



SECOND NATURE

an opera for youth

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome.....	3
Opera 101.....	3
Hosting an Opera Performance at Your School.....	4
How a School Tour Opera is Created.....	7
Voice Types.....	8
Characters and Story.....	9
Meet the Composer and Librettist.....	10
Climate Change and <i>Second Nature</i>	11
A Glossary of Opera and Music Terms.....	13
Meet the Cast and Creative Team.....	14
Activities for Grades 4-6.....	19
Activities for Grades 7-8.....	27
Props at the COC.....	32
Additional Resources.....	33
Bibliography.....	35
Credits.....	36

DEAR EDUCATORS,

OPERA IS A LIVING,
BREATHING ART FORM.
IT'S FOR ANYONE,
ANYWHERE.

It is in this spirit that the Canadian Opera Company's 2016 Ensemble Studio School Tour will once again burst out of the opera house to bring incredible singing, gripping drama, and magical sets and costumes to your schools and communities! Each year, thousands of students in southern Ontario and beyond are treated to some of the best young singers, directors, and musicians that this country has to offer. This year's opera, *Second Nature*, was commissioned by Lyric Opera of Chicago in 2015 and the COC is creating a brand new production for the school tour. The opera takes place in a fictional future where humans are forced to live in a "Habitat"—an abandoned zoo for humans—due to the insurmountable damage done to the environment. It has been described as a "dystopian fairy tale" and the opera explores many themes, including life in a virtual world, authoritarian society, and the importance of environmental conservation. Composer Matthew Aucoin hopes his opera will deepen the awareness of one of the biggest issues facing our world today: climate change.

This guide contains useful information about *Second Nature* to enhance your operatic experience, as well as activities to do with your students before and after the opera to help them gain a greater understanding of the work and the themes it presents. Use this guide to kickstart your students' journey into opera—you may be happily surprised at where it takes them.

Sincerely,
Vanessa Smith,
COC School Programs Manager

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*), and children's stories (*The Little Prince*).

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

HOSTING AN OPERA PERFORMANCE AT YOUR SCHOOL

We
are excited
that your school has
chosen the Canadian Opera
Company to perform for you. We
recognize how much planning and
co-ordination is done by the teachers
in advance of our visit. To make things
easier for you, your colleagues and
our cast, here are some tips on
how to host a COC opera at
your school!

REQUIRED TIME FOR EACH PERFORMANCE

Set-up: 60 minutes
Performance: 45 minutes
Q&A: 15 minutes
Load-out: 30 minutes
TOTAL TIME: 2 hours 30 minutes

AUDIENCE

The opera is designed to perform for a maximum of 300 students in grades 4 through 8.

SPACE

The opera is designed to be performed on the gym floor to allow for optimal sightlines for students.

WHAT TO PREPARE IN ADVANCE OF THE PERFORMANCE

- ◆ Distribute this study guide to colleagues.
- ◆ Reserve performance space for the total time (see previous page).
- ◆ Ensure that the space is cleaned and cleared prior to COC's arrival.
- ◆ Ensure load-in is accessible directly from the tour van to the performance space.
- ◆ Reserve parking for the COC's van.
- ◆ Arrange for four to six older students to help unload the sets, props and costumes from the van on the day of the performance.
- ◆ Arrange for a space where the artists can change into their costumes (adult washrooms, change room, etc.).
- ◆ Check the availability of a full-size digital or acoustic piano (complete with 88 keys). If you have an acoustic piano please check if it is in tune. If the piano is in a different room, please confirm that it can be moved into the performance space. If you do not have a piano, please notify the COC's stage manager as soon as possible. *
- ◆ Notify the stage manager if you are inviting another school to the performance.
- ◆ Arrange for bells, announcements and PA systems to be turned off during the performance.

*Please note that approximately one week before your performance, you will be contacted via e-mail by the COC's stage manager as well as the COC's public relations department. The stage manager will send you a list of questions and reminders that will ensure a smooth performance, and the PR department will only contact you if any media outlets are interested in covering the performance at your school.

ON THE DAY OF THE PERFORMANCE

- ◆ Greet the artists at the arrival time.
- ◆ Direct the artists as to where to park the van.
- ◆ Have the older students ready to help the artists unpack the van.
- ◆ Provide water for the artists or direct them to the nearest water fountain.
- ◆ Direct the artists to their changing room.
- ◆ Arrange for the student audience to be seated by the performance start time. COC performers are unionized and Prologue to the Performing Arts has crafted a detailed itinerary which adheres to our union agreements and ensures that we can arrive at each school in a timely fashion, set up, and begin the performance on time.
- ◆ Introduce the performance!

Mezzo-soprano
Rihab Chaieb
with enthusiastic
audience members
after a performance of
the Ensemble Studio
School Tour production
of *Cinderella*, 2010.

Photo: Michael Cooper



SUGGESTED INTRODUCTION TO THE PERFORMANCE

Note: Whoever is making any welcoming remarks should connect with the stage manager prior to beginning the speech to ensure that the performers are ready to begin.

Good morning/afternoon! We're very pleased to welcome the Canadian Opera Company to our school. Today, the COC (pronounced "see-oh-see") will present the opera *Second Nature* written by composer Matthew Aucoin (pronounced "oh-KOYN"). At the end of the performance you will have a chance to ask the performers questions about what you saw and heard and about opera in general.

A couple of things to remember during the performance:

- ◆ Listen quietly so you don't miss a word and so you can easily follow the story.
- ◆ Please stay seated during the show so those behind you can see.
- ◆ Save thoughts and comments until the question and answer time at the end of the performance.
- ◆ Please avoid leaving for drinks or other reasons because you don't want to miss any of the opera and it can be disruptive to your fellow audience members.
- ◆ A special note for the teachers or any guests in the room (excluding media): please put away any cameras or recording devices as we are not permitted to take photographs, videos or make audio recording of the performance due to union regulations.

Please join me in welcoming the Canadian Opera Company!

PHOTOGRAPHY/MEDIA AT PERFORMANCES

The COC's public relations department actively engages local media to publicize school tour performances. A representative from the PR department will contact you in advance to confirm whether media are allowed on school premises and, with the necessary permissions in place, will notify you of the possibility that media, including those with cameras, may be attending the performance. If your school or school board wants to arrange media or photography of the performance, you or the school/school board contact must contact and notify the COC publicist a minimum of three working days prior to the performance. Due to COC union agreements, only media that has been granted permission by both the COC and the school can film or photograph the opera. This means that any media that did not obtain permission from both the COC and the school will not be permitted to take photos or video of the performance. The agreement also stipulates that no one, aside from approved media outlets, is permitted to take photos of COC artists and productions. Teachers, administrators, parents, parent council members, students, school board staff, or guests or any other individuals are not permitted to take photos of the performance. Approved production shots will be available for download for any school requiring photos for parent/guardian newsletters and other school materials.

If you have any questions or require approved images for school materials, please do not hesitate to contact Kristin McKinnon, the COC's publicist, at kmckinnon@coc.ca or 416-306-2383.

HOW A SCHOOL TOUR OPERA IS CREATED

#1

STORY/LIBRETTIST/COMPOSER Someone finds an exciting story they think would make a good opera; the story can be from history, myths, fairy tales or real life. Matthew served as both **LIBRETTIST** and **COMPOSER** on *Second Nature*. As the **LIBRETTIST**, he took his story idea and wrote it into a script like a play, known as a *libretto*, with characters, scenes and stage directions. As the **COMPOSER**, Matthew used the libretto to write the music in a way that best told the story. The final combination of music and libretto is called the *score*.



