

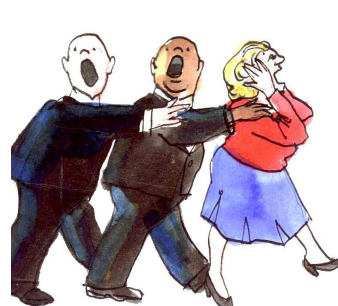
## Opera Blocks



Aria



Duet



Trio



Quartet

***"It was education at its best "***

Headteacher, Monken Hadley School, Barnet

***"The most fantastic visit we have had in many years. We have been on a high all day!."***

Deputy Head @ Rushey Green Primary School, Lewisham

### What is it?

An interactive introduction to opera and some of the music for the Albert Hall 2015. Written for children (and suitable for adults), it lasts 1hr, uses excerpts from over 20 operas and is in three parts:

- an introduction to the building blocks of opera;
- a 'pocket' sing-a-long *Romeo and Juliet* with children as the main characters; and
- an, as yet, unscripted 15-minute opera improvised on suggestions from the audience.

*Opera Blocks* shows us how to 'unpack' the ingredients of an opera. The example we take is an opera from the western classical music tradition that places special emphasis on the music and uses large orchestras and specially trained singers.

For us at English Pocket Opera Company, opera is any story, from any country in the world made up of three basic ingredients: Action, Words and Music. Such a story might be transformed into an opera, a musical, an Indian Bollywood film, an operetta, a cartoon etc. Story telling with action, words and music is common to all these art forms.

### What are the 'blocks'?

Given that we (or you) want to tell a story with music – the blocks are the 'building blocks' of opera that we unpacked and assemble to help tell that story. They include: music, libretto, arias, duets, trios, quartets, ensembles, choruses, narration, dialogue, recitative, melodrama, singers, orchestras and many more.

### Tell me more:

- EPOC comes to you to perform it;
- it lasts about one hour;
- it is suitable for children and young people of all ages Key Stages 1-3, GCSE and 'A' level;
- it can be performed to up to 250 children;
- it includes a 'pocket' sing-a-long opera with children as the main characters and an hilarious improvised opera;
- it involves three professional performers coming to your school - 2 singers and a pianist





**What would our school need to provide?:**

Ideally we need:

- a hall capable of accommodating the (up to ) 250 children who can watch or a room big enough for the number of children watching;
- a piano (essential – although if you don't have one, your best keyboard) - and piano stool (but a chair will do);
- 14 music stands (if you have them); if not, 14 chairs; if not, don't worry – we will manage!; and
- several other chairs (about 10) would be good – but again we will manage if not!



**EPOC will provide:**

In advance of coming to your school we will provide:

- a resource pack for teachers;
- a list of all performers; and
- an EPOC 'safe performer' document. All EPOC performers have undergone an enhanced CRB/DBS within the last two years. We will send you a list of the performers with details of their check. Scans of their original documents can be sent on request. All performers are expected to arrive at schools with photo-id and proof of their current address

On the day of the interactive presentation you can expect two singers and a pianist who will arrive at least one half hour before the commencement of the performance;

## Press and Feedback

In 2013 *Opera Blocks* was performed in 55 schools in the London Borough of Camden. 100% of teachers when asked to feed back rated it 'Outstanding'. Here are some more quotes:

"This week English Pocket Opera came into the school to give an hour's presentation. You might have expected the kids to be bored or alienated, but it went down a storm. The singers performed a variety of arias that had been used in adverts and the kids realised they knew a great deal more opera than they had imagined. It was one of the most popular events the school has ever arranged."

Teacher quoted in **The Guardian**

"Would surely delight the Culture Secretary"

**Times Educational Supplement**

"It was stunning!"

**Music Teacher Magazine**

"One week later and [my daughter] still remembers her introduction ... next week we'll mainly be listening to Wagner! "

**The Times**

"It was stunning! All the children and adults involved were thrilled by the high energy delivery, humour and of course excellent musicianship of the cast."

**Music Specialist @ Yerbury Primary School, Islington**

"The children loved it (so did the staff). Use of humour was excellent. My Year 2 teacher begged to go in – I was in two minds about it. In the end they went in and thought it was wonderful. Inspiring to see KS1 & 2 children loving opera."

**Head @ Chingford Hall Primary School, Waltham Forest**

"The session was fun, engaging and gave lots of children the opportunity to experience a small snippet of opera, first hand. All the adults in the room too enjoyed the experience and were full of praise."

**Music Coordinator, St. Mary's School, East Barnet.**

"This was the best afternoon session I have experienced – superb!"

**Head of Music @ Joseph Clarke Special School, Waltham Forest**

"It was just BRILLIANT!! Very funny and interactive for everyone. It's a fantastic approach to teaching opera!"

**Marta Marino, Music Co-ordinator @ Tyssen Primary School**

"I really loved the way you have incorporated children into high art – and hundreds of children at that! ..... I did not see a bored or disgruntled face, nor did I hear a single complaint from any child. They were loving it, and, importantly doing so naturally. With this kind of input, the future of opera as a genre is secured."

**Music Teacher @ Stockwell Park High School, Lambeth**

"What a performance. So clever! Congratulations to EPOC, a group of people who really know about children."

**Hackney Music Service**