people who are singing and playing with me because I won't look like myself but like the character I am playing. It also helps the audience realize which character I am playing because my body looks different from everyone else's. There are a great number of questions I can answer just by listening to the music and reading the words and then finding a character body to perform with.

### **Sarah Christina Steinert - Townsfolk, Dog**

For me it is not too hard to remember who I am playing and when, because I play two clearly defined parts. In the beginning of the opera I play Townsfolk and then I play the Dog for the rest. However, there are many more characters I have to interact with while I am the dog and I have to remember when they are playing their main character and when they are not. As I memorize the opera, I try to always have the order of the story in my mind, and sometimes I draw diagrams to help me as I learn the music.

### **Michael Rutland - Set & Costume Designer**

There are five principal characters and eight secondary characters in this opera but until the end we do not see all five principal characters on stage at the same time. The lead character, the Donkey, is on stage at all times and his costume remains more-or-less the same throughout. Three of the other singers play two or three different roles as they join the Donkey on his journey to Bremen, and our busy bass singer (who ends up as the Robber) plays a total of five different roles!

The best way to make these transformations happen is to quickly add or change costume pieces, hats, accessories and props to represent the other characters like the Townspeople, Wolf, Witch, and the Poet, etc.

## Composer & Librettist Dean Burry



Dean Burry was born in St. John's, Newfoundland in 1972, but grew up in the small town of Gander. As both his parents' families came from small outport communities, he spent a great deal of time by the ocean and out in his father's boat. Music is in the blood of Newfoundlanders, and it was in this environment that Burry began his own artistic journey. Early piano lessons were not completely satisfying, and it wasn't until a teacher encouraged his desire for composition, at age 10, that music became a passion. Theatre was another great interest and soon he was writing plays and music for the school drama club. His first produced script, *Good Gods*, won the local drama festival in 1987. In 1990 Burry released a pop/rock album, *Plant Your Seed*, with guitarist/vocalist Brad Davidge.

Shortly after completing composition studies at the University of Toronto, Burry began working in the box office at the Canadian Opera Company while composing incidental music for small theatrical productions. Working in the box office was the opening he needed to begin immersing himself in

the Canadian opera world. Most lunches were spent upstairs in the library or chatting with the Education and Outreach Coordinator. He was able to attend rehearsals and learn a great deal about the ways to create successful opera. In 1997, Burry was hired to create and run the Esso Kids After-school Opera Program, a community program designed to expose children to all the elements of opera. The program has met with great success and is now in its thirteen season. In 1998, Imperial Oil won the Opera America Foundation of the Year Award, in large part due to their support of this program. Burry has been involved in many other education programs and has taught students from Junior kindergarten to university level.

In 1998, while working as an educator with the COC that he was commissioned to write *The Brothers Grimm*, an new opera for the annual school tour. The opera was a great success and was the first work to put the composer on a national stage. *The Brothers Grimm* has been seen by over 90,000 students since 2001 and has been added to the regular touring repertoire of several major opera companies. *The Brothers Grimm* is believed to be the most performed Canadian opera ever.

Burry is currently working on *Children of the Moon*, a lost opera libretto written by Robertson Davies in 1983, but never set to music, *Pandora's Locker*, an opera for high school audiences, *Baby Kintyre*, a CBC radio opera and several other exciting projects.

Dean Burry currently lives in Toronto with his wife Julia, daughters Blythe and Maeve, and Tibetan Terriers, Felix and Annie.

### WHAT IS A COMMISSION?

**A commission is the special request a composer receives to write an opera. An opera company or an individual contracts with a composer for a new work to be written. This is a great thing when it happens because there aren't very many new operas being written these days!**

## Fun facts!



**Original Sketch of the rooster's costume**



**The rooster costume was inspired by the famous Pavarotti (hankie; set of tuxedo tails)**



**Original Sketch of the cat's costume**



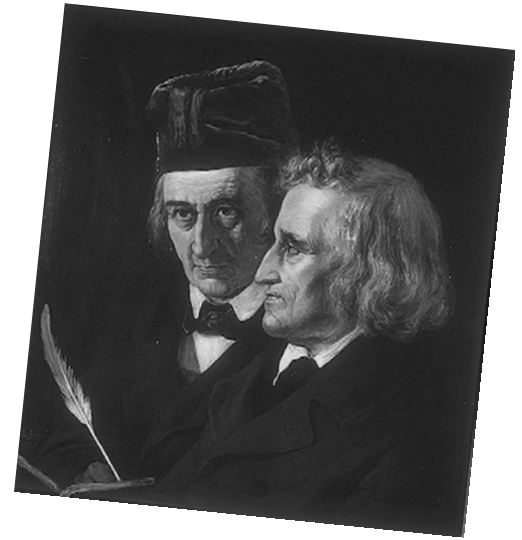
**Madonna inspired our cat costume!**



A bronze statue depicting the Bremen Town Musicians located in Bremen, Germany. The statue was erected in 1953. Note the front hooves that have become shiny. Touching the front hooves is said to make wishes come true.