#2

DIRECTOR Ashlie (far left) reads and studies the score and creates a concept of how to put the opera on stage.

DESIGNER Camellia (left) 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.



#3



MUSIC DIRECTORS

Hyejin and Stéphane work with the cast on how to sing the music, and play the piano for performances. In larger operas, the piano is replaced by a full orchestra, which is led by the conductor.

STAGE MANAGER

Michael helps the director during rehearsals and keeps notes. He works backstage during performances to keep everything on track.



#4

CAST The singers perform the opera. See pages 14–18 for more information on each performer.



#5

YOU, THE AUDIENCE!

Performing in front of an audience is what makes all the hard work worth it!

VOICE TYPES

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. Adrienne Pieczonka is a very well-known Canadian soprano. Click **here** to watch her perform!

Mezzo-soprano: These are lower female voices. Mezzo-sopranos have a darker sound and can reach low notes beneath the range of a soprano. Mezzo-sopranos often sing the roles of mothers, witches, confidantes, or even young male characters. Allyson McHardy is a notable Canadian mezzo-soprano and you can watch her by clicking **here**.

Contralto: This is the lowest female voice. This voice type is often written for a very strong character, such as a goddess. Canadian Marie-Nicole Lemieux is a famous contralto. Click **here** to see her in performance.

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.

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. Daniel Taylor is a famous Canadian countertenor. To listen to him perform, click **here**.

Tenor: Tenors are the higher male voices, and like sopranos, cover a wide variety of vocal colours. Ramón Vargas is an example of a "lyric tenor" with his ability to soar through melodies, while Canadian Ben Heppner exemplified the darker-hued intensity of the "dramatic tenor." They often play the hero. Michael Schade is a Canadian tenor, famous for his mastery of many Mozart roles. Click **here** to hear him.

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. Russell Braun is one of the world's leading lyric baritones. Click **here** to see him in performance. Many baritones 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 opera. Composers often challenge basses by writing notes at the extreme low end of their range. John Relyea is a highly acclaimed Canadian bass. Click **here** to see him perform.

CHARACTERS AND STORY

Character

Voice Type

Elder Constance, <i>leader of the Habitat</i>	mezzo-soprano
Elizabeth, <i>Jake's mother</i>	soprano
David, <i>Lydia's father</i>	baritone
Bonobo (pronounced "bo-NO-bo"), <i>a wise old ape</i>	baritone
Lydia, <i>a 12-year-old girl</i>	mezzo-soprano
Jake, <i>a 10-year-old boy</i>	tenor

SYNOPSIS

The story of *Second Nature* takes place in a fictional future 100 years from now, where climate change has made most places on the planet unlivable. The surviving humans have built a shelter they call the "Habitat" to protect themselves from the outside world. Everything in the Habitat is a virtual or synthetic copy of what was once found in nature.

Elder Constance, the ruler of the Habitat, has decided that there is no hope for repairing our planet and forbids anyone to leave or have contact with the outside world. She claims that it is too dangerous to leave as there is no civilization outside of the Habitat, and that human life does not mix with the force of nature. Elizabeth and David are upset as they have promised their children—Jake and Lydia—that they will one day see the sun, stars and the moon, and to breathe the fresh air.

Jake and Lydia overhear the adults' conversation and are saddened to learn they will never leave the Habitat. While discussing the bad news, Lydia and Jake are surprised to meet a talking ape—called Bonobo—from the Habitat next door. Bonobo tells the children how wonderful the world once was before humans neglected nature.

Elder Constance catches Jake and Lydia talking to Bonobo and tells each of their parents what has happened. Elizabeth and David scold their children and tell them how there was a war that nature won, and so they were forced to build the Habitat to protect their families. Jake and Lydia

realize they have been living their whole lives in an artificial world and begin to dream of what the natural world might be like. Lydia longs for more than a virtual world and is determined to find a way out of the Habitat.

Bonobo tells Lydia and Jake of a real tree he has kept hidden and offers a piece of fruit from the tree to them. Lydia takes a bite and is overjoyed by how great real food tastes (she has only ever eaten virtual food!). She convinces Jake to take a bite, too. The children wonder whether they could leave the Habitat in search of other real food. Bonobo reminds them that leaving is forbidden, but then he suggests they use the trash chute to sneak out.

Elder Constance suddenly appears, catching Lydia and Jake with the forbidden fruit. She tells them they will be banished from the Habitat if they leave. Lydia and Jake cannot believe their luck as this is what they wanted anyway! Hearing Lydia and Jake's positive response to the punishment, Elder Constance hastily tells Elizabeth and David their children may stay in the Habitat, but as their punishment, they will have to stay in their homes for an entire year. Elizabeth and David defy Elder Constance and let their kids go free. When they open the gates to the outside world, Elder Constance feels the fresh air and is reminded of how wonderful nature can be, as Lydia and Jake begin their journey into the world waiting outside.

MEET THE COMPOSER AND LIBRETTIST



Matthew Aucoin
(pronounced “oh-KOYN”)

*American composer Matthew Aucoin wrote both the story and music for *Second Nature*. Read on to learn more about him in his own words!*

Age: 26

Hometown: A small town near Boston, Massachusetts

What’s your favorite kind of music other than opera?

So many kinds...indie rock, jazz, non-operatic classical music.

What was your favorite subject in school?

Literature. Much more than music, actually.

What inspired you to become a composer?

I caught the composing bug pretty early—I think I was six. I heard Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony and got addicted.

Tell us about the first time a composition of yours was performed in public.

I was about nine when I first heard my own music performed. A local orchestra played a piece of mine.

Where did you get the idea for *Second Nature*?

I got the idea for *Second Nature* when I was walking around the Lincoln Park Zoo, in Chicago. Seeing our planet’s cool, funky, beautiful creatures made me think about how much of nature is disappearing—and a big part of that is humans’ fault. Some of those animals’ natural habitats are in danger because of pollution, for example. So I imagined a future world in which humans have messed up the environment so terribly that now we have to live in a zoo, to hide from the terrible heat and storms and toxic air outside.

How do you decide which voice type each character should be?

I decide the characters’ voice types based on their personality and their attitudes. For example, a bird might be a soprano, which is a really high woman’s voice, and an old king might be a bass, which is the deepest kind of male voice. But sometimes there are surprises: sometimes a male character is sung by a woman, or the other way around. The human voice expresses parts of ourselves that we don’t see every day. There are parts of me that I would want to express through a heroic tenor voice, and there are other parts of me that feel more like a squeaky soprano.

What’s the point of having people sing a story instead of just telling it like in a movie or a play or a TV show?

Yeah, why do opera singers sing? It risks looking pretty silly, right? Well, try something out at home: imagine you’re having a conversation with your friend, and you start to get into an argument. At first you’re talking normally, but then you start to get mad. You can feel your cheeks getting flushed, you can feel your pulse, and you raise your voice. At the moment when you raise your voice, listen to yourself: you just sang. When we raise our voices—if we’re really excited or overjoyed or angry—we push them closer to music. (Imagine yourself yelling “MOM! MOOOOOOOM!” You’re basically singing.) And opera is the world of that music—the music of human passion, of the things that we express in music because speech doesn’t say it strongly enough. It’s a way of letting our passion and emotions out into the world without hurting each other.

