

Activity Overview

Special performances for young audiences

Children from 3 to 14 years old are the stars of this year's edition of the European Opera Days. Many companies programme opera or concert performances specifically targeted at them: children's operas based on famous children's stories and fairytales (Buxton, Düsseldorf, Lisbon, Moscow) or new stories (Amsterdam, Bremen, Magdeburg); repertoire works in adapted versions (Brussels) or skilfully combined into a story (Stuttgart); musical story-telling (Antwerp) and short pop-up operas (Dublin). Dance is not left out either with children's ballets performed in Bratislava and Bucharest.

Operatic and musical introductions

What better than a little taste of opera and classical music to make you crave for more? In Athens, opera will be introduced to young and adult audiences through... an opera; 400 years of opera will be explored in 60 minutes in Ghent while Lisbon will travel through the history of song and voice and Moscow will bring its audiences to Africa and South America to the sound of the marimba.

Games and quizzes

Because playing is a better way to learn, companies have imagined various games to introduce the art of opera and the secrets of its making. Visitors in Bucharest and Magdeburg will test their operatic knowledge in fun quizzes, and discover more about the preparation of an opera and the many professions involved through Snakes and Ladders and Memory games in Brussels.

Workshops

Green light to the creativity of young ears, young voices and young hands! The European Opera Days will be an occasion for children to try their painting skills and make puppets, music boxes and plenty of other handicraft works to take back home (Belgrade, Brussels, Ostrava, Stuttgart). Little ones are not forgotten with an introductory workshop to opera for children aged 6 months to 4 years in London. Young and old will also be invited to express themselves with singing and music workshops (Brussels, Cardiff, Leeds); the most daring will even try the full opera experience in Glasgow with song, drama, dance – and foreign languages.

Guided tours

Auditorium, backstage areas, workshops... There is much magic enclosed in opera houses and it is exciting to discover the public and hidden parts of these historic buildings. Guided tours will be organised in Belgrade, Bucharest, Ghent, Maastricht, Moscow, Ostrava, Torino; in several languages in Stuttgart; and visitors of Brussels' La Monnaie will explore the building in an original way: investigating the death of the conductor in a Cluedo game.

Performances and open rehearsals

Some companies choose to reach out to Young Ears with... opera performances! - a one act comic opera in Skopje, a performance for children in Oviedo, and 100 opera newcomers invited to a performance in Göteborg.

Opera houses in Damascus, Maastricht, Magdeburg, Monaco and Moscow will let the general public access rehearsals, sometimes with an encounter with members of the creative team.

Opera outside the walls

In a number of cities, companies reach audiences outside their theatres and take opera to unexpected places. In Barcelona, opera arias accompanied by a piano will be performed live in metro stations. In Inverness, a 20-minute version of *Rigoletto* based on the Japanese story-telling artform 'Kamishibai' will be presented in bookshops, hospitals, care homes, libraries etc.

And more...

Companies will also offer small concerts and recitals in foyers, film and performance screenings, exhibitions, activities and performances for audiences with special needs, and more.

Programme across Europe

BELGIUM

Antwerp & Ghent – De Vlaamse Opera

www.vlaamseopera.be

De Vlaamse Opera celebrates the European Opera Days in Antwerp and Ghent on both 7 and 8 May. On Saturday in Ghent, the history of opera will be visited in 60 minutes: led by a singer, a pianist and an actor, visitors will listen to various excerpts of famous works retracing 400 years of operatic history. In Antwerp, children from 6 will be invited to a journey to the land of elves (*Kom je mee naar Elfenland?*): in the middle of the night, when no one expects it, elves come dancing and singing as tiny little lights... Accompanied by a singer, a pianist and a story-teller, children will experience a fantastic travel through legends and tales.

The audience of the Sunday performance of *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria* in Ghent will enjoy a pre-performance concert and post-performance drink, while in Antwerp Strauss's *Frau ohne Schatten* will be followed by a backstage tour to meet the production team.