## Did you know that the original story of The Bremen Town Musicians was written by the Grimm brothers?

The Grimm brothers, Jacob and Wilhelm, were two 19th century German scholars of philology<sup>1</sup> and folklore. They were the oldest of six children. Their parents died when they were quite young and Jacob was responsible for his five siblings. Wilhelm became a librarian and Jacob became a lecturer in ancient law, philosophy and literary history. Wilhelm married Dorothea Wild and had three children. They wrote educational books and created a German dictionary. But the Grimm brothers are most famous for collecting stories. The brothers began collecting folk tales around 1807, in response to a wave of awakened interest in German folklore. They searched the countryside for folklore and even traded in an old pair of pants in exchange for a good scary tale. The Grimm brothers edited and shaped them to stress religious, political and moral elements, more appropriate for young children. In 1857, the collection was published under the title *Children's & Household Tales*. Wilhelm died in 1859 and Jacob 1863. They left behind approximately 200 published stories that have been translated into 70 languages and enjoyed by millions.



The brothers take **note**: Between 1990 and the 2002 introduction of the euro currency in Germany, the Grimms were depicted on the 1000 Deutsche Mark note—the largest available denomination.



<sup>1</sup> philology – the study of language

## Musical/Opera Terms

**Pronunciation for Italian words is included.**

### A CAPPELLA [ah kuh-pél-luh]

Singing without instrumental accompaniment.

### ARIA [áh-ree-uh]

An extended vocal solo, usually a showpiece for the singer.

### BEAT

The underlying PULSE of a song. What you would clap along with at a concert.

## BRAVO!

**Audience members shout this Italian word after an exciting aria, scene, act, or performance. It is pronounced “brah-voh” and means “well done.” A female performer would be accorded a “brava,” and a group of performers (duets and ensembles) would receive a “bravi.”**

### COMPOSER

One who creates musical works.

### COSTUME

The outfit worn by each actor to reflect the time and place of an OPERA, as well as the personality of each character.

### CRITIC

One who describes and analyzes artistic works and performances, also judging their merits and faults.

### DOWNSTAGE

The position on a stage nearest to the audience. Because the "raked stage" prevalent in early opera houses was slanted, the closer a singer came to the audience, the lower the stage was to the ground.

### ENSEMBLE

The delicate equality of singing together in tonality and emotional contact. Also, a piece for three or more singers.

### LIBRETTIST [lih-brét-tist]

Author of an opera's text or the LIBRETTO.

### LIBRETTO [lih-brét-toe]

The text of an opera (Italian word for little book).

### OPERA

A drama expressed through music, in which the text of a drama is set to orchestral music and sung instead of spoken.

### PROPS

Objects, other than costumes or scenery, used as part of dramatic or operatic productions (short for properties).

### PULSE

The underlying BEAT of a song. What you would clap along with at a concert.

### QUARTET

A musical piece for four voices or four instruments.

### RHYTHM

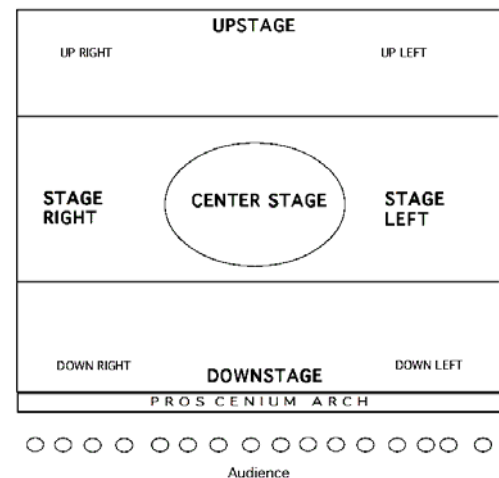
The pattern of beats created by the notes in a musical line.

### SET

The scenery on the stage, built to represent a particular location (short for setting).

### STAGE LEFT/RIGHT

The division of the stage from the singer's point of view on stage. For example: A singer moves to his/her left, which is the audience's right.



### TECHNICAL

The stage management, lighting, scene-building, and other mechanical aspects of a theatrical production.

### UPSTAGE

The position on stage farthest from the audience. (see DOWNSTAGE for further explanation)

# Everything You Wanted to Know About Opera

**Q:** What is opera?

**A:** A story that is told through singing, acting, and staging.

**Q:** What kind of story?

**A:** One music critic suggests that most opera plots boil down to a soprano and tenor wanting to hook up but being prevented from doing so by the baritone! While that's not always the case, the theme of unrequited love does turn up in opera frequently. Most of all though, the stories of opera are the human stories of love, loss, triumph and hope.

**Q:** Sometimes it sounds like the singers are singing songs and other times it sounds like they are half speaking and half singing. What's that all about?

**A:** The songs you hear are called ARIAS. The parts that sound almost like speaking are called recitative. Recitative is similar to the spoken dialogue of a play, but since it's opera, it has to be sung.

**Q:** Does the composer write everything? The story and the music?

**A:** Sometimes. In this case the composer Dean Burry wrote both the music and the lyrics, but quite often someone different from the composer, a LIBRETTIST, will create the text.