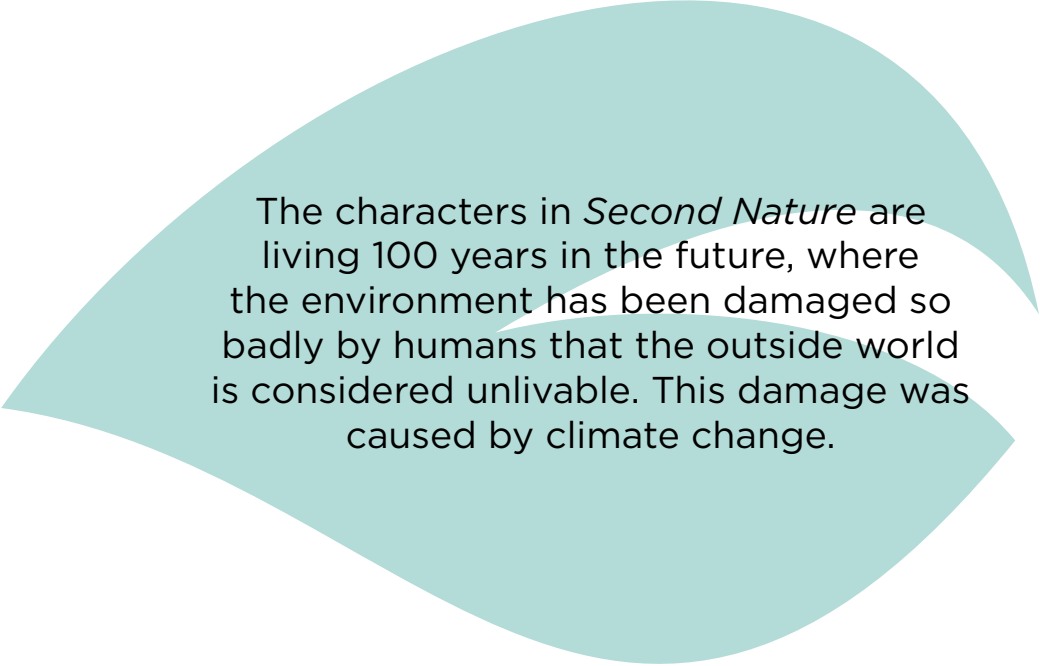
What’s your advice for someone interested in being a composer?

Listen. Just listen to and absorb as much music as you can—and not just music; listen to the music of the world around us. And if you want to make music up, find some friends that you want to make music with!

To learn more about Matthew and his past works, visit <http://matthewaucoin.com/>

(Reprinted with permission from Lyric Opera of Chicago)

CLIMATE CHANGE AND *SECOND NATURE*: WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?



The characters in *Second Nature* are living 100 years in the future, where the environment has been damaged so badly by humans that the outside world is considered unlivable. This damage was caused by climate change.

WHAT IS CLIMATE CHANGE?

“Climate” describes the big picture of temperatures, rainfall, wind, and other conditions over a larger region and longer time than weather. For example, an area with a lot of deserts would have a hot and dry climate. A place like Brazil has a tropical climate. Canada’s climates are very different depending on where you are. Global climate takes the average of these climates over the entire planet. Scientists are concerned because this climate is changing. Overall, the planet is becoming warmer at a faster rate than any time in Earth’s history.

Everything on Earth is connected to everything else—the oceans, the land, the air, wildlife, plants, the energy from the sun—it all works together to make life on Earth possible. But humans have been upsetting this balance.

The Earth is surrounded by an atmosphere, a bubble of gases that allow us to breathe. Carbon dioxide is one of the gases in this layer. One of the elements that makes up carbon dioxide, carbon, is stored all over the planet—it’s in plants, soil, the ocean, and inside of us. It’s also released into the atmosphere as its counterpart, carbon dioxide, through human activities like burning fossil fuels (coal, oil, and gas) and cutting down trees. This extra carbon dioxide gets trapped in the atmosphere, and creates a “greenhouse effect”—the earth gets much warmer, and the carbon dioxide holds in the sun’s heat, which results in the Earth’s overall warming. This is climate change.

Climate change is very much an issue present in our world today. The effects of the damage caused by climate change results in the rise of global temperatures and more extreme weather which lead to natural disasters like droughts, floods and tornadoes. Sustainable development has become an important part of our world. This means making decisions every day that meet our needs without compromising the needs of future generations.

THE EFFECT OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON HUMANS AND OUR WAY OF LIFE

Use the following points as inspiration for group discussions, individual reflections, or other activities! Suitable for all grades.

PRE-PERFORMANCE

Humans begin living in the Habitat in 2100. The oceans flood the coast lines and they turn the continent into a tiny island. People flee to “America’s Heartland” (an American term referring to states in the U.S. that don’t touch the ocean), and build a Habitat in order to survive the devastation. Everything in the Habitat is a virtual or synthetic copy of what was once found in Nature.

- ◆ Describe/draw/create a model of what you think the Habitat looks like.
- ◆ How many people does that Habitat have to contain? How big is it?
- ◆ What objects did the people replicate?

The opera takes place in 2120, 20 years after humans built the Habitat. Elizabeth (Jake’s mom) entered the Habitat when she was 18. Both Lydia and Jake were born in the Habitat; they are now 12 years old. Elizabeth knew the world before it was destroyed, but Lydia and Jake have never experienced a natural environment.

- ◆ Imagine you had to enter the Habitat. How would you feel leaving everything behind? What objects would you want to replicate?
- ◆ How would you describe your world to someone who has never seen it?

POST-PERFORMANCE

“Human life does not mix with the force of Nature.” – Elder Constance

- ◆ Do you believe this?
- ◆ Discuss the ways human behaviours are destructive to Nature. What will happen if we continue our ways?
- ◆ Find examples of cultures which value Nature and place it at the core of its traditions, teachings and way of life.
- ◆ How can humans and Nature co-exist?
- ◆ What do you think really happened? Was there a war with Nature or did Elder Constance make it up so she could rule in her own synthetic world? What clues in the music or text helped to frame your decision?

“Now that Nature has betrayed mankind,
We’ll live alone on the power of the human mind.
I will build a garden of knowledge like none have
ever seen...
And I will be your queen. “ – *Elder Constance*

“My dears, your queen forbade such knowledge
above all.
Why else would she forbid it than fear?
Her world might fall, and Nature claim you
children as its own.” – *Bonobo, in response to
Lydia wondering if Elder Constance was hiding
something.*

“Look... deep in the forest the leaves are falling
and there across the field the birds are calling...”
– *Lydia and Jake sing as they open the doors to
leave the Habitat*

Share your thoughts on what happens after the opera. What do you think Lydia and Jake find when they leave the Habitat? We want to hear your ideas and stories for a potential new opera in the future.

- ◆ What are some of the first things Lydia and Jake see? Hear? Smell? Taste?
- ◆ What adventures will they go on? Who or what will they meet?
- ◆ Will they return to the Habitat? If they do, what will they find?

