

The Brothers Grimm

by

Dean Burry

Saskatoon Opera in Schools Study Guide

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Saskatoon Opera in Schools 2014 *The Brothers Grimm* (timkip imaging)

WELCOME

Dear Educators,

Opera is a living, breathing art form. It's for anyone, anywhere.

So it's a good thing that Saskatoon Opera in Schools' Tour is once again bursting out of the opera house to bring incredible singing, gripping drama and magical sets and costumes to your schools and communities. Every year over 12,000 students in Saskatoon and beyond are treated to some of the best young singers, directors and musicians this province has to offer. It is our mandate to create opera of the highest quality and many of our school tour performers have gone on to grace the stages of major opera houses.

The Canadian Opera Company commissioned *The Brothers Grimm* in 1999, and it has proved to be their most successful touring opera. The fascinating real-life story of Grimm brothers Jacob and Wilhelm unfolds alongside the delightful, mysterious fairy tales they collected, featuring the beautiful but sad Rapunzel, the spunky Little Red Cap and the impish Rumpelstiltskin. Magical singing and acting is certain to enchant your audience from "once upon a time" to "happily ever after!"

2012 marked the 200th anniversary of the publication of the original Grimm Brothers' *Die Kinder- und Hausmärchen (Children's and Household Tales)*. The fairy tales of the Brothers Grimm and our production of this opera provide the perfect opportunity to celebrate one of the most popular books ever published: over two hundred years of adventure, mystery and love.

The COC has created this Study Guide to serve as the starting point for your own operatic experience. A brief history of the opera, synopsis and what to look for in the visual design elements of the production will deepen the experience while teacher-created lessons plans will help connect the opera to the larger worlds of music, expression, literature and imagination.



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Contents

1. Opera 101	5
2. How a School Tour Opera is Created	6
3. Voice Types	7
4. Characters and Synopsis (Story)	8
5. Meet the Composer and Librettist	9
6. Over 200 Years of the Brothers Grimm!.	10
7. A Glossary of Terms.	11
8. What to Look for	12
9. Classroom Activities for Kindergarten to Grade 6	13
10. Opera Detective Worksheet	15
11. Classroom Activities for Grades K – 2	16
12. Classroom Activities for Grades 3 and 4	19
13. Classroom Activities for Grades 5 and 6	25

Opera 101

What is Opera?

The term “opera” comes from the Italian word for “work” or “piece,” and it is usually applied to the European tradition of opera. Opera is a story told through music, drama and design. Musical equivalents to European opera can be found in Japan, at the Peking Opera in China, and in Africa where it is called Epic Storytelling. The COC presents works in the western European tradition.

History of Opera — in two minutes or less!

Opera started in the late 16th century in Florence, Italy, at the beginning of the Baroque period of music. The first opera composers took many of their ideas from the ancient Greeks, who combined music and drama to tell a story more effectively. The Greeks also used a chorus to further the plot and comment on the action of the story.

Early operas recreated Greek tragedies with mythological themes. During the 17th and 18th centuries, opera used many different stories: some serious (called *opera seria*) and some light-hearted (called *opera buffa*). Since then, operas have been written on a wide variety of topics such as cultural clashes (*Madama Butterfly*), comedic farce (*The Barber of Seville*), politicians on foreign visits (*Nixon in China*), the celebration of Canadian heroes (*Louis Riel*), or children’s stories (*The Little Prince*).

You probably know more about opera than you realize, as music from Bizet’s *Carmen*, Rossini’s *Barber of Seville* and Verdi’s *Rigoletto* (to name just a few) are featured in countless movies, cartoons and television commercials.

Wondering how to explain what opera is to your students? See Introduction to Opera activity on page 13.



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How a School Tour Opera is Created

Story

Someone (usually a *librettist*, *composer* or an opera company) finds an exciting story they think would make a good opera – the story can be from history, myths, fairy tales or real life.

Librettist

Takes the basic story and writes it into a script like a play, known as a *libretto*, with characters, scenes and stage directions.

Composer

Using the libretto, the composer writes the music in a way that best tells the story. The final combination of music and libretto is called the *score*.

Stage Director

Reads and studies the score and creates a *concept* of how to put it on stage. Asks the designer, actors and music director to help support that concept.

Designer

Studies the stage director's concept and works with the director on a look for the production. With the help of builders, the designer creates costumes, props and a set. In big productions there will be more than one designer.

Stage Manager

Helps the stage director manage the rehearsals and performers. She or he writes down where people and sets move in the opera. Manages all performances once the stage director is finished.