**Q:** What about all those voices? They all sound so different.

**A:** They *are* different. No two voices are ever the same. The most we can generalize by is their range and colour. Check out this handy chart for the voice categories.

<i>Coloratura Soprano= highest</i>
<i>Soprano= high</i>
<i>Mezzo-Soprano = medium-high</i>
<i>Contralto= low</i>
<i>Countertenor = highest</i>
<i>Tenor = high</i>
<i>Baritone = medium-high</i>
<i>Bass= low</i>

**Q:** What does it take to be a great opera singer?

**A:** You need a big voice that is distinctive, an understanding of at least four different languages, incredible musical skills, deep artistry, a healthy body, and a strong work ethic.

## What Is OPERA, Anyway?

1

### **Opera is storytelling!**

Take a really interesting group of characters. Add an exciting plot with adventure, danger, and maybe even a love story. Use a setting that is unusual, perhaps even far away in time and place.

2

### **Opera is drama!**

Next, take that story and act it out on a stage. Turn the conversations into dialogue for actors. Put the actors into costumes; give them make-up. Add scenery that takes people into a different world. Emphasize the conflicts and act out the struggles so that everyone can see them and feel them. Have heroes and villains – and maybe even dragons or monsters.

3

### **Opera is good music!**

Then, write music for your play. Use singing in place of all the spoken parts. When the characters are talking, use simple melody for their speech. When the characters are thinking out loud or presenting a little story, give them a song that is longer and gives them a chance to shine. When they are excited, you may have them sing higher and louder. Use an orchestra (just like the movies) to emphasize the mood of each part: fast for the exciting action part, soft for the love scene, heavy drum beats for the approach of the monsters. Have the orchestra play its music through most of the drama and even a few minutes before it starts (Overture or Prelude).

4

### **Opera is a spectacular event!**

Finally, take your musical drama, where everything (including even “hello” and “goodbye”) is sung, and add dancing and parades and lightning and thunder and a wind storm and lots of conflict and emotion

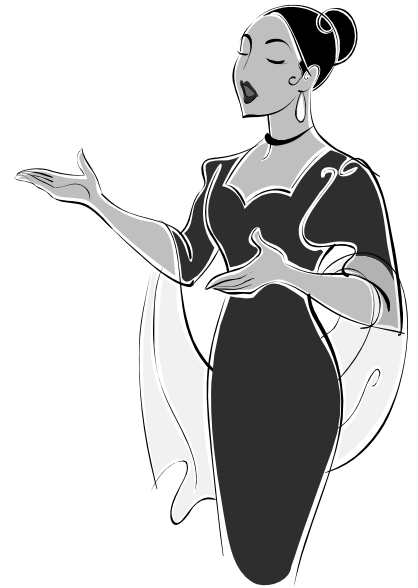
and...

...You've got an OPERA !

## Voice Types Based on Range

**Soprano:** The highest female voice has a range similar to a violin. In opera, the soprano is most often the heroine, since a high bright voice traditionally suggests femininity and virtue. The normal range of a soprano is two octaves up from middle C, sometimes with extra top notes.

**Mezzo-Soprano:** Also called a mezzo, the middle female voice is similar to an oboe in range. The mezzo sound is often darker and warmer than the soprano. In opera, composers generally use the mezzo voice to portray older women such as mothers, villainesses, seductive heroines, and sometimes even young boys (like Hansel). This is a special operatic convention, called trouser roles. The mezzo's normal range is from the "A" below middle C to the "A" two octaves above it.



**Contralto:** The lowest female voice. A true contralto is a very rare voice type, similar in range to a clarinet. It is usually used for an older female or special character parts such as witches and old gypsies. Its range is two octaves from F below middle C to the top line of the treble clef.

**Tenor:** Usually the highest male voice in opera. It is similar to a trumpet in range, tone, color, and acoustical ring. The tenor is usually the hero or the love interest in an opera. His voice ranges from the C below middle C to the C above.

**Baritone:** The middle male voice, close to a French horn in range and tone color. In comic opera, the baritone is often the ring-leader of the comedy, but in tragic opera, he is usually the villain. The range is from the G that is an octave and a half below middle C to G above.

**Bass:** The lowest male voice is similar to a trombone or bassoon in range and color. Low voices usually suggest age and wisdom in serious opera. In comic opera they are generally used for old characters who are foolish or laughable. The range is roughly two octaves down from the F above middle C.

## A Checklist for Opera Singers

A good opera singer must have...



### **Volume**

Opera singers are trained to be heard in large theaters, such as Southam Hall at the National Arts Center, without using microphones. Singers train for years to be able to sing loudly enough to be heard over other soloists, a chorus and a large orchestra of about 70 instruments. How loudly can an opera singer sing? When a jet takes off, the sound reaches 110 – 120 decibels, the human threshold level of pain. A powerful opera singer, singing very close to another person's ear, could reach up to 110 decibels.