Brussels – La Monnaie/De Munt

www.lamonnaie.be

On a nice and mild afternoon of early May, two young ears were strolling around the cobbled streets of Brussels. Here they come in front of a beautiful building – a colonnade, large open doors, lights and red velvet... The somewhat impressed but curious young ears took a step in and...

On 7 May, La Monnaie opens its doors and offers a series of activities that will unveil (some of) the secrets of the making of an opera. Visitors can discover what it feels like to be an opera singer having to overcome obstacles before the première with a giant Snakes and Ladders game. A Memory game will introduce the many people and professions involved in the creation of an opera performance. Throughout the day, there will be concerts by the Chamber Orchestra and the Youth Choruses of La Monnaie, film screenings in the auditorium and dance performances in and around the theatre. But there remains one mystery: one day, a conductor died at the opera house. What happened – angry diva? Food intoxication at the canteen? Tragic costume fitting? Surely the investigators of the opera Cluedo will find the answer!

Brussels – Opera Mobile

www.operamobile.be

Opera Mobile prepares a whole day of opera for young and adult audiences on 7 May. Their production of Mozart's *Bastien et Bastienne* in an adapted version for children from 4 to 12 will be performed 3 times during the day. In between performances, the audience will have the opportunity to participate in various workshops: singing with the soloists, making a music box, discovering Saint-Saëns' *Carnaval des animaux*, opera quiz etc. Opera Mobile singers will give mini-performances throughout the day and end with a final concert *Il Belcanto - soprannissimo*, during which famous Italian opera arias will be sung and introduced by the artists. A congenial family day that will make opera a real pleasure for all!

Liège – Opéra Royal de Wallonie

www.operaliege.be

In Liège, Young Ears of all ages are invited to smell, feel and taste sounds in all their forms! Alongside guided tours and opera quizzes, a number of local artists will offer original experiences to visitors: Pergolesi's *Serva Padrona* will breathe fresh air in the ears of young audiences with an adapted, surprising version by Compagnie Cifuentes; songwriter André Borbé will let the sound shine with a recital for young and old; new sounds will be explored with an introduction to *Sybil et les Silhouettes*, a fantastic interactive tale programmed for next season; and sound and senses will be combined in a crazy string instrument making workshop: what is a lemon cry? How does a snorophone sound? Find it out on 8 May at Palais Opéra de Liège!

CZECH REPUBLIC

Brno – National Theatre Brno / Janacek Opera

www.ndbrno.cz

The European Opera Day 2011 will sing the crowds in the biggest shopping centre in Brno on Sunday 8 May. For its third participation in the European Opera Days (after an exclusive fashion show in 2010 and graffiti and street dancing in 2009), the Janacek Opera will surprise the unsuspecting public in Brno's shopping and entertainment centre Olympia with a chorus opera performance. Other choirs will also be invited for the occasion, and children may be looking forward to funny presents – candies and colour balloons of National Theatre Brno!

Ostrava – National Moravian-Silesian Theatre

www.ndm.cz

In Ostrava, the European Opera Days will start as from Friday 6 May with the opening of an exhibition of costumes from National Moravian-Silesian Theatre's productions, which will then be open on both Saturday and Sunday. Eminent soloists of the opera company will guide visitors through the corridors and foyers of the theatre and tell them more about the opera house, and on Saturday afternoon children from 6 to 15 will be invited to 'paint Opera'. NMST will present three operas on these days: Smetana's *Bartered Bride* on Friday 6 May, Giordano's *Fedora* on Saturday 7 and Bizet's *Carmen* on Sunday 8, all preceded by introductions presenting the creation of the works and the tradition of their stagings in the Czech Republic.

GERMANY

Bremen – Theater Bremen

www.bremertheater.com

On 7 and 8 May, Theater Bremen will perform *Drei alte Männer wollten nicht sterben* ('Three Old Men who didn't want to Die'), a comical opera for children from 6 years old. Three old men, Diederik, Jonathan and Olivier, wake up with the feeling that today is going to be a very special day. Their enthusiasm wanes when they learn from a letter fallen on their doormat that today is their last day to live. They just cannot believe it and try to convince themselves that they are nowhere near ready to die.

