



The Brothers Grimm

DEAN BURRY

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Cover: Shannon Mercer and Andrea Ludwig in the Canadian Opera Company's *The Brothers Grimm* (2002). Photo: John M. Currid
Below: A scene from the Canadian Opera Company's *The Brothers Grimm* (2012). Photo: Chris Hutcheson



Welcome

Opera 101

Dear Educators,

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

So it's a good thing the Canadian Opera Company's 2013 Glencore Ensemble Studio School 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 15,000 students in southern Ontario and beyond are treated to some of the best young singers, directors and musicians this country 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 the world's major opera houses.

The COC commissioned *The Brothers Grimm* in 1999, and it has proved to be our 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!"

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 lesson plans will help connect the opera to the larger worlds of music, expression, literature and imagination.

Vanessa Smith
School Programs Manager
Canadian Opera Company

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!

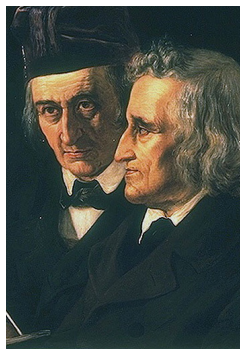
Opera started in the late 16th century in Florence, Italy, at the beginning of the Baroque period of music. The first opera composers took many of their ideas from the ancient Greeks, who combined music and drama to tell a story more effectively. The Greeks also used a chorus to further the plot and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

Wondering how to explain what opera is to your students? See Introduction to Opera activity on page 17.

How a School Tour Opera is Created



Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm
(Their stories inspired an opera!)

STORY

Someone (usually a librettist or composer) 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.



Dean Burry
(Composer/Librettist)



STAGE DIRECTOR

Reads and studies the score and creates a concept of how to put the opera 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.



Liza Balkan
(Stage Director)



Kevin McAllister
(Set and Costume Designer)

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.



Timothy Cheung
(*Music Director*)

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 with the rehearsal process.



Michael Barrs
(*Stage Manager*)



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.



Charlotte Burrage
(*Frau Viehmann*)



Neil Craighead
(*Brentano/Colonel Krause*)



Aviva Fortunata
(*Frau Viehmann*)



Andrew Haji
(*Wilhelm Grimm*)



Owen McCausland
(*Wilhelm Grimm*)



Danielle MacMillan
(*Dortchen Wild*)



Cameron McPhail
(*Jacob Grimm*)



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. Isabel Bayrakdarian is a 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.

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: The tenors are the higher male voices, and like the soprano, 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 exemplifies 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. Robert Gleadow is a well-known Canadian bass. [Click here](#) to hear him.

Characters and Story

CHARACTERS

Character	Voice-type
Wilhelm Grimm	Tenor
Jacob Grimm	Baritone
Brentano/Colonel Krause	Bass-baritone
Dortchen Wild	Soprano
Frau Viehmann	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 Wild, 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 have already heard about the book and want 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 15th anniversary this past 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* celebrated its 500th performance, making it the most performed Canadian opera in history.

Other major operatic works by Dean Burry

Isis and the Seven Scorpions, an opera for children commissioned by the Canadian Opera Company in 2006. [Click here to watch!](#)

The Vinland Traveler, for Memorial University's Opera Road Show. [Click here to learn more.](#)

Pandora's Locker for The Glenn Gould School. [Click here to watch a clip.](#)

The Bremen Town Musicians for Opera Lyra.