Music Director

Teaches the cast how to sing the music and plays the piano for performances. In larger operas, the piano is replaced by a full orchestra, which is led by the conductor.

Cast

A group of singers act out the roles of the opera with the help of the music director, director and stage manager. The cast are the people you see when enjoying an opera.

Audience

What would a show be without an audience? Performing in front of an audience is what makes all the hard work worth it!

Voice Types

Just as each person's speaking voice has a certain range and sound, each singer's voice falls within a certain range and possesses a unique tone or quality. In the same way that no two people are physically identical, no two voices sound the same. There is a tremendous variety within each vocal range.

FEMALE VOICES

Soprano: The soprano is the highest of the female voices. Some are able to sing very high notes and skip through rapid passages with ease (*coloratura soprano*). Others specialize in singing with great intensity and power (*dramatic soprano*). Still others have voices of exceptional beauty that can sustain long melodies (*lyric soprano*). Sopranos tend to play the heroines (lead female characters) in opera.

Mezzo-soprano: These are lower female voices. Mezzo-sopranos have a darker sound and can reach low notes beneath the range of the soprano. Mezzo-sopranos often sing the roles of mothers, witches, confidantes, or even young male characters.

Contralto: This is the lowest female voice. This voice type is often written for a very strong character, such as a goddess.

MALE VOICES

Countertenor: A countertenor is a falsetto male voice with a very high register, so much so, that at first hearing he can sound similar to a female operatic voice.

Tenor: The tenors are the higher male voices, and like the soprano, cover a wide variety of vocal colours. A "lyric tenor" has the ability to soar through melodies, the darker-hued "dramatic tenor" displays great intensity. Tenors often play the hero.

Baritone: These are the middle male voices. Composers only began to write for this range in the 19th century. As with all the ranges, there are a number of types of baritones and many have extremely flexible wide-ranging voices. They play the villains, fools, friends, fathers and other character parts.

Bass: The lowest of all voice types, the bass has a rich sound particularly suited to the wiser, older or evil characters in the opera. Composers often challenge basses by writing notes at the extreme low end of their range.

YouTube example of opera voice types:

[An Introduction to Opera Voice Types \(The Royal Opera\)](#)

Characters and Synopsis (Story)

Character	Voice Type
Wilhelm Grimm	Tenor
Jacob Grimm	Baritone
Brentano/Colonel Krause	Bass-baritone
Dortchen Wild	Soprano
Frau Viehmann	Mezzo-soprano

Synopsis

On a typical day in Kassel, Germany in the 1800s, the brothers Grimm are working together researching words to include in a dictionary. Brentano, who is a poet and scholar himself, interrupts them and sets them a task. He would like them to write a book for him of common tales, like the ones that people tell around a fire. Since the Grimm brothers do not have a background in writing stories, they ask their friends if they know of any tales.

Dortchen, a friend of the brothers with a crush on Wilhelm, suggests the first tale, one of love. She briefly describes a prince rescuing a long-haired princess from a tower owned by a witch. This is too short for the brothers to use, so they adapt it, lengthen it and embellish it into what we know today as the story of *Rapunzel*. They are very happy that they now have their very first story, but they realize that one story is not enough. Dortchen suggests that she find a lady from the market, Frau Viehmann, who knows the greatest of stories and will be able to help them.

Frau Viehmann tells them a tale of a girl named Little Red Cap who pays a visit to see her lovely grandmother, who lives in the middle of the woods and is not very well. Little Red Cap has been sent to take her some food. Along the way she meets a wolf who takes a shortcut and arrives at the grandmother's house long before Little Red Cap. There he eats both the grandmother and (when she arrives) Little Red Cap. The brothers are horrified at this ending, and try to come up with a new one.

Colonel Krause, an old soldier who keeps falling asleep, tells them the third and final story, of a mysterious little man named Rumpelstiltskin. This story is of the miller's daughter who is sent by her father to the king's palace to spin straw into gold... something she cannot do (but must or else face death). A mysterious little man suddenly appears and offers to do the spinning for her, if she agrees to give him her first-born child. If she can guess his name, however, he will not take her child. Years later, when the miller's daughter has a baby, Rumpelstiltskin comes to claim his reward. When the time comes to guess his name, she draws a blank. With a little bit of help, she finally guesses the right name, saving her baby and they all live happily ever after.