### **Stamina**

Opera requires the ability to sing for two to three hours or even longer. Opera singers rarely perform on consecutive evenings because they are so physically exhausted by the performances. Opera Lyra Ottawa plans its schedule so that the artists can rest for a day or two between performances.



### **Range**

Operatic music, as written, requires singers to have a large range – to be able to sing very low notes as well as extremely high notes.



### **Acting ability**

Opera singers don't just stand on stage and sing; they must be able to act as well. Just like actors in a play, the singers must make the audience believe in their characters. For example, *The Bremen Town Musicians* would not be effective if the singers could not act well.



### **Familiarity with different languages**

Since opera was developed in Europe, most operas are written in languages other than English. A singer must be familiar with the pronunciation of foreign languages as well as the meaning of each word that they sing. It is not unusual for an American singer to perform in Italian, French, German, or even Russian.

## Audience Etiquette

Believe it or not, the audience is probably the most important participant in any live production! One of the most exciting aspects of attending a live performance is the interactive relationship between the audience and the performers. When the audience is at its best, the performers will put on the best show possible. It's a good idea to prepare your students for their role in our production of *The Bremen Town Musicians* by covering these two basic guidelines:

**Respect:** Opera is not like TV; the singers on the stage can see you too. Be respectful of all the hard work that has gone into the performance. Don't get up, talk to your neighbour, or otherwise call attention to yourself.

**Respond:** It's ok to applaud and laugh. In Italy they say "Bravo!" to show that they are enjoying a performance.

### Things you probably shouldn't do during a live performance:

- ❖ GET UP AND WALK AROUND.
- ❖ TALK, WHISPER, OR YELL.

### Things that are OK to do during a live performance:

- ❖ LAUGH if something is funny.
- ❖ APPLAUD at the end of a song, after a scene, or at the very end of the opera.
- ❖ SHOUT "BRAVO!" when the performers take their bows.



## **Write a Classic Folk Tale**

For all Grades

In this exercise, each student contributes to a class folk tale. Use questions based on the “Folk Tale Recipe” chart, included in this guide, to facilitate writing the story. Record the children’s sentences on the chalkboard. Each student then illustrates his/her contribution to the story, and the pages are displayed around the room or collected into book format.

The teacher begins with “Once upon a time...” and then calls on individual students for contributions. If students have difficulty, remind them of the folk tale recipe story elements.

Students can then write their own folk tales to add to the class book or make individual books for everyone to enjoy.

### **Once upon a time...**

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## Folk Tale Recipe

Listed below are the common elements of folk tales. As you read these stories, discuss them and fill the chart with the appropriate response. List any specific information you know about events, places, and characters in the stories. Using the information you have gathered, create your own folk tale. Then use this chart to complete the Write a Classic Folk Tale exercise. For grades 3 – 5.

	<i>Beauty and the Beast</i>	<i>Cinderella</i>	<i>Hansel and Gretel</i>
The youngest and smallest of siblings is successful after others in the family fail. Wishes are granted.			
Magic objects (rings, beans, or tablecloths) are standard props.			
Monsters often appear.			
Animals talk.			
Use of trickery.			
The number three is significant (however, in Native American folktales, four is the magic number).			
Use of a variety of tools			
A poor person becomes rich			

**READ ALOUD**

- Read to the students a grade appropriate version of *The Bremen Town Musicians* (suggested for this age group: *The Bremen Town Musicians*, retold and illustrated by Nirroot Puttapipat, ISBN 0-7636-2758-5).
- Discuss, using strategies appropriate for your students.

**CHARACTER SOUNDSCAPE** (*Visual Arts and Music*, 30 minutes)

**EDUCATIONAL FOCUS:** Students represent a Bremen Town character in a class “soundscape”.

**EXPECTATIONS:**

- **10.** explore a variety of tools and materials of their own choice (*Music*, KE)
- **2.** explore a variety of tools, materials, and processes... to create visual art forms (*Visual Arts*, KE)
- **C1.3** create compositions for a specific purpose and a familiar audience. (*Music*, Gr. 1 & 2)
- **C 1.5** demonstrate understanding that sounds can be represented by symbols.... (*Music*, Gr. 1 & 2)
- **C 2.3** identify and give examples of their strengths and areas for growth as musical performers, creators, interpreters.... (*Music*, Gr. 1 & 2)
- **D1.4** use a variety of materials, tools, and techniques ... (*Visual Arts*, Gr. 1 & 2).

**TEACHING STEPS:**

1. Students choose their favorite animal from the story and draw it on construction paper. Have them cut it out and then paste on a large sheet of mural paper.
2. Have students choose a sound to represent their animal from a collection of assorted instruments (rhythm sticks, triangles, jingle bells, drums, finger cymbals, sand blocks, etc.).
3. Tell students that you are going to be the “remote control” for their sounds and that they should play their instrument only when your hand passes over their picture on the mural.
4. Move your hand back and forth over the mural, changing speed or hovering over a picture for emphasis.
5. Ask students what they noticed about the soundscape created. What did they like? What would they change?
6. Have fun! Have students come up and take turns as the “remote control”.