In this play, Dutch composer Guus Ponsioen introduces the audience to the difficult concept of growing old and dying in a cheerful and comprehensible way. The text treats the theme of the inevitability of death and shows the various stages we humans go through when confronted with death: anger, denial, fear, acceptance, sorrow, leave-taking. Librettist Suzanne Van Lohuizen succeeds in presenting this heavy subject in a light manner without concealing or embellishing anything. And this is what makes it such a great consolation.

Düsseldorf – Deutsche Oper am Rhein Düsseldorf-Duisburg

www.rheinoper.de

Deutsche Oper am Rhein will present the première of the magical fairytale opera *Der gestiefelte Kater* (*Puss in Boots*) aimed at children from 6 years old. The popular legend of the talking tomcat who by wiles and devices wins riches and a princess for his penniless master inspired the Catalan composer Xavier Montsalvatge in 1947. In his witty score, Montsalvatge imparts character to the impish figures of the tale now with traditional harmony, now with allusions to the style of Manuel de Falla, now with dissonance. The plucky cat meets not only the fair princess, but also her almost deaf and rather confused father and the wicked monster, which is however finally outwitted.

Director Svenja Tiedt and her designer Tatjana Ivshina are presenting an exciting piece for the young and old with inventive images and fast-moving characterisation. Humorous ingredients from a wide range of stories lend an extra dash of spice to the adventures of the miller and his fearless cat. With young hip-hop dancers from INDEX, the junior company integrated into her 'Tanzhaus NRW', Amelie Jalowy contributes droll choreographic elements, while graphic animations will surely further increase the appeal of the staging not only for younger guests.

Karlsruhe – Badisches Staatstheater

www.staatstheater.karlsruhe.de

Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe will present its 28th Opera Ball on 7 May. All stages of the theatre will turn into a sensational ballroom. About 2,500 guests participate in this event each year. Among them are many celebrities including international guest artists like the Italian bariton-star Ambrogio Maestri. The title of the Opera Ball ('As You Like It') refers to one of William Shakespeare's plays. The programme is also about the work of the great author William Shakespeare and its adaptations in music and dance. Artists of the Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe (ballet, chorus, opera soloists and Badische Staatskapelle) and guests will guarantee an unforgettable evening.

Magdeburg – Theater Magdeburg

www.theater-magdeburg.de

Theater Magdeburg will offer two days of activities to learn more about opera.

On 7 May, an orchestral rehearsal of Carl Maria von Weber's *Freischütz* will be open to the public and preceded by an introduction. Children will have pride of place with a performance of the short opera *Die Waldkinder* by Wilfried Hiller in the afternoon and *Kammerjäger* - improvisation theatre by children for children in the evening (with Theaterjugendclub Magdeburg). On 8 May, young audiences will be able to participate in the 'What is Opera' quiz and there will be the opportunity to attend the musical *Jekyll & Hyde* in the evening.

Stuttgart – Staatsoper Stuttgart

www.staatstheater.stuttgart.de

On Saturday 7 May, the Junge Oper of Staatsoper Stuttgart organises a 'Day of Cushion Concerts' with four little concerts performed by musicians of the Staatsorchester Stuttgart for the youngest ears, 4-8 year olds and their families. Each concert will be followed by a painting or craft activities. Besides, there will be guided tours of the opera house in different languages, a family workshop with musicians and puppets and make-up workshops.

Concerts include:

- *Frederick die Maus*: as all mice collect grains and wheat for the winter, Frederick gathers sunlight, words and colours. Will he be able to help the others when food stock slowly becomes bare? On music by Maurice Ravel, Fredrik Vahle and Jacques Ibert.

- *Die Schliefernasen und der kleine Mruschel*: Deep in the sea lives a little shell who is sometimes sad because of the darkness all around. How he wishes he could have light-eyes to enlighten the sea! A clown and a gamba player tell this children's story, combining movement with modern and 17th century music.