Just as the brothers are putting the final touches on these stories, Brentano comes in to tell them that he no longer wants a book of folk tales. But so many people had already heard about the book and wanted copies that the brothers decide to go ahead and publish the book themselves as *The Brothers Grimm Fairytales*.

Meet the Composer and Librettist

Dean Burry (b. 1972)

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 first place in the local drama festival in 1987.

Following high school, Burry enrolled in the bachelor of music program as a saxophone major at Mount Allison University in Sackville, New Brunswick. In seeking ways to combine his love of theatre and music, he began composing operas and musicals. In his first three years at university, he wrote, produced and conducted three major dramatic musical works: *The Resurrection*, *Joe and Mary Had a Baby* and *Unto the Earth: Vignettes of a War*.

His studies in music continued, and Burry completed his master of music in composition at the University of Toronto in 1996. Shortly after completing his studies at the University of Toronto, Burry began working in ticket services at the Canadian Opera Company while composing incidental music for small theatrical productions. Working for the COC enabled Burry to immerse himself in the Canadian opera world. His own curiosity and interest in opera drove him to spend a lot of time at the opera company outside of working hours, observing rehearsals and learning a great deal about the ways to create successful opera. In 1997, Burry was hired to develop and run the COC's After School Opera Program, a community program designed to introduce children to all the elements of opera. The program is still vibrant today and celebrated its 20th anniversary in the COC's 2017/2018 season.

In 1999, while working as an educator with the COC, Burry was commissioned to write *The Brothers Grimm*, a new opera for the annual school tour. The opera premiered in 2001 and received rave reviews from teachers and students alike, putting the composer on a national stage. Since 2001, *The Brothers Grimm* has been seen by over 140,000 school children across Canada, the United States and Europe. In December 2012, *The Brothers Grimm* will celebrate its 500th performance making it the most performed Canadian opera in history.

Call out: Other major works by Dean Burry:

- [The Scorpions' Sting](#) – an opera for children, commissioned by the Canadian Opera Company in 2006
- [The Vinland Traveler](#) for Memorial University's Opera Road Show
- [Pandora's Locker](#) for The Glenn Gould School
- *The Bremen Town Musicians* for Opera Lyra
- [The Mummies' Masque](#) for Toronto Masque Theatre
- Works for children's chorus including an adaptation of Pierre Berton's book *The Secret World of OG* and J. R. R. Tolkien's [The Hobbit](#), both commissioned by the Canadian Children's Opera Company.

Over 200 Years of the Brothers Grimm!

2012 marked an important anniversary in world literature as we celebrated the 200th anniversary of the publication of one of the most popular books of all time: the fairy tales of the Brothers Grimm!

Although fairy tales such as *Hansel and Gretel*, *Snow White* and *Rumpelstiltskin* are read the world over, few people know of the two German scholars who collected and published them. Jacob (1785 – 1863) and Wilhelm (1786 – 1859) Grimm were born in the German city of Hanau and were the oldest in a family of nine children. Their father Philipp was employed as a local magistrate, a position which came with a large house, servants and a high social standing. All this changed upon Philipp's death in 1796 and the family was forced to move to more modest accommodations and rely on the charity of relatives.

Despite financial challenges, Jacob and Wilhelm excelled in school, studying law, philology (the study of words and language) and medieval German literature at the university in Marburg. It was these latter two subjects which inspired their life-long love of folk tales and in 1806, encouraged by their friend Clemens Brentano, the two set out to systematically collect and record the oral storytelling tradition of the local countryside. Contrary to what many believe, Jacob and Wilhelm were not really the authors of these fairy tales, unlike another famous writer of tales, Hans Christian Andersen. Andersen's works, while certainly appearing to be folktales, are defined as *literary tales*. His stories, including *The Little Mermaid* and *Thumbelina* came from his imagination. As folklorists, the Grimm brothers sought to record common stories that were told around camp fires or to children at night – some of which had been passed down for centuries. Travelling around the local district and inviting individuals into their home allowed them to accumulate a vast amount of raw material which included everything from magical fairy tales to parables, local legends, fables and other moral lessons. The resulting book, *Die Kinder- und Hausmärchen* or *Children's and Household Tales*, was published on December 20, 1812 and contained 86 stories including *Rapunzel*, *The Frog Prince*, *Cinderella*, *The Fisherman and His Wife*, *The Bremen Town Musicians* and *The Elves and the Shoemaker*. By 1857, seven editions had been released and the publication had grown to include 211 entries.