Send your stories, drawings, and ideas to:

Canadian Opera Company
Education & Outreach
227 Front St. E.
Toronto, ON M5A 1E8
Email: education@coc.ca

A GLOSSARY OF OPERA AND MUSIC TERMS

A capella	Vocal music without instrumental accompaniment	Note	A musical sound with its own pitch
Act	A group of scenes with a common theme, such as a specific time and place. Most operas are divided into two or three acts; some have only one act	Octave	The distance between the tone of scale and the next higher or lower tone of the same pitch (i.e. “middle C” and the C above are one octave, or eight notes, apart).
Aria	A musical piece sung by one person. The words in the arias are usually all about the emotions a character is feeling	Ostinato	A continually repeated musical phrase or rhythm
Cast	All the singers, actors, and dancers who appear on stage	Overture	A musical introduction to an opera played by the orchestra
Chorus	A group of singers who act and sing together	Pitch	The element of music relating to the highness or lowness of a tone
Composer	The individual who writes the music	Piano	Italian for “quiet”, a term used to tell singers or musicians that a passage of music should be played or sung more quietly
Conductor	The person who leads the singers and the orchestra in the production	Recitative	A type of singing unique to opera when words are delivered in a way that imitates speech
Crescendo	Gradually getting louder	Scale	A series of notes (usually eight in the Western tradition) that can be played in an ascending and descending pattern, and that are related by the pattern of the intervals between the notes
Decrescendo	Gradually getting softer	Score	The book containing all the music for every voice and instrument in the opera
Duet	A song performed by, and written for, two people	Tempo	The speed at which a piece of music moves
Finale	The final musical number of an act, scene, or opera	Timbre	The quality of tone (vocal or instrumental)
Forte	Italian for “strong” or “loud”, a term used to tell singers or musicians that a passage of music should be played or sung loudly		
Librettist	The individual who writes the libretto (the words) of the opera		
Libretto	The words or script of an opera		

MEET THE CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM



KARINE BOUCHER

ROLE: Elizabeth

HOMETOWN: Quebec City

VOICE TYPE: Soprano

AGE WHEN YOU STARTED SINGING: 11 years old

FIRST TIME ON STAGE: Performing an opera at age 16

FAVOURITE PART OF THE SCHOOL TOUR: Sharing our passion with the younger generation.

IF YOU LIVED IN THE HABITAT, WHAT WOULD YOU MISS MOST ABOUT THE OUTSIDE WORLD? I would miss seeing the sun and feeling the wind on my skin!!



ASHLIE CORCORAN

ROLE: Director

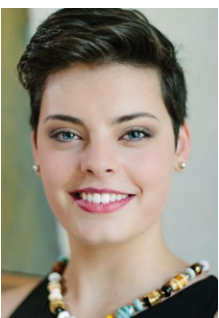
HOMETOWN: White Rock, BC

WHEN DID YOU DECIDE YOU WANTED TO DIRECT?: When I was 18, in first year university. I was stage managing a great play, and having a wonderful time, but I realized I wanted more creative control.

FIRST TIME DIRECTING: My first professional experience was 10 years ago, when I directed *Tiny Dynamite* with Theatre Smash.

FAVOURITE PART OF THE SCHOOL TOUR: Getting to collaborate with the wonderful Ensemble Studio participants!

IF YOU LIVED IN THE HABITAT, WHAT WOULD YOU MISS MOST ABOUT THE OUTSIDE WORLD? The smell of evergreen trees and salt air.



EMILY D'ANGELO

ROLE: Lydia

HOMETOWN: Toronto

VOICE TYPE: Mezzo-soprano

AGE WHEN YOU STARTED SINGING: 7 years old in choir

FIRST TIME ON STAGE: 7 years old

FAVOURITE PART OF THE SCHOOL TOUR: singing for awesome kids!

IF YOU LIVED IN THE HABITAT, WHAT WOULD YOU MISS MOST ABOUT THE OUTSIDE WORLD? Sunshine and pizza!



LAUREN EBERWIN

ROLE: Lydia

HOMETOWN: Qualicum Beach, BC

VOICE TYPE: Mezzo-soprano

AGE WHEN YOU STARTED SINGING: in the shower? For as long as I can recall! However, I didn't start formally studying voice until my early teens.

FIRST TIME ON STAGE: When I was about 5 years old. I was in a school play about Santa Claus. I played one of the reindeer.

FAVOURITE PART OF THE SCHOOL TOUR: Meeting all the kids!

IF YOU LIVED IN THE HABITAT, WHAT WOULD YOU MISS MOST ABOUT THE OUTSIDE WORLD? I would miss it all. The ocean. Fresh air. Nature itself. But I think what I would miss MOST is the Sun—the feeling of warm rays on my skin and the comfort of watching it rise and set each day.



CAMELLIA KOO

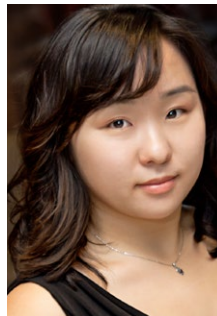
ROLE: Designer

HOMETOWN: born in London, ON, but grew up in Mississauga

AGE WHEN YOU FIRST STARTED DESIGNING: 18

FIRST THEATRICAL SHOW YOU DESIGNED FOR: *The Bundle* by Edward Bond.

FAVOURITE ASPECT OF SCHOOL TOUR: The challenge of designing a set that is imaginative and evocative but still fits into a minivan.



HYEJIN KWON

ROLE: Music Director

HOMETOWN: Seoul, South Korea

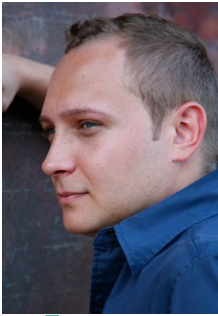
AGE WHEN YOU STARTED PLAYING THE PIANO: Four years old.

FIRST TIME ON STAGE: Six years old.

FAVOURITE PART OF THE SCHOOL TOUR: Seeing children's enthusiasm!!

IF YOU LIVED IN THE HABITAT, WHAT WOULD YOU MISS MOST ABOUT THE OUTSIDE WORLD? Nature and all of its beauty.





MICHAEL LEWANDOWSKI

ROLE: Stage Manager

HOMETOWN: Born in Wloclawek, Poland; I have been calling Toronto home, since 1991.

WHEN DID YOU DECIDE TO BECOME A STAGE MANAGER? In university, while at theatre school. It was a choice between design and stage management.

FIRST TIME STAGE MANAGING: In university, in my 4th year. Professionally, a year after graduating school with Opera Mississauga.

FAVOURITE PART OF THE SCHOOL TOUR: Getting to know the entire group. We spend a lot of time together, traveling in a van, along with all our props, costumes, performers.

IF YOU LIVED IN THE HABITAT, WHAT WOULD YOU MISS MOST ABOUT THE OUTSIDE WORLD? I would have to say equally real food (PIZZA!) and the ability to swim in the ocean.



DANIKA LORÈN

ROLE: Elizabeth

HOMETOWN: Saskatoon, SK (but raised on a farm outside the city)

VOICE TYPE: Soprano

AGE WHEN YOU STARTED SINGING: I began in a choir at age seven, but was singing as long as I could talk according to my parents!

FIRST TIME ON STAGE: My first opera was a children's show called *Brundibar* where I played Brundibar at age 13. It was a show that was performed in concentration camps and Brundibar was the bad guy! I got to wear a moustache.

FAVOURITE PART OF THE SCHOOL TOUR: I love talking to our audiences and inspiring young musicians and actors!

IF YOU LIVED IN THE HABITAT, WHAT WOULD YOU MISS MOST ABOUT THE OUTSIDE WORLD? I would miss the opportunity to travel and learn first-hand about other cultures of the world.



IAIN MCNEIL

ROLE: David/Bonobo

HOMETOWN: Brockville, ON

VOICE TYPE: Baritone

AGE WHEN YOU STARTED SINGING: 8 years old

FIRST TIME ON STAGE: A school play when I was 6 years old

FAVOURITE PART OF THE SCHOOL TOUR: Seeing kids' react to opera.

