



Opera Quest

English Pocket Opera Company

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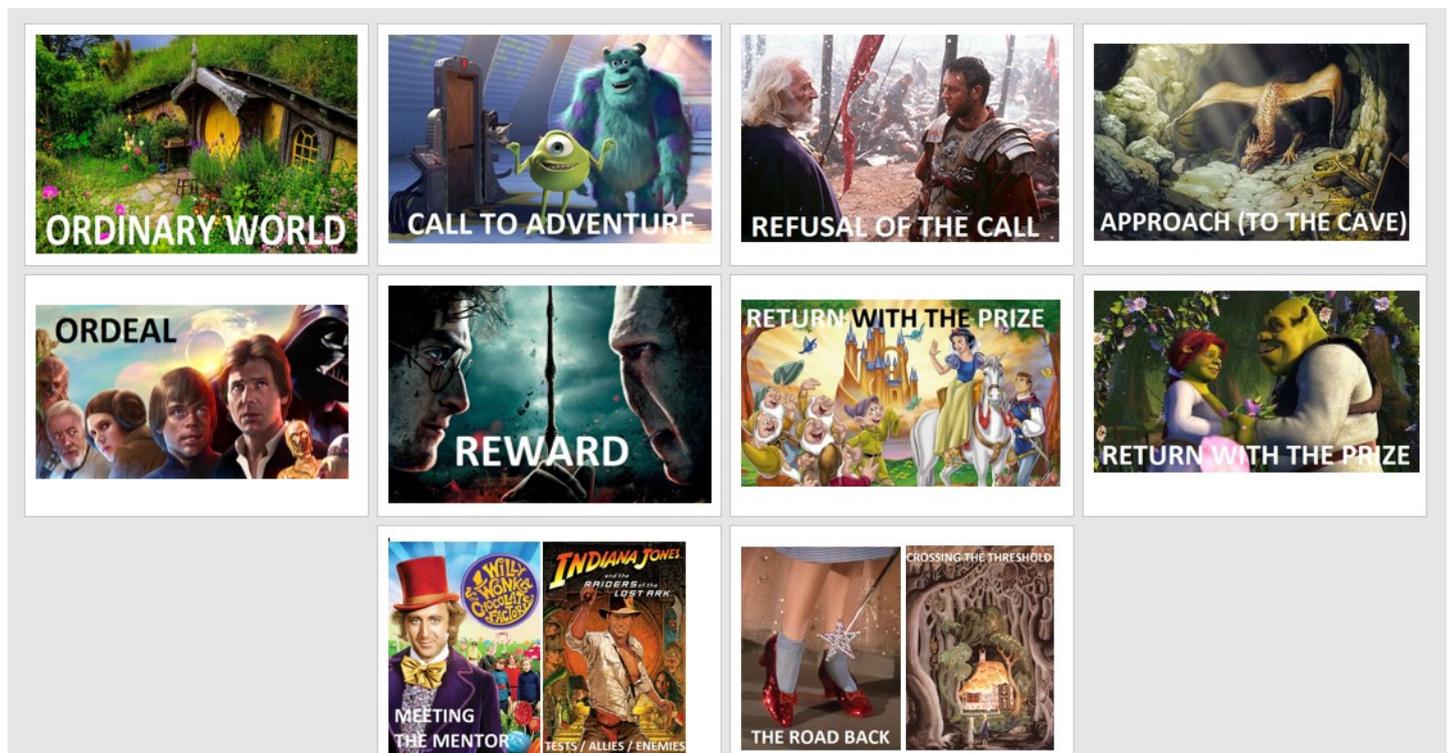
What is it?

Opera Quest is the latest of EPOC's 1hr, in-school 'interactive presentations' – or introductions to opera. It joins the list of popular offers from EPOC's series of workshops called **Opera Opened Up**. These workshops have been developed by EPOC over 14 years and include **Opera Blocks** (the structural 'building blocks' of opera – arias, ensembles etc), **Opera Hotpot** (the recipe for opera and international music theatre) and **Operatastic** (about skills acquisition and the role of the singer).

Originally commissioned from EPOC by English National Opera, these 'interactive presentations' have been seen by over 250,000 pupils in over 300 schools, festivals and theatres. Lasting 1hr, performed by 2 opera singers and a pianist, **Opera Quest** can be performed to up 400 people at a time and uses excerpts from at least 25 operas.

Opera Quest is in three parts:

- an introduction to opera and the 'hero's journey using excerpts and examples from (amongst others) Harry Potter, Star Wars, The Hobbit, Raiders of the Lost Ark and Shrek;
- a heroic operatic journey based around a young girl's appearance in a well-known TV talent show – the 'Y' Factor;
- a 'pocket' sing-a-long opera¹ with children singing choruses and acting as the main characters.



"It was education at its best" Headteacher, Monken Hadley School, Barnet

The Hero's Journey - In Western culture, there is a story, which is told over and over again, in innumerable versions, from the earliest times. It is the story of a hero and his journey. It is our favourite story and it has been told so many times, in so many different forms, genres and cultures, that it has come to shape the way

¹ Orpheus and Eurydice

all stories are told. *The Hero's Journey* is a skeletal framework that is 'fleshed' with the details and surprises of 'individual' stories. In films, operas or stories, the 'hero's journey' structure may not call attention to itself, nor be followed too precisely. Modern heroes may not be going into caves or labyrinths to fight mythical beasts, but they do enter a special world and an Inmost Cave by venturing into space, to the bottom of the sea, into the depths of a modern city, or into their own hearts. The patterns of myths have been used to tell the simplest comic book story or the most sophisticated modern 'realist' drama.



EPOC's *Opera Quest* features the Greek myth *Orpheus and Eurydice* in its operatic form by Gluck

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 or a pantomime - story telling with action, words and music is common to all these art forms.

"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 do schools need to provide?

Ideally we need:

- a hall/theatre capable of accommodating the (up to) 400 audience members;
- a piano (essential – although if you don't have one, your best keyboard) - and piano stool (but a chair will do);
- 4 music stands (if you have them); if not, 4 chairs; if not, don't worry – we will manage!; and
- several other chairs (about 6) would be good – but again we will manage if not!

EPOC will provide:

In advance of coming to your venue 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 venues with photo-id and proof of their current address

On the day of your performance of **Opera Blocks** 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 2017 *Opera Quest* as premiered in 25 schools in the London Borough of Barnet. 100% of teachers when asked to feed back rated it 'Outstanding'. Here are some more quotes about *Opera Opened Up* workshops:

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 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!
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

One of the highlights of the year and the best assembly in my 7 years at the school!

KS2 Leader, St Philip's Primary, Cambridge