**EXTENSION:**

Brainstorm types of sounds *The Bremen Town* animals would have heard and create other soundscapes. Some examples could include the sounds of the animals singing or the robbers running away.

**STORYTIME MIX-UP** (*Language*, 30 minutes)

**EDUCATIONAL FOCUS:** Students re-tell *The Bremen Town Musicians* by arranging sentences into their proper order.

**EXPECTATIONS:**

- Retell a simple story in proper sequence and recall information in it accurately (*Language*, RTC – Gr.1)
- Retell a story in proper sequence, identify the main idea and the characters, and discuss some aspects of the story (*Language*, RCT – Gr. 2)

**TEACHING STEPS:**

1. Write the following single sentences on chart paper ahead of time:
  - Once upon a time an old donkey who ran away from a mean master.
  - The donkey met a dog who was also running away.
  - Soon they were joined by a cat and then a rooster.
  - They all decided to go to Bremen and become musicians.
  - At nighttime they crept up to a house and looked into the window.
  - They saw some robbers eating at a table.
  - The animals crashed through the window and began to play their music.
  - The robbers were so scared that they ran away!
  - The animals helped themselves to a big feast and then fell asleep.
  - One robber snuck back only to be scratched, bitten, and kicked.
  - The robbers never bothered the animals again (they were too scared!).
  
2. Cut out each single sentence in strips and rearrange them on the pocket chart. Have the students work in small groups or as a class to put the sentences back in order.

**EXTENSION:**

Depending on the literacy level of the class, modify the exercise as necessary. For example, draw pictures instead of words or group two sentences together, or divide sentences into two for more of a challenge.

**DURING THE PERFORMANCE**

**EDUCATIONAL FOCUS:** Ask the students to think of two examples of how a dramatic or musical moment was effective.

**EXPECTATIONS: C2.1** express initial reactions and personal responses to musical performances in a variety of ways (*Music*, Gr. 1 & 2)

**C2.2** describe ways in which the elements of music are used for different purposes in the music they...listen to.... (*Music*, Gr. 1 & 2)

**POST-PERFORMANCE**

**FREEZE!** (*Drama*, 40 minutes)

**EDUCATIONAL FOCUS:** Students use a “freeze” to show their favourite moment in the opera and articulate why they enjoyed it the most.

**EXPECTATIONS:**

**24.** communicate their understanding of something (*e.g., ...a piece of music*) through drama (*Drama*, KE)

**B2.1** express feelings and ideas about a drama experience or performance in a variety of ways...(*Drama*, Gr. 1 & 2)

**TEACHING STEPS:**

1. Discuss as a class what they thought the MOST exciting part was in the opera.
2. In groups of four, have students create a tableau (frozen picture) of their favourite part of the opera.
3. Share the performances saying “3,2,1, freeze!” for each tableau. Have the class guess what the scene is.
4. Ask students to explain what their scene is and why it was their favorite.

**GRADE 3 & 4 ACTIVITIES****PRE-PERFORMANCE****READ ALOUD**

Read to the students a grade-appropriate version of *The Bremen Town Musicians* (suggested for this age group, Brian Wildsmith, *The Bremen Town Band*, Oxford University Press, ISBN 0-19-2789034-X). Discuss, using strategies appropriate for your students.

**CREATE YOUR OWN FOLK TALE** (Language, 3 x 30 minutes)

**EDUCATIONAL FOCUS:** Students find common elements in three different folk tales, then create their own, using the same components.

**EXPECTATIONS:**

- 1.1 read a variety of literary texts
- 1.2 generate ideas about a potential topic, using a variety of strategies and resources

**TEACHING STEPS:**

1. Explain that *The Bremen Town Musicians* is an example of a folk tale. List on the board the following characteristics of folk tales, and identify the example from the story:
  - begins with “Once there was” or “Once upon a time” or similar phrase
  - characters are common people or animals (not royalty)
  - some characters are good and some are evil
  - the good character(s) have a problem to solve
  - there is something magic or very exaggerated in the story
  - the problem is solved and the good characters live happily ever after
2. For this activity select three (or more) very short folk tales from Canadian, Aboriginal or world collections in your school or local library (one excellent source is *The Singing Sack* by Helen East, ISBN 0713658053). Divide students into groups of four, and give each group a folk tale to read aloud, taking turns. When students have completed their read aloud, they make a list on chart paper of how the same characteristics are present (or not) in their story.
3. Post the charts and discuss. Did most of the tales have most of the characteristics?
4. Create a new folk tale as a whole-class activity, brainstorming ideas for each of the characteristics. Once the plot is decided upon, students return to their groups to develop one section of the story.
5. Send your story to Opera Lyra Ottawa at [jdubois@operalyra.ca](mailto:jdubois@operalyra.ca) or my mail at 110-2 Daly Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6E2

**SAME TUNE, DIFFERENT STORY** (Language, Music, 40 minutes)

**EDUCATIONAL FOCUS:** Students create lyrics to tell the story of *The Bremen Town Musicians* using the tune of Frère Jacques.