It is interesting to note, that although the brothers' original goal was to produce an accurate account of German folk tales, they found it irresistible to modify some of the story fragments they received to create a more satisfying narrative. Through the various editions they also revised many of the tales to be more reflective of trends in religion, social appropriateness and children's literature.

Children's and Household Tales has been translated into over 100 languages and served as the inspiration for some of the world's most enduring operas, plays, movies and even video games.

A Glossary of Terms

Opera and Music Terms:

A capella: Vocal music without instrumental accompaniment

Aria: A song for one singer; content is often self-reflective in nature, or emotional

Arioso: A type of singing that is more tied to the rhythm of speech than an aria, but more melodic than recitative

Bel canto: Italian for “beautiful singing” (also a style of music)

Chorus: A group of singers who act and sing together

Coloratura: Ornamental vocal music where several notes are sung for each syllable of the text

Composer: The individual who writes the music

Concept: A stage director’s overall sense of how a given production should look and feel

Conductor: The musical director of the orchestra

Crescendo: Gradually getting louder

Decrescendo: Gradually getting softer

Duet: A song written for, and performed by, two singers

Ensemble: A group of complementary singers or musicians that combine to create a single musical effect

Finale: The final musical number of an act, scene, or opera

Forte: Musical notation meaning the notes should be played or sung loudly

Legato: Smooth, connected playing or singing, with flowing transition from one note to another

Librettist: The individual who writes the libretto of an opera

Libretto: The words and story of the opera set to the composer’s music; Italian for “little book”

Mezzo: Medium (e.g. *mezzo forte* means medium loud)

Note: A musical sound with its own pitch

Octave: The eight-interval distance between two notes of the same pitch in a scale

Ostinato: A continually repeated musical phrase or rhythm

Overture: The introductory musical passage played by the orchestra

Pianissimo: Very soft

Pitch: The highness or lowness of sound

Recitative: A type of singing found in opera when words are sung in a way that imitates speech

Scale: A series of notes (usually eight in the Western tradition) that can be played in an ascending and descending pattern

Score: Music in written form with all the parts set down in relation to each other

Tempo: The speed at which a piece of music moves

Timbre: The quality of tone (vocal or instrumental)

What to Look for

The visual elements or design of an opera plays a vital role in how the story is told. Sets, props and costumes all combine to show location, atmosphere and character while supporting key events of the plot.

Like the characters themselves, many of the props (items used by the singers) of the opera spring forth from books. For example, set pieces like drama blocks have been designed to conceal such important objects as Rumpelstiltskin's spinning wheel and the witch's garden in the story of Rapunzel.

The costumes of this production are called period costumes, meaning the designer is attempting to recreate the actual clothing worn in Germany in the early 1800s. There are also several performers that have to play more than one role. The bass-baritone who plays Brentano must also play Colonel Krause, Rapunzel's father, the Miller, Rumpelstiltskin and even Grandma! Costumes changes help singers portray such different roles.

In keeping with the storytelling style of the opera, some of the performers in each tale can be characterized through the use of masks. Half-masks show some of the singer's or actor's face, but are designed to convey the essence of the character being portrayed. They allow the singer to breathe and sing more easily than a full-face mask. Often they highlight one facial feature, in order to emphasize the nature of the character.

Also, a designer may do many sketches around a basic idea. These ideas are then further developed in rehearsal.



Saskatoon Opera in Schools 2018 *The Scorpions' Sting* (timkip imaging)

Classroom Activities for Kindergarten to Grade 6

Pre-Performance Activity

Introduction to Opera

Music, Media Literacy

two periods, 30 minutes each

SUMMARY:

Students are introduced to the opera medium and opera-related vocabulary. Students listen to opera excerpts and identify emotions/stories in music. In this lesson, students explore opera through reflection and active participation, and practice listening skills.

OBJECTIVES:

- Introduce opera as a collaborative form of storytelling which includes music, drama and design
- Highlight the difference between opera and other art forms including ballet, plays, etc.
- Identify how music helps to convey and emphasize the drama and emotions in a story and in opera

ACTIVITY:

PART ONE:

1. Hand out three cue cards to students.
2. Ask the students: What do you think of when you hear the word “opera”?
3. Ask the students to write down three words that they associate with opera on the cue card (one word per cue card). Note: if students are not able to write yet, ask the students to voice their words and the teacher can then write the words out on the cue cards.
4. Invite the students to put their cue cards up on the board (chart paper, black board, white board, etc.)
5. Ask the students if any of their answers correspond to one another: e.g. “singing” and “instruments.” Begin to group the cue cards.
6. Hopefully, you will see at least three groups come out of this activity: one with music-focused words, another with words related to drama and/or movement and one group that relates mainly to visual arts or design.
7. Give the students the proper definition for opera: Opera is a form of theatre that uses music, drama and design to tell a story. Ask them if their findings and words support this definition.
8. Ask the students what they think is the difference between opera and a play? An opera and a ballet? What grouping might be noticeably absent from these other art forms?
9. Many individuals believe that the only way to understand an opera is to be fluent in the language in which it is sung. Ask the students how else they can follow a story without knowing a foreign language. Some of the possible answers may include: the music, the movement of the singers, the colours of the costumes, the light on stage, etc.
10. Tell the students that you’ll focus on discovering how music helps to tell the story.

PART TWO:

1. Introduce/review the musical terms (e.g. forte, piano, tempo, etc.) and operatic terms (see “A Glossary of Terms” on page 11).
2. Lead the class in singing a familiar tune, then sing it again with different emotions (e.g. “Row, row, row your boat” sung happily, angrily, sadly). Discuss what volumes of sound and tempos they chose to convey the different emotions. Why did they choose them?
3. Play three operatic excerpts, each representing a different emotion. Refer to the suggested list of pieces below. Play each excerpt twice through and ask the students to complete the questions for each excerpt on the “Opera Detective Worksheet” on page 15.
4. Discuss the responses once all three excerpts have been played and the worksheets are completed. What did the students imagine was happening in the story? What was (were) the singer(s) singing about?
5. Once you’ve reviewed each column, read the actual libretto (text) of the excerpt for the students. Were their interpretations of the music accurate? Did many students have a similar response? How did the music help tell the story?

EXTENSION:

Discuss the universality of music and emotions. Is one sound always a “happy” sound? Can a sound convey a “happy” emotion for some but a “sad” feeling for others? If so, why?

SUGGESTED EXCERPTS:

“Largo al factotum” – from Rossini’s <i>The Barber of Seville</i> (baritone aria)	Music	Libretto
“Les voici, les voici!” – from Bizet’s <i>Carmen</i> (children’s chorus)	Music	Libretto
“O soave fanciulla” – from Puccini’s <i>La Bohème</i> (tenor/soprano duet)	Music	Libretto
“Va, pensiero” – from Verdi’s <i>Nabucco</i> (chorus)	Music	Libretto
“Voi che sapete” – from Mozart’s <i>The Marriage of Figaro</i> (mezzo-soprano aria)	Music	Libretto
“Una furtiva lagrima” – from Donizetti’s <i>L’elisir d’amore</i> (tenor aria)	Music	Libretto
“Evening Prayer” – from Humperdinck’s <i>Hansel and Gretel</i> (soprano/mezzo-soprano duet)	Music	Libretto
“Der hölle Rache” – from Mozart’s <i>The Magic Flute</i> (soprano aria)	Music	Libretto

Opera Detective Worksheet

Name _____

Date _____

Excerpt 1 _____

Excerpt 2 _____

Excerpt 3 _____

What is tempo? _____

What is (are) the overall emotion(s) of this piece? _____

Who do you think is singing? (e.g. a young woman? a group of sailors?) _____

What do you think is the story behind the piece (what are they singing about)?

How do you feel while listening to this piece? _____

Classroom Activities for Grades K – 2

Pre-Performance Activities

Let's Perform!

Drama and Dance, 15 minutes

SUMMARY:

Students will concentrate on the sounds around them and physically create dramatic characters.

OBJECTIVE:

- Perform in a group
- Describe responses to music that they hear
- Demonstrate the ability to move and control their bodies in space and time

ACTIVITY:

1. Have students find a spot in the room where they can spread their arms out and not touch anyone. Have them stand in those spots with their arms at their sides.
2. Tell the students they are becoming very sleepy and to sink to the floor as slowly as possible and lie down, using smooth movements.
3. When all students are lying down, ask them to concentrate on the sounds they hear outside the classroom, (people walking by, other classes) and inside the classroom (clocks, the lights). Which sounds are high and low, and which are loud and soft?
4. Finally ask them to concentrate so hard that they can “hear” their own heartbeat. They can find their pulse on their neck so they can feel the beat as well.
5. Ask them to imagine their favourite character from one of their favourite stories (preferably not TV). What is that person (or animal) wearing? What is he/she/it doing? Tell the students that when you clap three times, they are to wake up and “become” that character, moving silently around the space.
6. Tell the students that their character is doing a job or a task. Have them act out that task.
7. Freeze! Explain to the students that their character has just encountered a problem with the job he/she is doing (they have lost something, something has broken, etc.). Are the students clear enough in their silent actions that you can tell what the problem is?
8. Have the students figure out a way to solve this problem. When they have solved the problem, have them sit down.
9. Ask students to break into groups of three or four and tell the others who they were, what they were doing, what their problem was and how it was solved.