IF YOU LIVED IN THE HABITAT, WHAT WOULD YOU MISS MOST ABOUT THE OUTSIDE WORLD?: The stars.



STÉPHANE MAYER

ROLE: Music Director

HOMETOWN: Edmonton, AB

AGE WHEN YOU STARTED PLAYING THE PIANO:

Five years old.

FIRST TIME ON STAGE: Seven years old.

FAVOURITE PART OF THE SCHOOL TOUR: Getting to play music for an audience mostly comprised of children. They bring a different energy and force us performers to bring our A game.

IF YOU LIVED IN THE HABITAT, WHAT WOULD YOU MISS MOST ABOUT THE OUTSIDE WORLD?: I would miss the sun and sky most of all. Feeling the warmth on your face and breathing fresh air.



SAMANTHA PICKETT

ROLE: Elder Constance

HOMETOWN: Kitchener, ON

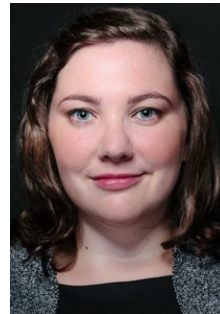
VOICE TYPE: Soprano

AGE WHEN YOU STARTED SINGING: Three years old.

FIRST TIME ON STAGE: Age four for a dance recital

FAVOURITE PART OF THE SCHOOL TOUR: Spending time sharing stories and opera with amazing kids all over Ontario!

IF YOU LIVED IN THE HABITAT, WHAT WOULD YOU MISS MOST ABOUT THE OUTSIDE WORLD?: I would definitely miss seeing trees and wild animals the most. Whether it is a small animal like a squirrel or a big farm animal like a cow or horse, I love making friends with animals! I would be very sad without them.



MEGAN QUICK

ROLE: Elder Constance

HOMETOWN: Brockville, ON

VOICE TYPE: Mezzo-soprano
AGE WHEN YOU STARTED

SINGING: 14

FIRST TIME ON STAGE: *Annie Jr*, Musical, Grade 4 (age 9).

FAVOURITE PART OF THE SCHOOL TOUR: Watching the students reacting to opera as an art form and a type of storytelling.

IF YOU LIVED IN THE HABITAT, WHAT WOULD YOU MISS MOST ABOUT THE OUTSIDE WORLD? The smell of the ocean, and the movement of the waves.





BRUNO ROY

ROLE: David/Bonobo

HOMETOWN: Carignan, Quebec

VOICE TYPE: Baritone

AGE WHEN YOU STARTED SINGING: 8 years old.

FIRST TIME ON STAGE: 10 years old.

FAVOURITE PART OF THE SCHOOL TOUR: Having had the opportunity to do opera in schools in the past, I was very touched by

the enthusiasm and attentiveness that our listeners had. I also remember them being very curious about opera and I really look forward to all the questions that the students will have about what we do.

IF YOU LIVED IN THE HABITAT, WHAT WOULD YOU MISS MOST ABOUT THE OUTSIDE WORLD?: Of the many things that I would miss, coffee is without a doubt what I would miss most. It is part of my every day routine and there are always new coffee aromas to be discovered. An outdoor patio, with a book in hand, would hardly be complete without a fresh cup of coffee.



AARON SHEPPARD

ROLE: Jake

HOMETOWN: St. John's, NL

VOICE TYPE: Tenor

AGE WHEN YOU STARTED SINGING: Six years old.

FIRST TIME ON STAGE: Very young...

FAVOURITE PART OF THE SCHOOL TOUR: My favourite part of the school tour is definitely performing the show. There's nothing quite like the thrill of being on stage.

IF YOU LIVED IN THE HABITAT, WHAT WOULD YOU MISS MOST ABOUT THE OUTSIDE WORLD? If I lived in the habitat, I would definitely miss being able to go fishing!



CHARLES SY

ROLE: Jake

HOMETOWN: Mississauga

VOICE TYPE: Tenor

AGE WHEN YOU STARTED SINGING: Eight years old in church choir.

FIRST TIME ON STAGE: Grade 5 Christmas Pageant.

FAVOURITE PART OF THE SCHOOL TOUR: getting to travel around Ontario and perform great music with my friends.

IF YOU LIVED IN THE HABITAT, WHAT WOULD YOU MISS MOST ABOUT THE OUTSIDE WORLD? I would miss the beautiful blue of the sky.

ACTIVITIES FOR GRADES 4-6

PRE-PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY #1
INTRODUCTION TO OPERA
MUSIC, TWO PERIODS, 30 MINUTES EACH

SUMMARY: Students are introduced to opera 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 their listening skills.

OBJECTIVE:

- ♦ Introduce opera as a collaborative form of storytelling which includes music, drama and design
- ♦ Identify how music helps to convey and emphasize the drama and emotions in a story and in opera
- ♦ Express detailed personal responses to musical performances in a variety of ways (Music, C2.1)
- ♦ Identify the elements of music in the repertoire they listen to and describe how they are used (Music, C2.2)
- ♦ Demonstrate an awareness, through listening, of the characteristics of musical forms and traditions of diverse times, places, and communities (Music, C3.2)

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)
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. Play an excerpt from the suggested list on the right and ask the students about the emotions the singers showed. How do you know without speaking the language?

PART TWO:

1. Introduce/review the musical terms (e.g. forte, piano, tempo, etc.) and operatic terms (see "A Glossary of Opera and Music Terms" on page 13).

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 on this page. Choose three, and play each excerpt twice through. Ask the students to complete the questions for each excerpt on the Opera Detective worksheet (on the following page.)

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 the tempo?			
What is the overall emotion(s) of the piece?			
Who do you think is singing? (e.g. a young woman? a group of sailors?)			
What do you think is the story behind this piece (what are they singing about)?			
How do you feel while listening to the piece?			

ACTIVITY #2
SEE, THINK, WONDER
SOCIAL STUDIES & LANGUAGE, 45 MINUTES

SUMMARY: Students use the inquiry process to formulate their own questions regarding an issue presented in the opera *Second Nature* and have the opportunity to gather information and communicate their findings for an audience.

OBJECTIVE:

- ♦ Interpret and analyse information and data related to their investigations, using a variety of tools (Social Studies, Gr. 4, B2.4)
- ♦ Gather and organize a variety of information and data that present various perspectives about Canadian social and/or environmental issues (Social Studies, Gr. 5, B2.2)
- ♦ Demonstrate an understanding of appropriate speaking behaviour in a variety of situations, including paired sharing, dialogue, and small and large group discussions (Language, Oral, 2.2)

ACTIVITY:

1. Show the class a picture of the effects of climate change, such as the one below:



2. Using a graphic organizer, have the students write down their thoughts under each heading (I See, I Think, I Wonder). Encourage the students to back up their interpretation with reasons and ask them what makes them wonder about the topic. Think about how our actions today will impact the environment one hundred years from now.
3. Bring the students either to a carpet, or make a circle with chairs, and have a knowledge building circle around the issues of climate change. Everyone should participate with the teacher acting as the moderator.
4. As a class, come up with ways that we can make positive changes to our environment.

EXTENSION: Have students make a poster advertising ways to help reduce your carbon footprint. Use the questions the students have come up with to launch a further investigation into their wonderings using the inquiry process.

DURING THE PERFORMANCE

Have the students pay special attention to the details of the set and costume design. How do you think this contributes to the overall effectiveness of the performance? How was the dramatic and musical movement effective in this production? Did you notice a relationship between the music and the mood of the character?