**EXPECTATIONS:**

- **C1.1** sing, in tune, unison songs, partner songs, and rounds (*Music*, Gr. 3 & 4)
- **C1.3** create compositions for a specific purpose and a familiar audience (*Music*, Gr. 3 & 4)
- Divide words into syllables (*Writing*, S – Gr. 3)
- Choose words that are most appropriate for their purpose (*Writing*, WU&VB – Gr. 3 & 4)
- Use a variety of sentence types correctly and appropriately (*Writing*, G – Gr. 4)

**TEACHING STEPS:**

1. Write the words to Frère Jacques on the board, using a new line for each phrase.
2. Clap the rhythm (all the syllables) while singing the words.
3. Circle the rhyming words (John, dong).
4. As a class, create a new verse for the song, telling the first part of the story of the Bremen Town Musicians. Start with “Donkey’s walking, donkey’s walking...” and be sure to use a rhyme in the same place as the original song.
5. Divide the students into four groups to create four more verses to the song for the dog, cat, rooster and robber.
6. Share the songs with the class.

**DURING THE PERFORMANCE**

**EDUCATIONAL FOCUS:** Think about the scenery, costuming and props, and how one item can become something else. Try to find at least three examples.

**POST-PERFORMANCE**

**FROZEN PICTURES** (*Drama*, 30 minutes)

**EDUCATIONAL FOCUS:** Students work cooperatively in groups to re-tell scenes of the story of *Cinderella* through the convention of tableau.

**EXPECTATIONS:**

- **B1.1** engage in dramatic play and role play, with a focus on exploring themes, ideas, characters, and issues from imagination or in stories from diverse communities, times, and places (*Drama*, Gr 3&4)
- **B1.2** demonstrate an understanding of how the element of time and place can support the development of role (*Drama*, Gr 3&4)

**TEACHING STEPS:**

1. Review the storyline of *The Bremen Town Musicians*.
2. As a class, reduce the story to three sentences (beginning, middle, and end).
3. Divide into groups of three or four, and assign each group one part of the story.
4. The students create a tableau (frozen picture) for each sentence. Remind students to use different levels and exaggerated facial expressions make a more exciting picture.
5. Share each group’s scenes with the class. Select one student to read the sentence aloud before each presentation.

## GRADES 5 &amp; 6 ACTIVITIES

## PRE-PERFORMANCE

**READ ALOUD**

Read to the students a grade-appropriate version of *The Bremen Town Musicians* (suggested for this age group, Illustrated by Bernadette Watts, *The Bremen Town Musicians*, ISBN 1-55858-694-6). Discuss, using strategies appropriate for your students.

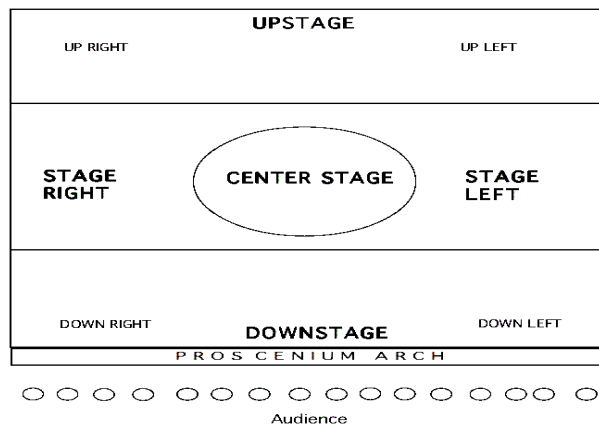
**STAGE INSTRUCTIONS!** (Drama, 40 minutes)

**EDUCATIONAL FOCUS:** Students learn about the terminology of stage instructions by playing a game in open space.

**EXPECTATIONS: B2.2** explain, using drama terminology, how different elements are used to communicate and reinforce the intended message in their own and others' drama works (*Drama*, Grade 5 & 6)

**TEACHING STEPS:**

1. Share the following diagram with the class:



2. Label the different areas of your floor and room space, and practice pointing to upstage, down right, stage left etc. Once students are comfortable with the terminology, remove the labels.
3. Divide the class into four teams. Give each team in turn an instruction involving three different stage terms, e.g., “Stand downstage facing stage right and pointing stage left.” The team members must follow the instruction as quickly as they can. Give points to each team (2 for very fast, 1 for slow, 0 for a mistake). Play until each team has had several turns and declare a winner.
4. Over the next few days play the game whenever your students need a quick break from their classroom activities. Ask students to create the challenge instructions.

## DURING THE PERFORMANCE

**EDUCATIONAL FOCUS:** Ask the students to remember one or more places where characters or storylines from other folk/fairy tales are introduced into this opera. Compare the story in the opera to the story version that was read in class.

<b>POST-PERFORMANCE</b>
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**Pulling it Together**

It takes a lot of people to produce an opera! An opera production not only involves soloists, chorus and orchestra, but many other people involved in planning, working behind the scenes, in the auditorium and marketing the performance.