Sounds of a Magic Forest

Drama and Music, 30 minutes

SUMMARY: Students will create a class soundscape of various forest sounds.

OBJECTIVE:

- Identify examples of dynamics in their environment and in music
- Identify different tempi (speeds) in their environment and in music
- Perform a “soundscape” or sound collage based on a theme or topic

ACTIVITY:

1. Arrange students in a circle. Tell them that they are going to become an orchestra called “Sounds of a Magic Forest.” Brainstorm about what kinds of sounds one might hear in a forest. Give them a few moments to think of a unique sound they would like to produce (e.g. blowing air may sound like the wind, the rubbing of hands on one’s legs may sound like rustling leaves).
2. Tell the students that you are going to be the “remote control” for their sounds. When you move your hand(s) with your palms up to the ceiling, their sounds get louder. When you lower them with your palms down, they are to get softer. When you move your hands in a wave-like motion quickly, they are to speed up their sounds. When you wave very slowly, they slow down their sounds.
3. Have a discussion. What sounds are slow sounds in the school? Fast sounds? What sounds do they like? Which are fast in tempo? Slow?
4. Have fun! Have students be the conductor. Divide the students into two groups and have them each follow a different hand with different commands.

EXTENSION:

Brainstorm types of sounds the characters from The Brothers Grimm would have heard throughout the story and create other soundscapes. Some examples could include: sounds of books and writing; sounds within a small German village; sounds of celebration at the end of the opera.

Underscore

Language and Music, 30 minutes

SUMMARY: Students use sounds to help tell the stories found in The Brothers Grimm.

OBJECTIVE:

- Demonstrate understanding of a variety of written materials read to them
- Express thoughts and feelings about a story
- Produce works of art that communicate thoughts and feelings
- Retell a story by presenting events in a coherent sequence

ACTIVITY:

1. Read *Rapunzel*, *Little Red Cap* and *Rumpelstiltskin* out loud to the students. Have children use their soundscape noises during the reading to underscore the forest scenes.
2. Have students choose their favourite story and decide what they thought the most exciting part was.

During the Performance

Ask the students to consider two examples of how music helped with the drama.

Post-Performance Activity

The Brothers Grimm Mural

Visual Art and Language, 60 minutes

SUMMARY:

Students will recreate their favourite images and scenes from the production and articulate why they enjoyed them.

OBJECTIVE:

- Use pictures, sculptures, and collage to represent scenes
- Describe the subject matter in their own and others' art work
- Produce two- and three-dimensional works of art that communicate thoughts and feelings
- Correctly use the vocabulary appropriate to their grade level

ACTIVITY:

1. Discuss as a class the most exciting aspects of the production.
2. Provide students with a large piece of paper and allow them to make drawings/paintings/collages of their favourite scenes from the opera. If possible, also encourage them to include words or sentences that correspond with their pictures.
3. Students can present their work to the class.
4. Fill the hallways with these terrific images!

Classroom Activities for Grades 3 and 4

Pre-Performance Activities

Frozen Pictures

Drama, 50 minutes

SUMMARY:

Students will work co-operatively in groups to retell scenes from *The Brothers Grimm* through tableaux.

OBJECTIVE:

- Interpret and communicate the meaning of stories using basic drama techniques
- Enact or create, rehearse, and present drama and dance works based on novels, stories, poems, and plays
- Demonstrate the ability to maintain concentration while in a role

ACTIVITY:

1. Read the story of The Brothers Grimm out loud to the students.
2. As a class, pick one of the fairy tales (Rapunzel, Little Red Cap or Rumpelstiltskin) and reduce the story to three sentences (beginning, middle and end).
3. Divide the students into groups of three or four and encourage them to create a tableau (frozen picture) for each sentence. Suggest that different levels and exaggerated facial expressions make a more exciting picture.
4. Allow each group to perform their tableaux while one student reads the sentences aloud.

EXTENSION:

Allow each group to create their own three-sentence frames.

Comic Relief

Visual Art and Language, 50 minutes

SUMMARY:

Students will create a comic strip based on their favourite segment of the story.