- *Schnipselgestrüpp*: Hidden in his bedroom, a little child creates his own dream world with paper: airplanes, elephants, flowers... This helps him to forget real life, which is not always funny. But the force of fantasy eventually wins over and deploys its magic on the child and his family. With music for string quartet by Dvorák, Haydn, Saint-Saëns etc.

- *Ein kleiner König weint doch nicht*: One day, a young Prince became King – suddenly he has to count money, make war, punish thieves and play chess. This makes him very sad until the arrival of a court jester who will show him how he can follow his own heart – and make everything differently! With 20th century music for wind quintets by Ferenc Farkas, György Ligeti and Norman Hallam.

GREECE

Athens - Greek National Opera

www.nationalopera.gr

On 7 and 8 May in the morning, Greek National Opera will present *The Magic Violin*, an operatic introduction to opera for children and adults specially composed for the European Opera Days by Nikos Xanthoulis (music) and Marivita Grammatikaki (libretto). In the afternoon, various happenings will be organised in the foyer and corridors of the opera house to pursue the discovery of opera, ending with a performance of *Carmen* in the evening.

ICELAND

Reykjavik – Icelandic Opera

www.opera.is

To mark the occasion of its move to Harpa Music Hall in Reykjavik and the European Opera Days, the Icelandic Opera will open to the public its home for the past thirty years, in the historic old cinema 'Gamla bíó' in the heart of Reykjavík, on Saturday 7 May afternoon.

Guests are welcome to explore the historic house, have a cup of coffee in the green room, buy chocolate in the old candy shop, look around the backstage, sing on the stage where most Icelandic singers have performed, and buy old programmes, posters and tapes. Children and families are especially welcome!

IRELAND

Dublin – Opera Theatre Company

www.opera.ie

Opera Theatre Company will present three Pop-Up Opera performances on Saturday 7 May in no. 25 Eustace St., a timeless Georgian house set in the heart of Dublin's cultural quarter. Young ears (and old) are welcome to join these free, 15-minute long operas devised by OTC's artists. Step back in time and enjoy delightful family performances in this welcoming intimate setting.

In association with the Irish Landmark Trust.

ITALY

Torino – Teatro Regio

www.teatroregio.torino.it

The doors of Teatro Regio will be open for the whole of Saturday 7 May with free guided tours of the theatre as well as short performances in the foyers by Teatro Regio's chamber orchestra playing with young musicians from Torino's Giuseppe Verdi Conservatory on the occasion.

MACEDONIA

Skopje - Macedonian Opera and Ballet

www.mob.com.mk

On 7 May, Macedonian Opera and Ballet will stage Donizetti's comic opera *Rita*. Donizetti's beautiful and entertaining music is ideal for a first encounter with opera. Sung in Macedonian by young soloists whose moves are also choreographed, the performance will appeal to audiences young and old. Additional activities are also in preparation.

MONACO

Monte-Carlo – Opéra de Monte-Carlo

www.opera.mc

Opéra de Monte-Carlo has joined the European Opera Days 'en avant-première' on Sunday 20 March 2011 with an open-door day around *Rigoletto*. Visitors have been able to enjoy a matinee performance of the Women's Chorus of the Opera, and to attend two open stage-orchestra rehearsals. Last 13 February, the audience of Monte-Carlo had already had the opportunity to access a rehearsal of *Salomé* in the context of those early European Opera Days on the Riviera.

THE NETHERLANDS

Amsterdam – De Nederlandse Opera

www.dno.nl

During the European Opera Days, De Nederlandse Opera together with The Amsterdam Music Theatre will present four performances of *PoY!*, an opera for 3-6 year olds in which a dream is captured in music.

Henriette lives with a cellist who works too much. The cellist is constantly rehearsing, and is in fact quite tired of music. For Henriette it is the opposite: Henriette loves music and she loves the quietness. She collects and plays with sounds and the cellist hates it when she cuddles up on her big pillow and dreams of a universe of music.