Match the following Job Title to their Work Descriptions

Example: 1. to I)

Job Title	Work Descriptions
1. COMPOSER	A) I plan or design the costumes and supervise their construction.
2. LIBRETTIST	B) I choose the repertoire for the ensemble, come up with an artistic vision for the company and also a long-term strategy for programming.
3. ARTISTIC DIRECTOR	C) I am the author of words to be set to music in an opera.
4. MUSIC DIRECTOR	D) I make sure the technical equipment in the theatre is functional, maintained and safe.
5. TECHNICAL DIRECTOR	E) I coordinate between the artistic and business aspects of production; insure that everything happens on time and within budget.
6. REHEARSAL PIANIST	F) I block the action of the show; help the singers interpret characters; show actors how to move and gesture; work with designers to create sets and costumes.
7. STAGE DIRECTOR	G) I play for all music and staging rehearsals.
8. PRODUCTION MANAGER	H) I am in charge of the overall musical performance, including ensuring that the cast knows the music thoroughly.
9. COSTUME DESIGNER	I) I create music, usually by musical notation, for interpretation and performance.
10. STAGE MANAGER	J) I plan or design the color, intensity, and frequency of the light onstage.
11. LIGHTING DESIGNER	K) I oversee scheduling and supervise singers and technical staff during rehearsals and performances ensuring the correct flow of such things as the singers' entrances and exits, lighting and occasional sound cues, set changes and the organization of and distribution of props, the movement of scenery, the use of props.

**ANSWERS: 1. (I) 2. (c) 3. (b) 4. (h) 5. (d) 6. (g) 7. (f) 8. (e) 9. (a) 10. (k) 11. (j)**

## Happily Ever After the Performance

We hope that your students will have a great experience attending Opera Lyra Ottawa's production of *The Bremen Town Musicians*. To make the experience more meaningful we would like to suggest a number of possible additional classroom activities following the performance. In addition, we ask each teacher to complete the EVALUATION FOR TEACHERS which is located at the back of this study guide, and return it to address provided.

### Discussion Activities

If opera is a completely new art form to your students, this first exposure may have been quite different from what they expected. Discuss how their responses differ from their expectations.

If some students have had previous experience with opera, talk about how they felt returning to the art form and how seeing opera for a second (or third) time compared with the first.



### Writing Activities

Encourage personal responses by having students write thank-you notes to the singers, draw pictures of what they saw, write reviews of the performance, etc.

Assist students in writing a critical review of the performance of *The Bremen Town Musicians*. This project will facilitate students' listening, writing skills, communication and aesthetic judgment skills. Use the *Ottawa Citizen* worksheet on page 30 as a prompt, reminding students to include **who, what, when, where** and a **personal response**. Then please take a few minutes and send these critiques to Isabelle Dubois, General Administrator, Opera Lyra Ottawa, 2 Daly Avenue, Suite 110, Ottawa ON, K1N 6E2.

We really do appreciate your and your students' feedback. Let us know if the child's parents would allow for their review to actually be submitted to the *Ottawa Citizen*.

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# OTTAWA CITIZEN

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## Arts Review

### *The Bremen Town Musicians*

Write your account of what happened for your own newspaper review.

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Article written by: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail your review to:  
Opera Lyra Ottawa  
Attention: Isabelle Dubois  
2 Daly Avenue, Suite 110  
Ottawa, ON K1N 6E2**

**Parental Consent:** I hereby give my consent for Opera Lyra Ottawa to submit my son's / daughter's review of the opera *The Bremen Town Musicians* to the Ottawa Citizen for possible publication.

Parent's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Children's Literature

Cencetti, Greta. Wagner. School Specialty Children's Publishing, 2001. ISBN: 1588454746 (recommended 2-5th)

Cross, Milton. The Complete Stories of the Great Opera. Doubleday, 1952

Elliott, Donald. Lambs' Tales from Great Operas. Boston: The Harvard Common Press, 1991. ISBN: 0-876-45120-2

Ganeri, Anita. The Young Person's Guide to the Opera: [Book and CD set]. Harcourt, 2001. ISBN: 0-152-16498-7

Geras, Adele. The Random House Book of Opera Stories. New York: Random House, 1997. ISBN: 0-679-99315-0

Gruelle, Johnny and Jack Zipes, trans. The Complete Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm All-New Third Edition. Bantam 2003. ISBN: 0553382160

Hooper, Caroline R. Learn to Play Opera Tunes. Tulsa: EDCP, 1997. ISBN: 0-746-02420-7

Husain, Shahrukh and Mayhew, James. The Barefoot Book of Stories from the Opera. New York: Barefoot Books, 1999. ISBN: 1-90228328-7

Kobbe, Gustave. The Complete Opera Book. G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1976

Orgel, Doris The Bremen Town musicians and other animal tales from Grimm; ISBN: 1596430109

Rosenberg, Jane. Sing me a Story: The Metropolitan Opera's Book of Opera Stories for Children. New York: Thames and Hudson, 1996. ISBN: 0-500-27873-3

Siberell, Anne. Bravo! Brava! A Night at the Opera: Behind the Scenes with Composers, Cast, and Crew. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001. ISBN: 0-195-13966-6

Tatchell, Judy. Understanding Music. EDC Publishing, 1990. ISBN: 0746003021

*The Bremen Town Musicians*, retold and illustrated by Nirroot Puttapipat, ISBN 0-7636-2758-5).