POST-PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY #1 FROZEN PICTURES DRAMA, 45 MINUTES

SUMMARY: Students work co-operatively in groups to re-tell the story of *Second Nature* through tableaux.

OBJECTIVE:

- ♦ Engage actively in drama exploration and role play, with a focus on exploring drama structures, key ideas, and pivotal moments in their own stories and stories from diverse communities, times, and places (Drama, B1.1)
- ♦ Express personal responses and make connections to characters, themes, and issues presented in their own and others' drama works (Drama, B2.1)

ACTIVITY:

1. Review the storyline of *Second Nature* with the class as a discussion (you can use the synopsis of the opera on page 8.)
2. As a class, choose one character from the opera and tell their story through a series of three sentences.
3. Explain the concept of creating a “tableau” for students. Let the students know that they will be creating a frozen picture for each of these sentences. When creating these pictures, you want their roles to be clear, they’ll need to keep in mind the location of their audience (what is the audience seeing?), and things that keep a picture interesting, such as having characters stand, sit, or kneel at different levels. For more information on working with tableaux, click [here](#).
4. Divide the class into groups of four or five students and ask them to create a series of three tableaux, one based on each sentence.
5. Have the groups perform their tableaux while one student reads the sentences aloud.

EXTENSION: While students are in tableaux, tap them one by one and ask them to stay frozen, but reveal what their character is thinking. Alternatively, the teacher or another student can act as a reporter and ask questions of each person in the tableau. While a group is holding their tableau, the teacher can facilitate a discussion with the rest of the class to describe what they are seeing. After the initial tableaux, allow each group to develop their own three-sentence frames. The groups may choose to explore the role of a different character, or what happens after the children leave the Habitat.

A large, abstract teal graphic on the left side of the page, consisting of several overlapping, curved shapes that resemble stylized leaves or petals. It is positioned behind the text, partially obscuring it.

**ACTIVITY #2
IN THE HOTSEAT
DRAMA, 30 MINUTES**

SUMMARY: Students embody various characters from the story, and their fellow students will have the opportunity to ask them questions and further explore the drama and motivations.

OBJECTIVE:

- ♦ Engage actively in drama exploration and role play, with a focus on exploring drama structures, key ideas, and pivotal moments in their own stories and stories from diverse communities, times, and places (Drama, B1.1)
- ♦ Demonstrate an understanding of the element of role by selectively using a few other elements of drama to build belief in a role and establish its dramatic context (Drama, B1.2)
- ♦ identify the point of view presented in oral texts and ask questions to identify missing or possible alternative points of view (Language, Oral, 1.8)

ACTIVITY:

1. Ask for six volunteers from the class who would like to each portray one of the characters from the opera *Second Nature*.
2. Have each character sit in a chair at the front of the room. The rest of the class will act as reporters and ask questions.
3. Each volunteer will take turns answering questions from the point of view of their character. Questions can be about what happened in the opera, their relationship to other characters, how they feel about living in the Habitat, etc. Redirect the students' questions if need be, although flexibility in questions should be allowed for creativity. Potential questions: What does your character like to eat? What sort of home do you have? What sort of activities do you participate in? What are your greatest strengths? Weaknesses?
4. Allow 5-7 minutes for questions, depending on how many questions the students have. Then, switch, and allow a new student to volunteer for each character.
5. After the students have taken turns in the "hotseat", bring the class together to reflect and discuss. What new things did they learn about each character? Has this created a greater understanding of how the characters relate to one another?

EXTENSION: Have the students write a journal entry from the perspective of one character. What is their life like now that the children have left the Habitat?

ACTIVITY #3

EXTRA! EXTRA! READ ALL ABOUT IT! LANGUAGE, 60 MINUTES

SUMMARY: Students write and share a 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 (Oral, 1.4)
- ♦ Extend understanding of oral texts by connecting, comparing and contrasting the ideas and information in them to their own knowledge and experience (Oral, 1.6)
- ♦ Identify whose point of view is presented or reflected in a media text (Media Literacy, 1.1)
- ♦ Identify the conventions and techniques used in some familiar media forms and explain how they help convey meaning and influence or engage the audience (Media Literacy, 2.2)

ACTIVITY:

1. Ask the students to bring in a review of a performance, play or musical from the newspaper.
2. Brainstorm different types of media with the class. Specifically discuss the aspects of print media and online posts or blogs. Divide the class into groups of two or three.
3. Ask each group to write a blog review and touch on each aspect of the opera: acting, singing and set/costume design. The glossary of opera terms would be helpful for this activity. This can be done online, or in hard copy and presented to the class. Some questions you can have the students think about include: Did any particular performer stand out for you, and why? Could you hear the emotion in the singers' voices? What did you think of the interaction between the characters? What did you think about the costumes? What were you expecting from this performance of the opera? What was your favourite moment in the opera?
4. Groups can either present or write short posts or comments on each review.

EXTENSION: Have students work towards the publishing stage of their writing. Reviews can be typed and shared on a bulletin board, with or without the ability for other students to leave comments and share opinions. Alternatively, students could do a presentation of their review or make a video/podcast.

EXAMPLE REVIEWS:

Click on the titles below for examples of reviews to show your students.

[The Globe and Mail, "A Stunning Siegfried at the COC" by Robert Harris](#)
[NOW Toronto, "Review: Jacob Two-Two Meets the Hooded Fang" by Jon Kaplan](#)
[SCHMOPERA, "In Review: ENO's *The Magic Flute*" by Jenna Douglas](#)

ACTIVITY #4

PROPS!

VISUAL ART, 50 MINUTES

SUMMARY: Students create props that they would see on stage, inspired by the virtual world of the Habitat.

OBJECTIVE:

- ♦ Create two- and three-dimensional art works that express feelings and ideas inspired by their own and others' points of view (Visual Art, D1.1)
- ♦ Use a variety of materials, tools, and techniques to determine solutions to design challenges (Visual Art, D1.4)

ACTIVITY:

1. The word “prop” comes from the term “theatrical property” which refers to objects used to add realism in a theatre. Have a discussion with students about how props are used to add dramatic effect to a scene (they can create an emotional impact, provide humour, they can be a metaphor, they can focus the audience’s attention). Use the profile on the COC’s Props Supervisor, Guy Nokes, on page 32 to discuss props in theatre and opera.

2. Have students collect items that they would like to use to represent their item from the future and bring to them to class (paper towel role, tissue paper, magazine clippings)

3. Glue objects together in unusual ways to create something new and encourage creativity through the use of different materials such as a paint, textiles, modelling clay, paper maché , etc

4. Challenge the students to think about what would need to be seen on stage, and if the prop would be safe, durable and reliable.

5. Encourage students to make a 3D shape and to use colour and shading to help make the prop look realistic.

ALTERNATIVE: Students can use a computer-assisted program to design their artifacts (depending on computer/tablet availability). Have students design and present their own “Habitat” and the things that must be present to keep that type of community alive.

ACTIVITIES FOR GRADES 7-8

PRE-PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY #1

THE MAKING OF AN OPERA

MUSIC, DRAMA, TWO CLASSES, 45 MINUTES EACH

SUMMARY: Students will gain an understanding of opera as an art form through research and receive a behind-the-scenes look at the production side of opera.