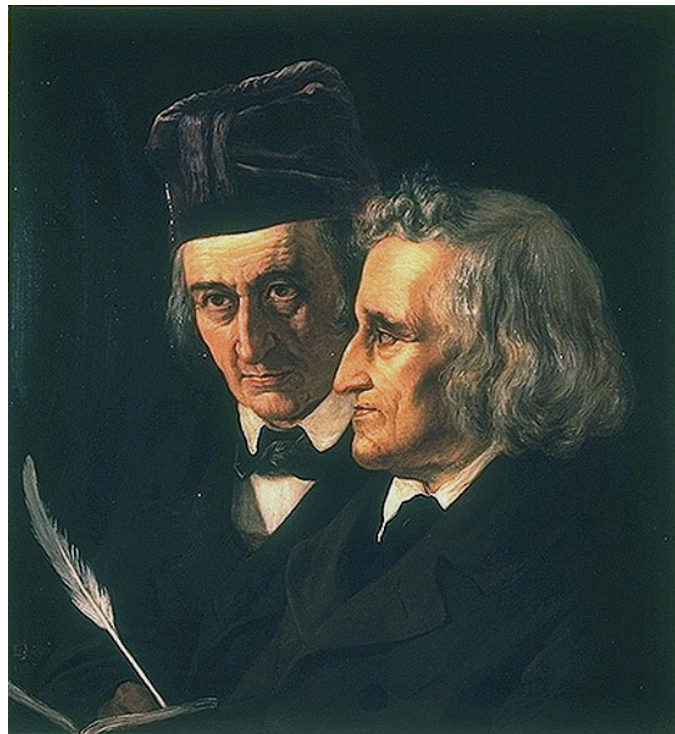
The Mummies' Masque for Toronto Masque Theatre. [Click here to watch a clip.](#)

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* ([click here for more information](#)), both commissioned by the Canadian Children's Opera Company.

The Real 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 campfires 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, *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.



Die Brüder Grimm ("The Brothers Grimm") by Elisabeth Jerichau-Baumann, 1855. Currently located in the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin in Berlin, Germany.

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 propriety 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 or emotional in nature
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
Conductor:	The musical director of the orchestra
Crescendo:	Gradually getting louder
Decrescendo:	Gradually getting softer
Duet:	A song performed by, and written for, 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 to which the composer sets music; Italian for “little book”
Mezzo:	Medium (i.e. <i>mezzo forte</i> 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 delivered 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)

Meet the Cast and Crew



Liza Balkan
(Stage Director)

NAME: Liza Balkan

HOMETOWN: Born in Montreal.
Now: Toronto and Stratford

WHEN YOU DECIDED YOU WANTED TO DIRECT: Back in 2001 I began the transition from actor to director. Of course, I am still delighted to be on the stage every now and then, too!

FIRST TIME ON STAGE: My first professional job as an actor was a school tour in upstate New York a long time ago!
My first time performing on stage was at a dance concert when I was seven years old.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS: Creating and directing my documentary theatre project *Out The Window* (2012), directing *Le nozze di Figaro* and *L'elisir d'amore* in Italy (COSI, 2010), directing the premiere of the site-specific *Opera on The Rocks* at Paupers Pub in Toronto (2008), performing in Theatre Rusticle's dance theatre work *The Stronger Variations* at Harbourfront (2006), acting in *Still The Night* (Theatre Passe Muraille/Tapestry New Opera, 1997 and subsequent National Tour – Dora Award Recipient), and playing “Anybody’s” in the musical *West Side Story* under Jerome Robbins’ direction at the Kennedy Centre in Washington, D.C. (1986).

FAVOURITE ASPECT OF SCHOOL TOUR: Introducing opera and theatre – up close and personal – to young people!



Michael Barrs
(Stage Manager)

NAME: Michael Barrs

HOMETOWN: Ancaster, Ontario

WHEN YOU DECIDED YOU WANTED TO BE A STAGE MANAGER: At 11 years old, I decided I wanted to be involved in theatre production and design.

STAGE MANAGING DEBUT: As a stage manager at York University.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS: Meeting Mary Rodgers (daughter of composer Richard Rodgers) during rehearsals of *The Sound of Music* in Toronto.

FAVOURITE ASPECT OF SCHOOL TOUR: The creative post-opera questions asked by the school children!



Charlotte Burrage
(*Frau Viehmann*)

NAME: Charlotte Burrage

HOMETOWN: Woodstock, Ontario

Voice Type: Mezzo-soprano

AGE WHEN YOU STARTED SINGING: I had my first singing lesson when I was eight years old.