Wildsmith, Brian The Bremen Town band; Oxford University Press 1999 ISBN: 019279034X

## Recordings and Multi-Media

Grolier Electronic Publishing Inc. Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia 1997. Danbury, CT: Grolier Electronic Publishing Inc., 1996. CD-ROM.

Harmonic Vision. Music Ace. CD-ROM. A series of 24 lessons designed to develop and reinforce fundamental music skills.

Meriam-Webster Inc. Webster's Family Encyclopedia. Chatsworth, CA: Cambrix Publishing Inc, 1997. CD-ROM.

Subotnick, Morton. Making Music. Voyager CD-ROMS. Children learn the basics of musical composition in a visually and aurally interactive format.

The Children's Group. The World's Very Best Opera for Kids. NAXOS. CD: 84341-2. Teachers Guide with CD: 84368-1

## Opera Websites for Educators

[www.artsalive.ca](http://www.artsalive.ca)

The National Arts Centre resource site for arts education.

[www.teachopera.net](http://www.teachopera.net)

Great resource for lesson plans, composer bios and other information on opera.

[www.aep-arts.org](http://www.aep-arts.org)

Arts Education Partnership Website Support for arts in the classroom

[www.operaamerica.org](http://www.operaamerica.org)

Opera America Website Find research and COUNTLESS other resources here.

[www.operainfo.org](http://www.operainfo.org)

A project of the Metropolitan Opera Guild with synopses, composer bios, photographs, lesson plans, etc.

## Who does what at Opera Lyra Ottawa?

Opera Lyra Ottawa has a great staff who works tirelessly to promote and develop opera in the National Capital region.

**General Director**

Elizabeth Howarth

**Technical Director**

Ron Ward

**Artistic Director and Principal Conductor**

Tyrone Paterson

**Director of Marketing and Communications**

Moira Johnson Consulting

**General Administrator**

Isabelle Dubois

**Development Manager**

Tricia Johnson

**Director of Outreach and Production**

Marilyn Lawrie

**Box Office Manager**

Laura Beks

**Opera Studio Manager**

Judith Ginsburg

**Volunteer Coordinator**

Patricia Blute

### Thank you

Opera Lyra Ottawa (OLO) sincerely appreciates the time and effort you have invested to allow us to perform for you. We look forward to providing more opportunities such as this to schoolchildren in the National Capital Region. Your feedback will be greatly appreciated so that this outreach program can continue to flourish.

Special Thanks to Alison Kenny-Gardhouse & Catherine West from Connexionarts for providing their valuable and transparent guidance all throughout.

Special thanks to the National Arts Centre for the loan of equipment for Opera Lyra's Opera Studio programme.

# OPERA LYRA OTTAWA

## *The Bremen Town Musicians Evaluation*

School Name \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher/Contact \_\_\_\_\_

Total number of students viewing production \_\_\_\_\_ Grade levels \_\_\_\_\_

Please take the time to evaluate the following aspects of your participation in the *Cinderella* production.

**Study guide:**

The study guide was a tool developed to assist teachers in preparing their students for attending the opera at the NAC.

The Guide was distributed two weeks prior to production. Was this an appropriate time frame to receive this document?  Yes  No

If No, what would you recommend as appropriate timing for its distribution?

Please rate the usefulness of the information provided in the guide in preparing your students for this production?

Not Useful    1   2   3   4   5    Very Useful

Did you use the activities?     Yes  No

Which of the activities were most useful?

What would you recommend to improve the study guide?

**Administration:**

What other arts programs will be at your school this year?

Would you be interested in working with the Opera Lyra Ottawa on other projects?

Yes  No

Did you find the opera staff helpful in planning the event?  Yes  No

Do you have any suggestions for making the booking process easier?

Do you have any suggestions for improving the NAC experience?

**Please comment on the quality of the:**

Performers: \_\_\_\_\_

Venue: \_\_\_\_\_

Did your students enjoy the experience?  **Yes**  **No**

**As a result of this initiative, have your students:**

Developed an understanding of basic opera/ music terminology?  **Yes**  **No**

Learned audience etiquette?  **Yes**  **No**

Expressed an interest in learning more about opera and music?  **Yes**  **No**

Learned enough about opera to explain it to someone else?  **Yes**  **No**

Describe how you integrated this performance into your overall curriculum:

\_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any other comments?

\_\_\_\_\_

Would you be interested in receiving additional information on the programs and productions of Opera Lyra Ottawa?  **Yes**  **No**

May we have permission to reproduce your comments in programmes and brochures?  
 **Yes**  **No**

We would greatly appreciate any comments from your students or completed activities to assist in preparing for future shows.

**Thank You!**

Opera Lyra Ottawa sincerely appreciates the time and effort you have invested to attend this performance and provide feedback on the experience.

Your comments will help the Opera improve this outreach opportunity for children.