OBJECTIVE:

- Identify and explain the specific choices they made in planning, producing, and displaying their artwork
- Choose words that are most appropriate for their purpose
- Use a variety of sentence types correctly and appropriately
- Identify the emotional quality of the text

ACTIVITY:

1. Tell the story of The Brothers Grimm to the class.
2. Invite the students to discuss their favourite scenes from the story and to consider appropriate costumes, props, and set designs.
3. Ask the students to recreate their favourite scenes through a comic strip, emphasizing the important relationship of images and text.
4. In groups, challenge the students to share their comic strips and to explain their artistic choices.
5. Collect all the comic strips from the students and create The Brothers Grimm comic book.

EXTENSION:

Encourage students to think about the important relationship between music and drama. How does the music heighten the plot or provide further insight into characters? How does the music emphasize mood or communicate emotion?

Same Tune, Different Story

Music and Language, 30 minutes

SUMMARY:

In this activity, students will use familiar tunes and create new texts to these melodies.

OBJECTIVE:

- Divide words into syllables
- Substitute different words in familiar songs or create new verses, using their knowledge of rhythm to ensure that the new text fits with the melody
- Sing and/or play in tune

ACTIVITY:

1. Write the words for “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star” on the board with each phrase written on a different line.
2. As a class, sing the song aloud, and then clap each syllable while singing the song a second time. This will reinforce the rhythm that they will be matching to new lyrics.
3. Challenge the students to create their own lyrics based on The Brothers Grimm to the “Twinkle” tune. The following first lines for verses can serve as a template:
4. Verse #1: Once two brothers had a job,
5. Verse #2: In a tower lived a girl,
6. Verse #3: Little Red Cap walked along,
7. When finished, students can form groups and share songs. One way to do this is to have students pick their favourite verse, and to recreate the storyline in chronological order.
8. Share songs with the class!

EXTENSION:

Create one giant The Brothers Grimm theme song. The words could be printed on large chart paper, or keyed into a class newsletter for one big sing-along!

During the Performance

Think about the set, costumes, and props, and how one performer can play many roles. Provide three examples of a performer that played more than one character.

Post-Performance Activities

Magic Verses

Drama and Music, 40 minutes

SUMMARY:

Students will write magic chants using nonsense words.

OBJECTIVE:

- Write and perform chants
- Create and perform musical compositions in which the students apply their knowledge of musical elements and sound patterns
- Create an accompaniment for a story, poem, or dramatic presentation, using their knowledge of beat, rhythm, and tone colour
- Create an accompaniment for a song, using a melodic ostinato

ACTIVITY:

1. Introduce the following magic verse or rhythm poem to the students

Dum diddle dee, diddle dum, diddle doo

Bum biddle bee, biddle bum, biddle boo

Zum ziddle zee, ziddle zum, ziddle zoo.

Rik-a-tik-a

Rik-a-tik-a

Ticky, tacky, too!

2. Add rhythmic body actions, such as clapping, snapping, patting, etc., to correspond with various patterns. For example, one might clap twice on two-syllable words such as “diddle,” and snap on monosyllabic words such as “dum” or “dee.”
3. Challenge the students to make up their own magic verses, either individually or in pairs.
4. Students may then incorporate their own body rhythms.

EXTENSION:

Create a small dramatic fairy tale scene where characters communicate using only nonsense phrases. Each of the characters can have their own signature chant.

Music Notation

Music, 50 minutes

SUMMARY: The students will learn Kodály rhythm syllables as well as note values.

OBJECTIVE:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the difference between beat and rhythm
- Identify whole notes, half notes, quarter notes, and eighth notes, and their corresponding rests in 4/4 time

ACTIVITY:

1. Have the students rewrite the poem using the following code:

Substitute TA for:

DUM, DEE, BUM, BEE, ZUM and ZEE

Substitute: TI-TI for:

DIDDLE, BIDDLE and ZIDDLE

Substitute TA-AH for:

DOO, BOO and ZOO

What does the poem sound like now?

2. Now, have the students rewrite the poem again but this time substitute a quarter note for every **ta**, eighth notes for every **ti-ti**, and a half note for every **ta-ah**.

Congratulate them for having written out the chant in musical notation!

Encourage them to make up their own words to this rhythm.

Ask them to guess the time signature.

Ask them to rewrite it into another time signature using different notes.

Ask the students how changing the tempo of this chant would affect the mood.

Do you need to change the tempo, timbre, and dynamics to change the mood? Encourage them to experiment!