With this opera DNO invites new audiences living in the suburbs of Amsterdam to get acquainted with the art form. *PoY!* is a production of Opera Omnia/Norway written by composer Glenn Erik Haugland and composer/singer/writer Heidi Tronsmo, based on a story by Ståle Tråsdahl.

Maastricht – Opera Zuid

www.operazuid.nl

On 7 May at Opera Zuid, there will be an opera exhibition made by children around the production of *Barbe-Bleue*, as well as an exhibition of works made by children taking musical art classes at 'Het Brede Spoor', an educational art centre in Maastricht. There will be a tour of the house with funny, exciting and beautiful opera displays along the way. Visitors will also be able to attend a rehearsal of *L'elisir d'amore* and to listen to Assistant Director Aimee Charlier telling more about this work and opera in general. Before taking leave, there will be a very special love elixir for all young opera lovers under the age of 18.

NORWAY

Bergen - Den Nye Opera

www.dennyeopera.no

Den Nye Opera celebrates the European Opera Days with an open day for children, young people and families on Sunday 8 May. It will promote its extensive action towards children and young people by showing it in different venues in the city of Bergen. The first part of the programme will be a concert of the Children's Opera Chorus performing together with two guest choruses. In the second part, two school classes from Bergen participating in Den Nye Opera's large 'Write an Opera' programme will perform their own operas on public stages.

Oslo – Den Norske Opera og Ballett

www.operaen.no

Dwarves, dragons, beautiful women and the curse of a magical golden ring... On Saturday 7 May, the Education Centre of Den Norske Opera holds two free performances of *Eventyret om Ringen* ('The adventure of the Ring'), an adventure travel for children aged 6 and up, where the plots of Wagner's operas are retold in words, pictures and music by drama teacher Dag B. Ulseth.

POLAND

Nowy Sącz – Malopolskie Province Culture Centre SOKÓŁ

www.mcksokol.pl

The culture centre of the Malopolskie province in Poland has chosen to hold the award ceremony of the 14th Ada Sari International Vocal Artistry Competition on 7 May, as a contribution to the European Opera Days. Conducted by Tomasz Tokarczyk, the Krakow Opera Orchestra will accompany the prize-winners of this competition named after the great Polish soprano.

PORTUGAL

Lisbon - Companhia de Ópera do Castelo

www.operadocastelo.com

Companhia de Ópera de Castelo has devised a programme geared towards children in particular but also towards families for the European Opera Days.

The staged concert for new opera lovers *Brincadeiras Líricas* ('Lyrical Fun') presents a journey along the history of erudite song, playing with the huge expressive ability of the lyrical voice. Folk songs, Lieder, mélodies, opera excerpts, fado and jazz, and other songs telling amusing stories with unexpected sonorities will be presented to children between 4 and 12 – and their parents.

Children from 5 years old will also enjoy the opera-tale *O Polegarzinho* (*Little Tom Thumb*) by French composer Isabelle Aboulker, inspired by Charles Perrault's fantastic and terrifying story of a small hero who saves himself and his siblings from great adversity on a number of occasions – a story revealing the complexity of family ties and life situations. A new genre which combines a tale with music, where words are both spoken and sung, introducing an intense and appealing opera genre. In association with the Trindade Theater, MUDE - Museum of Design Lisbon and the Viriato Theater in Viseu.

ROMANIA

Bucharest - Bucharest National Opera

www.operanb.ro

On Saturday 7 May, Bucharest National Opera will present a matinee performance of *Harap-Alb* ('The White Moor'), a ballet performance for children inspired by a traditional Romanian fairytale. In the evening, Haendel's *Alcina* will be performed by students of the Baroque Orchestra of the Bucharest National University of Music.