FIRST TIME ON STAGE: The first time I sang in front of an audience was when I was eight for the Woodstock Rotary music festival. I sang "If you should meet a crocodile." I won a trophy and they played a recording of it on the radio. I haven't stopped performing since!

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS: Performing Maria in *The Sound of Music* with my sister playing the role of Liesl, singing the Canadian and American national anthems at the Rogers centre for a Blue Jays and Yankees baseball game, buying my first gown for my solo recital, singing Hansel in *Hansel and Gretel* for Vancouver Opera in Schools and of course becoming a member of the COC Ensemble Studio.

FAVOURITE ASPECT OF SCHOOL TOUR: This is my second school tour and I can't wait to share what I love with people who are still deciding what they love. I consider myself an advocate for opera and I am excited to make it accessible to everyone. I wish this kind of program existed when I was in school. The more experiences you can have as a young person the better. Whether you enjoy the music, the acting, the costumes, or the set, there is something for everyone and I am excited to hear your questions! Ultimately my favourite part about a school tour is that it reminds of simpler times and that dreams do come true. All of our careers started as dreams when we were young and now we are performers and artists. Decide what you love and can't live without and never give up.



Timothy Cheung
(*Music Director*)

NAME: Timothy "Lightning Fingers" Cheung

HOMETOWN: Toronto, Ontario and Hong Kong

AGE WHEN YOU STARTED PIANO: Five or six

FIRST TIME ON STAGE: "The whole world is a stage." Eight or nine years of age. First full piano recital at 19. Choirs since nine or 10.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS: Being at the Canadian Opera Company with the Ensemble Studio; playing a piano concerto with my university orchestra; standing on stage as an extra (super) and pretending to be a singer.

FAVOURITE ASPECT OF SCHOOL TOUR: Travelling with a group of people who love what they do.



Neil Craighead
(*Brentano*)

NAME: Neil Craighead

HOMETOWN: Calgary, Alberta

VOICE TYPE: Bass-baritone

AGE WHEN YOU STARTED SINGING: Choirs at six. Voice lessons at 12.

FIRST TIME ON STAGE: Singing in church; first role: UBC Opera's *The Magic Flute* – the role of The Speaker.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS: Joining the COC Ensemble; working with Larry Brownlee in *La Cenerentola*.

FAVOURITE ASPECT OF SCHOOL TOUR: Answering questions about singing, and eating a different lunch every day!



Aviva Fortunata
(*Frau Viehmann*)

NAME: Aviva Fortunata

HOMETOWN: Calgary, Alberta

VOICE TYPE: Soprano

AGE WHEN YOU STARTED SINGING: Five years old.

FIRST TIME ON STAGE: Eight years old.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS: Singing on the stage of the San Francisco Opera House, performing *Desdemona* with orchestra, working at the Canadian Opera Company!

FAVOURITE ASPECT OF SCHOOL TOUR: Introducing opera to a whole new generation!



Andrew Haji
(*Wilhelm Grimm*)

NAME: Andrew Haji

HOMETOWN: London, Ontario

VOICE TYPE: Tenor

AGE WHEN YOU STARTED SINGING: I sang in choirs since the age of eight, but only started taking voice lessons when I was 22.

FIRST TIME ON STAGE: I sang on lots of stages with choirs, but my first real “stage” experience was performing *The Music Man* at the Grand Theatre in London in high school.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS: Attending some amazing summer programs, such as COSI in Italy and Music Academy of the West in California.

FAVOURITE ASPECT OF SCHOOL TOUR: I am looking forward to introducing our audiences to a genre of music they may not have experienced before.



Danielle MacMillan
(*Dortchen Wild*)

NAME: Danielle MacMillan

HOMETOWN: Toronto

VOICE TYPE: Mezzo-soprano

AGE WHEN YOU STARTED SINGING: 12 years old

FIRST TIME ON STAGE: Senior Kindergarten. I was singing with my graduating class and fainted in front of everyone... that’s when all the drama started!