OBJECTIVE:

- ♦ Analyze, using musical terminology, ways in which the elements are used in the music that they listen to (Music, Gr. 7, C2.2)
- ♦ Analyze some of the social, political, and economic factors that affect the creation of music (Music, Gr. 8, C3.1)
- ♦ Identify and describe several ways in which drama contributes to contemporary social, economic, and cultural life (e.g. raise awareness of social issues) (Drama, Gr. 7, B3.2)
- ♦ Demonstrate an awareness of different kinds of drama and theatre from different times and places, and understanding how they reflect their context (Drama, Gr. 7, B3.2)
- ♦ Evaluate, using drama terminology, how effectively drama works and how shared experiences use the elements of drama to engage the audience and communicate a theme or message (Drama, Gr. 8, B2.2)

ACTIVITY:

1. Have students work in pairs and let them choose an area of opera that they would like to investigate further: music, dance, drama, or set and costume design.
2. Students will further research the roles of those involved in each area of the opera and present back to the class so there is an understanding of how the different elements come together to make a powerful performance.
3. Students should give examples of specific operas and their historical relevance at that point in history.
4. Ask students to think about what value drama has in their own life and in the life of the community. Why do they think it is beneficial to have a local theatre group in their community?
5. Further discuss the question of how drama can help us understand people, times, and places that we have not experienced in our own lives.

EXTENSION:

Book a behind-the-scenes tour with the Canadian Opera Company and take a visit to our rehearsal spaces. See where the props, costumes, and wigs are made!

Visit coc.ca/explore for more information.

ACTIVITY #2
SUSTAINABLE FUTURE
GEOGRAPHY, 50 MINUTES

SUMMARY: Students use the inquiry process to investigate issues related to the impact of the use of natural resources, and how issues of sustainability may affect settlement in the future.

OBJECTIVE:

- ♦ Identify significant short- and long-term effects of natural resource extraction/harvesting and their impact on people and the environment (Geography, Gr. 7, B3.3)
- ♦ Describe some responses to social and/or environmental challenges arising from the use of natural resources (Geography, Gr. 7, B3.5)
- ♦ Describe possible features of a sustainable community in the future and analyze some challenges associated with creating such a community (Geography, Gr. 8, A1.3)

ACTIVITY:

1. Divide the class into groups of four or five.
2. Provide each group with a large piece of paper, and arrange them as depicted below. Keep the centre block empty.
3. Ask the students one or more framing questions such as: Why do we need to consider various perspectives when determining the impact of human activities? Why do different people have different responses to the environment and the opportunities and challenges it presents? What makes a community sustainable? Why is it important that communities be sustainable? What can happen if a community is not sustainable? What are the challenges associated with creating such a sustainable community? (e.g. cost, population growth, increasing urbanization, dependence on fossil fuels).
4. Allow each student to write down their own thoughts in their allocated space on the paper and share their thoughts with their group members.
5. Ask the students to collectively come up with their top five responses to one of the questions and record them on paper in the centre square. All members of the group should agree on the responses.

EXTENSION: Have students or groups create a poster or oral presentation to communicate their top five responses. Turn this into a larger unit by having students design and present their own “Habitat” and the things that must be present to keep that type of community space alive. They could build a diorama of their habitat space, or create a painting or computer model to aid in their presentation.

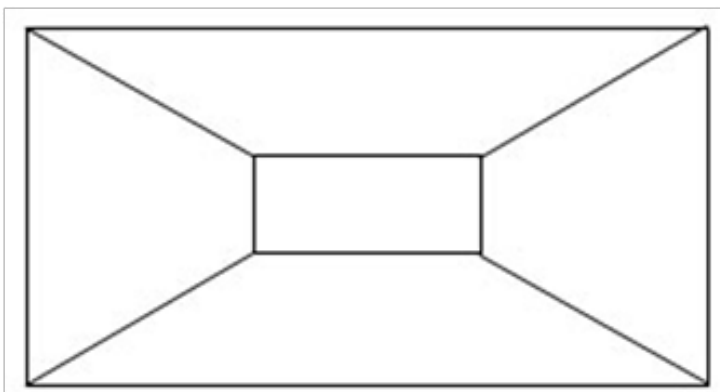


Diagram of paper arrangement

DURING THE PERFORMANCE

Ask the students to listen to how the music contributed to the mood of the character who is singing. How would you respond if you were Lydia or Jake? Does the storyline of the opera make you think about the effects of climate change? Do you think opera is an effective way to communicate a message?

POST-PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY #1 FROZEN PICTURES DRAMA, 50 MINUTES

SUMMARY: Students work co-operatively in groups to re-tell the story of *Second Nature* through tableaux.

OBJECTIVE:

- ♦ Engage actively in drama exploration and roleplay (B2.1)
- ♦ Evaluate, using drama terminology, how effectively drama works and how shared experiences use the elements of drama to engage the audience and communicate a theme or message (B2.2)
- ♦ Demonstrate an understanding of the elements of drama by selecting and combining several elements and conventions to create dramatic effects (B2.1)

ACTIVITY:

1. As a class, discuss the main parts of the storyline in *Second Nature*. (Variation: Re-tell the story from a single character's point of view, and have each group choose a different character's perspective in the next step.)
2. Explain the concept of creating a "tableau" for students. Let the students know that they will create a frozen picture for five different parts of the opera. When creating these pictures, you want their roles to be clear, they'll need to keep in mind the location of their audience (what is the audience seeing?), and things that keep a picture interesting, such as having characters stand, sit, or kneel at different levels. For more information on working with tableaux, click **here**.
3. Divide students into groups of five or six students and have them write five sentences about the storyline they choose to present (and to create a plan for their tableaux).
4. Have the students create a series of five tableaux to depict the story of the opera.
5. Each group presents to the class.

EXTENSION: Create more scenes by adding specific sentences to the basic five-sentence frame (e.g. have groups use all five sentences to create five different pictures). Invite the students to be directors and help improve each of the scenes by offering suggestions to help make the tableaux more effective in terms of spacing and levels. Should the groups have more students than characters, encourage the other students to take on roles to help set the scene—items in the Habitat, other members of the Habitat who may be in the background, walls and doors, etc. Get creative!

ACTIVITY #2
CRITICAL THINKING
DRAMA & LANGUAGE, 50 MINUTES

SUMMARY: Students create a mind map in order to organize their thoughts when thinking critically about issues presented in the opera *Second Nature*.

OBJECTIVE:

- ♦ Construct personal interpretations of drama works, connecting drama issues and themes to social concerns at both the local and global level (Drama, Gr. 8, B2.1)
- ♦ Identify and order main ideas and supporting details and group them into units that could be used to develop a multi-paragraph piece of writing, using a variety of strategies (Language, Writing, Gr. 7, 1.5)
- ♦ Identify elements in their writing that need improvement, selectively using feedback from the teacher and peers, with a focus on voice, diction, and an effective beginning and ending (Language, Writing, Gr. 7, 2.6)

ACTIVITY:

1. As a class, discuss the main issues presented in the opera. Possible topics may include: wildlife conservation, climate change, environmental stewardship, authoritarian society, dystopian future, virtual worlds, etc.
2. Ask each student to create a mind map with one of these concepts in the centre, choosing words describing personal and global connections leading out from the centre. How does their chosen central message relate to their own life experiences and opinions?
3. Students can organize the ideas presented on their mind map by using the chart below to further develop their thinking and ideas.
4. Come back for a larger classroom discussion to expand on their ideas.

CONNECT	EXTEND	CHALLENGE
How is the information presented CONNECTED to what you already know?	What new ideas did you get that EXTENDED or pushed your thinking in new directions?	What is still CHALLENGING or confusing for you or to get your mind around? What questions, wonderings or puzzles do you now have?