On 8 May, children will be allowed to explore the backstage, dressing rooms, ballet rehearsal studios and workshops of the opera house during interactive guided tours. Other activities such as a debate for teenagers and a contest on opera themes will also be organised. In the evening, the concert 'A Tribute to Maria Callas' with young opera singers who have already been appreciated both by the critics and the audience in national and international competitions will take place in the presence of Maria Callas' former assistant Mrs Giovanna Lomazzi (in partnership with L&N Promotion).

RUSSIA

Moscow - The Moscow State Academic Music Theatre for Children named after Natalia Sats

www.teatr-sats.ru

On 7 and 8 May, Russia celebrates the victory over fascism. In this context, the Moscow State Academic Music Theatre for Children will present *Son of the Regiment*, a contemporary opera by Alexander Flyarkovsk based on a book by Valentin Kataev. It tells the story of an ordinary schoolboy who, accidentally caught in the middle of military events, becomes involved in incredible and dangerous events and grows up before our eyes. An exciting opera full of soulful lyricism for 'young ears' from 7 years old. Young audiences will also have an opportunity to learn more about the theatre through a series of events, including: a guided tour in the theatre workshops (make-up, props, wardrobe) and backstage; access to rehearsals, an orchestra master-class with explanations from the conductor and musicians etc. The performance 'Marimba or the history of the singing tree' will present works by composers who worked at different times in history and in different countries and continents to the sound of the marimba solo, ensemble of percussions and voice, including folk songs from Africa, Brazil and Argentina. Finally, chamber music ensemble and singers will present the works of medieval composers in the theatre foyer.

SERBIA

Belgrade – Madlenianum Opera & Theatre

www.madlenianum.rs

The Madlenianum Opera & Theatre will belong to Young Ears on European Opera Days! On Saturday 7 May, creative workshops 'The Youth for the Youth' will offer new ways of hearing and listening to music. In the evening, the Madlenianum Opera Studio singers will perform a concert entitled *Young Voices to Young Ears*. On Sunday 8 May, young people and adults new to the operatic arts will have a chance to discover the Madlenianum during a guided tour. Workshops for children with special needs will be organised during the day (painting, music, etc) before a performance of Rossini's *Signor Bruschino* adapted to young audiences and dedicated to children with Down's syndrome.

SLOVAK REPUBLIC

Bratislava - Slovak National Theatre

www.snd.sk

On 7 May, Slovak National Theatre will celebrate the European Opera Days with *A Bug Was Born*, a ballet performance for little ones, followed by Mozart's *Don Giovanni* in the evening. On 8 May, mezzo-soprano Elisabeth Kulman will sing Mahler Lieder with Amarcord Ensemble in the historical building of Slovak National Theatre.

SPAIN

Barcelona – Gran Teatre del Liceu

www.liceubarcelona.cat

On Sunday 8 May, the doors of the Liceu will be wide open to all citizens of Barcelona and Catalonia, who might not experience opera in their everyday lives, but who are curious about this institution so important to the cultural life of the country. Throughout the day, two of the most popular performances, *Manon* and *Turandot*, will be screened for the public in the foyers. In between screenings, a summary of all artistic activity from 2000 to 2010 (opera performances, concerts and chamber music concerts, children's sessions) will be shown. Some talented students and professional singers from one of the conservatories of Barcelona and the Goethe Institut will also perform short programmes to accompany visitors in the foyers – but not only: live opera arias will also resonate in metro stations during the whole day! - With the support of General Cable.

Bilbao – ABAO-OLBE

www.abao.org

Not having any production on stage on 7-8 May, the Bilbao Friends of the Opera still want to bring their contribution to the European Opera Days: they will offer special discounts on tickets to their *Eugene Onegin* on 18 April 2011 to mark their involvement.

Oviedo – Opera de Oviedo

www.operaoviedo.com

Opera de Oviedo wants to bring opera to young audiences and disadvantaged children. For the European Opera Days, it will organise a performance of *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (tbc) in association with schools and charitable associations.