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS: Singing Diana in *La Calisto*, Singing *Pur ti miro* for The National Ballet of Canada

FAVOURITE ASPECT OF SCHOOL TOUR: Aside from touring across Ontario with great people, I’m most definitely looking forward to the Q&A. Kids always ask the sweetest and funniest questions. You never know what’s going on in their inquisitive minds.



Kevin McAllister
(*Set and Costume Designer*)

NAME: Kevin McAllister

Over 10 years ago the COC contracted Kevin McAllister to design the touring sets and costumes for this production of *The Brothers Grimm*. As a testament to the quality of his work and the classic feel of the design, the COC continues to tour his production, even a decade later. Though Kevin is no longer involved with the school tour, his creative designs have had a lasting impact! Kevin McAllister

is an award-winning Canadian set designer who has worked with the Canadian Opera Company, the Arts Club Theatre, Vancouver Opera, the Grand Theatre, Western Canada Theatre, Pacific Theatre, Festival of Classics, ShakespeareWorks and UBC Theatre. He recently served as Associate Designer on the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympic Opening and Closing Ceremonies.



Owen McCausland
(*Wilhelm Grimm*)

NAME: Owen McCausland

ROLE: Wilhelm Grimm

HOMETOWN: Saint John, New Brunswick

VOICE TYPE: Tenor

AGE WHEN YOU STARTED SINGING: six years old, in school choirs

FIRST TIME ON STAGE: 14 years old

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS: Tito in *La clemenza di Tito*

FAVOURITE ASPECT OF SCHOOL TOUR: Being on stage with friends!



Cameron McPhail
(*Jacob Grimm*)

NAME: Cameron McPhail

HOMETOWN: Brandon, Manitoba

VOICE TYPE: Baritone

AGE WHEN YOU STARTED SINGING: 24 years old

FIRST TIME ON STAGE: 24 years old as the title role in Mozart's *Don Giovanni* in Czech Republic

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS: Sinfonica Giuseppe Verdi di Milano, *Wonderful Town*, Nick Shadow in *The Rake's Progress* at Music Academy of the West, George London Foundation Finals Concert.

FAVOURITE ASPECT OF SCHOOL TOUR: The performances that result in repeating the same show 60 times with the same friends, but fueled by varying levels of espresso.

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. For this production of *The Brothers Grimm*, designer Kevin McAllister was inspired by the work of English painter Arthur Rackham (1867 – 1939). The muted browns and greys of the **set** reflect the simple country life of a 19th-century German village.

Like the characters themselves, many of the **props** (items used by the singers) of the opera spring forth from books. Large, worn leather books 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! Costume changes help singers portray such different roles.

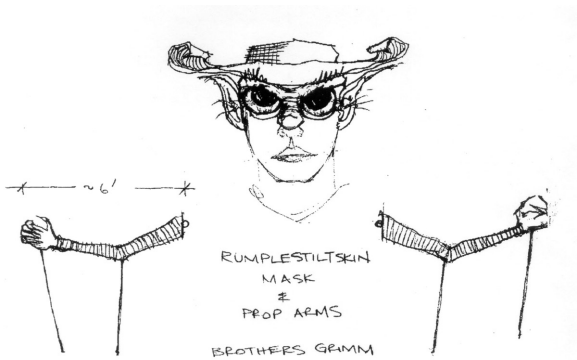
A designer may do many sketches around a basic idea. These ideas are then further developed in rehearsal.