ACTIVITY #3
DESIGN CHALLENGE
VISUAL ART, 40 MINUTES

SUMMARY: Students design and create their own props, costume or set design for the stage.

OBJECTIVE:

- ♦ Use elements of design in art works to communicate ideas, messages, and understandings for a specific audience and purpose (Visual Art, D1.3)
- ♦ Use a variety of materials, tools, techniques, and technologies to determine solutions to increasingly complex design challenges (Visual Art, D1.4)

ACTIVITY:

1. Discuss with the class what roles are required behind the scenes of an opera. Ask what they noticed aside from the singers and musicians. This should be a discussion around the artistic skill of the set, costume, props and lighting designers. To learn more about what it's like to be a props designer, check out the Q&A with COC Props Supervisor Guy Nokes on page 32.
2. Discuss the story of *Second Nature*—how did our designer, Camellia Koo, use the story to inform her design? What elements did the students like about the design? What would they change?
3. Browse the internet or use magazines to seek inspiration for the students' own *Second Nature* designs. How would they factor colour, fabric and/or building materials. into their designs? The items they find can be pasted or stapled onto a Bristol board "mood board."
4. Thinking about the story elements of *Second Nature*, have students build a diorama or sketch a set or costume piece of their own design. Where would they set the opera? What would Elder Constance look like in their world?



PROPS AT THE COC

In *Second Nature*, humans now live in a habitat full of artificial items made to seem real—fake food, fake trees, etc. While for different reasons, with the help of our props department, we do the same thing (theatrically). Properties, or “props” for short, are all of the things actors and singers handle on stage – paper, pens, food, chairs, and sometimes even artificial animals! Want to learn more about making props for the stage? Check out our Q&A with COC Props Supervisor Guy Nokes below.

How did you get into the world of props?

I started as a scenic artist after I finished art college. When I first went to Stratford and saw what the props department did for the Festival Theatre, I decided I'd like to try that.

What tools (costume tools, building tools, painting tools) do you typically use to make props, and for what purposes?

Making props is an interesting job because the skill set is so wide. You should be good at some or all of the following: sculpting, carving, carpentry, mould-making, sewing, fabric dying, leather working, drawing, painting, welding, mask-making, and so much more. Each of these aspects requires its own set of tools and we have hundreds of tools in our shop.

How do you make fake things look real on stage?

The stage is a make-believe place, so often simply using real things can look uninteresting or out of place when they are put on stage. We might make a prop a bit bigger than normal or exaggerate its presence and depth by painting shadows and highlights on it. Because the audience is a fair distance from them on stage, everything needs to be exaggerated, including lighting, costumes, hair, and make-up.

Who are the other members of the opera production team that you work with?

We often work with the scenic department when scenery needs to be decorated. The carpenters may make a tall shelf and we would need to supply props like books, lamps, statues, etc. which would become part of the set, rather than props which are usually handled by performers. This happened in 2016 in *Siegfried* where a lot of props including fake bodies were hung from wires in the air. These floating props were a major part of the set design.



What educational path would you recommend to a young person looking to become a props builder?

I would suggest that if you are interested in the visual arts or are technically inclined and like making things with your hands, then going to a theatre school or art school would be a good start. If you are just starting out, I'd advise that you keep an open mind about what jobs you might like. As I mentioned, I trained as a painter and never thought I would be making props for the opera. I worked in TV, film and theatre doing various things before I came to the COC and I enjoyed all of those things.

What is your favourite COC moment?

My favorite thing is sitting in the rehearsal hall or the auditorium of the Four Seasons Centre and listening to the incredible singers and musicians we have.

What do you love about your job?

In props you are always confronted with new problems to solve, so the job is always interesting.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Did *Second Nature* spark new ideas and discussions in your class? Continue your explorations into opera, dystopian futures, and the effects of climate change using the following websites and books.

BOOKS: OPERA

Bennet, Roy. *Opera*. Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Ganeri, Anita and Nicola Barber. *The Young Person's Guide to the Opera: With music from the Great Operas on CD*. Harcourt: London, England 2001.

Husain, Shahrukk. *The Barefoot Book of Stories from the Opera*. James Mayhew (Illustrator), Barefoot Books, 1999.

Siberell, Anne. *Bravo! Brava! A Night at the Opera: Behind the Scenes with Composers, Cast and Crew*. Fred-erica Von Stade (Introduction). Oxford University Press Children's Books, 2001.

Thee, Christian and Robert Levine. *Behind the Curtain: Hansel and Gretel: Your own Backstage Tour in look-through and pull-up panels*. Workman Publishing Company, 1994.

BOOKS: DYSTOPIAN FUTURE

AUTHOR	TITLE	GRADE LEVEL EQUIVALENT	DRA	LEXILE [®] MEASURE
Bradbury, Ray	<i>Fahrenheit 451</i>	10	70	890L
Brown, Peter	<i>The Wild Robot</i>	4	40	740L
Collins, Suzanne	<i>The Hunger Games</i>	5.3	70	810L
Condie, Ally	<i>Matched</i>	5.3	70	680L
Dashner, James	<i>The Maze Runner</i>	5.3	70	870L
DuPrau, Jeanne	<i>The City of Ember</i>	5.1	60	680L
Huxley, Aldous	<i>Brave New World</i>	9		870L
Lowry, Lois	<i>The Giver</i>	5.9	60	760L
Oliver, Lauren	<i>Delirium</i>	9	70	920L
Orwell, George	<i>1984</i>	8.9		1090L
Wyndham, John	<i>The Chrysalids</i>			

WEBSITES

A Student's Guide to Climate Change

<http://www3.epa.gov/climatechange/kids/solutions/actions/>

Environment and Climate Change Canada

Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Catherine McKenna

<http://www.ec.gc.ca/cc>

Our Canada Project

An organization started by youth to give their peers a voice when it comes to creating positive change through action. This interactive website allows students to post their initiatives and contributions as responsible citizens.

<http://www.ourcanadaproject.ca>

Resources for Rethinking

<http://www.resources4rethinking.ca/en/home>

Ausable Bayfield Conservation

A website with great resources for teachers, complete with lesson plans and activities.

<http://www.abca.on.ca>

ORGANIZATIONS

Evergreen

<http://www.evergreen.ca>

Learning for a Sustainable Future

Includes many resources for teachers including curriculum-based lesson plans, activities and guides as well as student engagement activities.

<http://www.lsf.lts.ca>

Kids Go Green - Fact sheet

<http://www.bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/MF2983.pdf>

Climate Kids (NASA)

<http://climatekids.nasa.gov/>

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Environment Canada. Climate Change Web Site. <http://www.ec.gc.ca/climate/index.html>.

The David Suzuki Foundation. <http://www.davidsuzuki.org/climate/main.htm>.

Lyric Opera of Chicago. Lyric Unlimited: Backstage Pass

NASA Climate Kids
<http://climatekids.nasa.gov/>

Visible Thinking.
http://www.visiblethinkingpz.org/VisibleThinking_html_files/03_ThinkingRoutines/03c_Core_routines/SeeThinkWonder/SeeThinkWonder_Routine.html
www.visiblethinkingpz.org

eWorkshop
http://www.eworkshop.on.ca/edu/pdf/Mod36_coop_placemat.pdf
Placemat activity
http://www.learnalberta.ca/content/sssm/html/placematactivity_sm.html



The COC offers a wide variety of school programs for Kindergarten to Grade 12.

To find out more, visit our website at coc.ca/Explore or contact:

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