Palma de Mallorca - Fundació Teatre Principal de Palma

www.teatreprincipaldepalma.cat

For its second participation in the European Opera Days and on the occasion of its production of *Carmen*, Teatre Principal de Palma is organising a popular concert in front of the theatre on 7 and 8 May. Open to all, this concert will feature each chorus of the opera house: adults, babies, children and young people. Each will sing one song for Opera in the World, and the European Opera Days manifesto will be read aloud.

SWEDEN

Göteborg – GöteborgsOperan

www.opera.se

On Saturday 7 May, GöteborgsOperan will invite 100 opera first-timers to a performance of *Eugene Onegin*. The performance will be preceded by an introduction and followed with a moment for the group to talk about their experience.

SWITZERLAND

Genève – Grand Théâtre de Genève

www.geneveopera.com

On 7 May in Geneva, there will be singing and directing workshops in the morning and a discussion about Verdi's *Les Vêpres siciliennes* with an encounter with artists on the stage of Grand Théâtre, in the production's set.

SYRIA

Damascus – Damascus Opera House

www.opera-syria.org

The Damascus Opera House will be in preparation for a premiere production of Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi* during the European Opera Days and will open a rehearsal for the public on the occasion.

UNITED KINGDOM

Buxton, Derbyshire – English Touring Opera

www.englishtouringopera.org.uk

On Saturday 7 May, English Touring Opera is visiting Buxton Opera House with its production of *Fantastic Mr Fox*, a family opera by Tobias Picker based on Roald Dahl's children's story. Alongside English Touring Opera's professional cast, *Fantastic Mr Fox* stars local schoolchildren as a skulk of fox cubs and a chorus of trees. Pupils will also contribute artwork and compose songs that will be recorded and published in a book, *Foxtales - '24 Hours in the Life of a Fox'*.

This performance is part of a UK-wide tour during which ETO will perform alongside 250 schoolchildren from 21 schools whilst over 750 children will contribute to the *Foxtales* book. Most of the children involved have never been introduced to opera previously, and for many, this is the first time they have appeared on stage (especially alongside professional singers!). ETO's work demonstrates the way in which opera can be used as a vehicle, not only to inspire Young Ears, but also to enrich the learning experience within school.

Cardiff – Welsh National Opera

www.wno.org.uk

Welsh National Opera will be collaborating with the Wales Millennium Centre for the European Opera Days. As part of their *Alice in Wonderland* Family Day, families will be offered the opportunity to take part in a singing workshop led by choral animateur Kate Woolveridge. Kate will be teaching animal songs by Welsh composer Mervyn Burtch, followed by a lunchtime concert in which Kate will sing a selection of operatic animal songs, accompanied by writer Simon Rees who will be reading from his poetry collection: *Animals, Beasts and Creatures*.

Inverness & Glasgow – Scottish Opera

www.scottishopera.org.uk

Throughout the weekend of 7 and 8 May in locations throughout Inverness, SO will present performances of *A Little Bit of Rigoletto* that tells the story of the jester Rigoletto in just 20 minutes. Based on an adaptation of the Japanese story-telling artform 'Kamishibai' (literal meaning paper story) this performance features a storyteller, baritone singer and two instrumentalists and a set of illustrations framed in a black theatre box. The flexible format is suitable for venues as diverse as bookshops, hospitals, care homes, libraries, staff canteens and theatre foyers.

On 7 May, a *Sing Up Saturdays* workshop in Glasgow will introduce opera to 3-10 year olds, run by a small, handpicked team of singers, language teachers, and drama and art specialists. Through song, games, art activities, drama, dance and more, they bring to life the music, language, culture and traditions of Spain and Italy, the home of opera.

Leeds – Opera North

www.operanorth.co.uk

During European Opera Days this year, Opera North will present a special programme of events designed to engage young people and people who are new to opera.

It will hold a series of participation events over the weekend in keeping with this year's theme 'Young Ears', beginning with *Sing On: Raise Your Voice!* on Friday 6 May, a fun singing workshop for 6-11 year olds and their families.