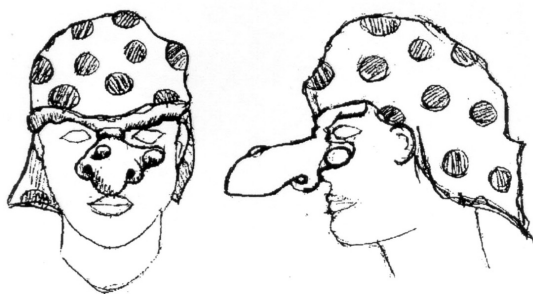
Top left: The story of Cinderella, illustrated by Arthur Rackham. Top right: Shannon Mercer and Andrea Ludwig in the Canadian Opera Company's *The Brothers Grimm* (2002), photo: John M. Currid. Left: The story of Rapunzel, illustrated by Arthur Rackham. Below: A scene from the Canadian Opera Company's *The Brothers Grimm* (2009), photo: Anand Maharaj



In keeping with the storytelling style of the opera, some of the characters in each tale are created 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.



WOLF MASK



WITCH MASK



Above: these mask designs for characters in *The Brothers Grimm* were sketched by designer Kevin McAllister. To the right, you see how the final masks looked.

Above: photos from the 2007 Xstrata Ensemble Studio School Tour production of *The Brothers Grimm*. Middle: Lisa DiMaria as Little Red Cap. Bottom: Melinda Delorme as the Witch. Photos: Gary Beechey

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.

OBJECTIVE

- ♦ 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*, *tempo*, etc.) and operatic terms (see “A Glossary of Terms” article on page 10).
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 *tempi* (speeds) 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 the next page. Play each excerpt twice through and ask the students to complete the questions for each excerpt on the Opera Detective worksheet (on page 19).
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 “cheerful” sound? Can a sound convey a “happy” emotion for some but a “sad” feeling for others? If so, why?

SUGGESTED EXCERPTS

Click on the clouds to listen to music excerpts or to see the libretto (words)!

1. “Largo al factotum” – from Rossini’s *The Barber of Seville* (baritone aria)



2. “Les voici, les voici!” – from Bizet’s *Carmen* (children’s chorus)



3. “O soave fanciulla” – from Puccini’s *La Bohème* (tenor/soprano duet)



4. “Va, pensiero” – from Verdi’s *Nabucco* (chorus)



5. “Voi che sapete” – from Mozart’s *The Marriage of Figaro* (mezzo-soprano aria)



6. “Una furtiva lagrima” – from Donizetti’s *L’elisir d’amore* (tenor aria)



7. “Evening Prayer” – from Humperdinck’s *Hansel and Gretel* (soprano/mezzo-soprano duet)



8. “Der Hölle Rache” – from Mozart’s *The Magic Flute* (soprano aria)



Opera Detective Worksheet



NAME _____

DATE _____

	EXCERPT 1	EXCERPT 2	EXCERPT 3
What is the tempo?			
What is the overall emotion 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?			

Classroom Activities for Kindergarten to Grade 2

PRE-PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES

Let's Perform!

Drama and Dance, 15 minutes

SUMMARY

Students 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. 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 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 hands 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 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 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 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 art work
- ♦ Choose words that are most appropriate for their purpose
- ♦ Use a variety of sentence types correctly and appropriately
- ♦ Identify the emotional quality of lines

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 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:
Verse #1: *Once two brothers had a job,*
Verse #2: *In a tower lived a girl,*
Verse #3: *Little Red Cap walked along,*
4. 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.
5. 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 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 mono-syllabic 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 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 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 ACTIVITIES

Frozen Pictures

Drama, Dance and Language, 50 minutes

SUMMARY

Students will work co-operatively in groups to 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?

Andrew Stewart, Justin Walsh and Adam Luther in the Canadian Opera Company’s The Brothers Grimm (2007), photo: Gary Beechey



POST-PERFORMANCE ACTIVITY

Extra! Extra! Read all About it!

Language, 60 minutes

SUMMARY

Students 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. 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. The glossary of opera terms would also be helpful for this activity.
5. The students should try not to use a story synopsis to make it a little challenging.
6. Other groups could then present or write short posts or comments on each review.



Ileana Montalbetti and Laura Albino in a scene from the Canadian Opera Company's The Brothers Grimm (2009), photo: Anand Maharaj



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The Brothers Grimm Study Guide

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