3. **Writing Activity:** Tell the students they are a fairy tale character or a magician like Harry Potter. What circumstances would cause them to chant this spell?

Treasure Map

Social Studies and Visual Arts, 50 minutes

SUMMARY:

Students will create a treasure map to guide their class to Little Red Cap's grandmother's house.

OBJECTIVE:

- Construct and read graphs, charts, diagrams, maps, and models for specific purposes
- Create sketch maps of familiar places, using symbols for places and routes
- Demonstrate an understanding of the proper and controlled use of art techniques

ACTIVITY:

1. Invite the students to imagine the forest. What does it look like? Are there any mysterious paths? Are there any prominent landmarks? Where is Grandma's house located? Where is Little Red Cap's house?
2. Allow each student to create his/her own treasure map of the forest to guide his/her friends.
3. Encourage the students to include a scale, a legend and a title, and to incorporate a variety of artistic techniques into their maps.

EXTENSION:

Allow each student to hide an object within the school and to create a map that outlines a route from the classroom to the "buried treasure." Once all the maps are finished, have the students exchange maps with a classmate. Then invite the students to search for their partner's buried treasure using their carefully constructed map. The first student to locate their partner's buried treasure wins!

Classroom Activities for Grades 5 and 6

Pre-Performance Activity

Frozen Pictures

Drama, Dance and Language, 50 minutes

SUMMARY:

Students will work co-operatively in groups and retell scenes from *The Brothers Grimm* through tableaux.

OBJECTIVE:

- Work collaboratively and adapt the scenes from the story of *The Brothers Grimm* into *tableaux* (frozen pictures)
- Learn about the important dramatic elements in tableaux including: levels (individuals positioned at different heights), defined and animated facial expressions, intention and focus (giving the body a sense of “movement” while holding a static pose)
- Use movement as a language to explore and communicate ideas and emotions expressed in the story of *The Brothers Grimm*
- Analyze and reflect on the tableaux created by their peers and identify the proper use of the dramatic elements listed above and offer constructive feedback on ways to improve tableaux

ACTIVITY:

1. Review the story outline and characters of *The Brothers Grimm* with the students.
2. As a class, reduce the story to seven sentences (introduction, beginning, Rapunzel, Little Red Cap, Rumpelstiltskin, climax and end).
3. Divide the students into groups of three or four, and assign each group one part of the story.
4. Encourage the students to create a tableau (frozen picture) for their assigned sentence. Suggest that different levels, exaggerated facial expressions, and intention and focus in their poses make a more exciting picture.
5. Ask groups to choose one student to narrate the sequences before each presentation. Each group will share their scene with the class.

EXTENSION:

Invite the students to be directors and help improve each of the scenes by offering suggestions of how to make the students’ poses better reflect the emotion they are trying to express.

During the Performance

Ask students to look closely for elements in the production that are similar to the tableaux they created in the pre-performance activity. How did the performers use the space? What type of stage “pictures” stood out in this production for you? How was dramatic or musical movement effective in this production? How did the images created by the performers contribute to the overall production of the opera? How do you think it fits into the opera? How does the music emphasize the mood or characters?

Post-Performance Activity

Extra! Extra! Read all about it!

Language, 60 minutes

SUMMARY:

Students will write a musical review of the production using appropriate musical and operatic terms.

OBJECTIVE:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the information and ideas in oral texts by summarizing important ideas and citing a variety of supporting details
- Identify a range of presentation strategies used in oral text and analyze their effect on an audience
- Interpret oral text by using stated and implied ideas from the text
- Extend understanding of oral texts by connecting, comparing and contrasting the ideas and information in them to their own knowledge and experience
- Sort and classify ideas and information for their writing in a variety of ways
- Identify whose point of view is presented or reflected in a media text
- Identify the conventions and techniques used in some familiar media forms and explain how they help convey meaning and influence or engage the audience

ACTIVITY:

1. Brainstorm different types of media with the class. Specifically discuss the aspects of print media and online posts or blogs.
2. Divide the students into partners or groups of three.
3. Ask each group to write a blog review of one aspect of the opera experience: acting, singing or design. The students should try not to use a story synopsis to make it a little challenging. The glossary of opera terms would also be helpful for this activity. This can be done online, or in hard copy and presented to the class.
4. The students will then write a news piece that will be incorporated into their segment. To make it more challenging, the students should try not to use a story synopsis. The students should try not to use a story synopsis to make it a little challenging. The glossary of opera terms would also be helpful for this activity.
5. Other groups could then present or write short posts or comments on each review.