On Saturday 7 May, singers and musicians will take part in fun sing-a-long and music-making sessions with professional musicians from Opera North. The singers and musicians will learn pieces from Bizet's *Carmen* before coming together for a one-off performance. There will also be an audio description of *Carmen* with touch tour for visually impaired audiences as well as a sign interpretation for hearing impaired audiences.

Other events will include an 'Inside Opera' talk on Leos Janáček's *From the House of the Dead*, a pre-show talk on Beethoven's *Fidelio* and a film screening of Alejandro González Iñárritu's Mexican neo-noir *Amores Perros* (18+), accompanying Opera North's production of *Carmen*.

Lewes & online – Glyndebourne

www.glyndebourne.com

Glyndebourne are planning to host a programme of 'virtual' activity this year with *Knight Crew*, the hugely successful new opera for young people as its focus. Over the weekend, Glyndebourne will stream the full opera recorded from a live performance in March 2010. Associated activity is planned through social networking and short films streamed via www.knightcrewopera.co.uk.

London – Royal Opera House

www.roh.org.uk

Activity at the Royal Opera House will focus on the Youth Opera Company, as 40 young participants continue rehearsals for their inaugural performance in late May.

London – English National Opera

www.eno.org

ENO are celebrating the European Opera Days with *Damnation Tots* - a bespoke version of ENO's *Opera Tots* series taking place on Sunday 8 May during the matinee performance of *The Damnation of Faust*. Offering operatic adventures for young ears, *Opera Tots* introduces children aged 6 months to 4 years to opera in a fun, accessible and exciting way while allowing their parents to enjoy a performance at the London Coliseum.



The European Opera Days in France: TOUS A L'OPÉRA !

www.tous-a-lopera.fr

A FEW HIGHLIGHTS

Tous à l'Opéra ! invites audiences to discover opera and its professions:

- Props, costumes, sets, make-up and wigs workshops
- Technical and historical guided tours, but also backstage tours led by technicians and artists
- Several opera houses will also take this opportunity to

unveil their 2011/12 season

Tous à l'Opéra ! brings artists into the limelight with:

• Open rehearsals

• Performances, recitals and concerts

- A number of concerts and recitals will be given by opera orchestras and choruses, but also guest artists and conservatory students
- In Compiègne, the world creation of *Pour une déesse* by Charles Chaynes will be performed with soprano Magali Léger
- Soprano Nathalie Manfrino, sponsor of *Tous à l'Opéra !*, will give two exclusive concerts of great opera arias at Théâtre des Champs-Élysées on 7 May and at Opéra de Massy on 8 May.

Tous à l'Opéra ! loves Young Ears:

- The Bordeaux Opera invites young people to dance and have a go at points and barre exercises!
- Metz and Rouen organise treasure hunts through their opera houses
- Théâtre Volland in the Reunion Island programmes an introduction concert to lyrical singing specifically aimed at young people
- Massy, Paris and Nancy celebrate the artistic work realised by young people in the context of partnerships with schools and conservatories
- The Chorégies d'Orange programme a special concert by young singers

Tous à l'Opéra ! invites audiences to sing, play and dance along:

• Participative workshops

- In Lille, over 80 amateur or experienced musicians will take on the challenge of learning, rehearsing and performing a new version of Verdi's *Macbeth*... in only one day!
- At the Paris Opéra Comique, there will be workshops on 'Vaudeville' and 'Commedia dell'arte' - followed by live performances by the most daring participants!
- Lyon mixes influences with hip-hop, world, classical and tap dance workshops, gospel singing and an African-Caribbean bal
- In Aix-en-Provence and Metz, there will be singing workshops and even an opera talent contest
- In Compiègne, everyone is invited to sing along with children and adult choirs
- In Marseilles, visitors are invited on the main stage for an 'expressive research' workshop
- In Toulouse, families are invited to singsong together and invent their own decor.

• Contests and quizzes

- Lyon organises dance, music and song contests while Massy will open the day with a Medley quiz of famous operetta airs

• A different approach to opera

- Filmed opera screenings
- Exhibitions of costumes, set models and performance photos
- Open air performances and happenings