

Education & Community Programs: Bringing the magic of OPERA to Colorado audiences

The goal of Education & Community Programs is to bring opera to schools and community venues across the state, especially audiences that might otherwise never experience it. One component of bringing high-quality and engaging programs to Colorado audiences are the Opera Colorado Young Artists. Every year, the Education department brings five emerging opera singers to Denver for a seven-month residency program. The Young Artists come from all over the country and perform in Education programs as well as mainstage productions.

Education programs, created for learners of all ages, help to introduce and demystify opera by creating an inviting and lively environment in which opera can be explored. They create and develop future audience members and arts enthusiasts, ensuring the future of opera for generations to come. Here's a snapshot of some of Opera Colorado's Education & Community programs.

Opera Colorado's **Opera on Tour** programs are engaging one-act operas that appeal to a wide variety of ages. The 2012-2013 repertoire includes Rossini's brilliant comedy *The Barber of Seville* and Bizet's dramatic masterpiece, *Carmen*. Both touring operas performed by the Opera Colorado Young Artists.

Generally targeting older students and adults, the **Arias & Ensembles** program consists of operatic arias, duets, trios and ensembles from Opera Colorado productions as well as other great operatic works. Background information and interesting facts are interspersed with the songs to give audiences a complete picture of some of the world's greatest music.

POPera is a program designed to introduce students to opera. Here, students learn just how much opera they are already familiar with by viewing clips from popular culture; movies, television cartoons, etc. The opera that they heard on the screen then comes alive as it is performed by the Opera Colorado Young Artists.

Opera in a Trunk introduces students to one of the Opera on Tour productions or mainstage operas. The "trunk" is literally a steamer trunk filled with costumes, props and hands-on instructional materials for educators. A 45-minute interactive presentation is given about the opera and the items in the trunk help inspire creativity and improvisation. After the presentation, the trunk remains at the school for two weeks so that teachers and students can continue to explore the world of opera.

The largest and most comprehensive education program is **Generation OC**. In this residency program, students learn to apply 21st Century Workforce Readiness Skills using the arts, and specifically opera, as a catalyst. For example, students in an 8th grade language arts classroom learn to apply skills in creative and persuasive writing by creating an original marketing ad centered on one of Opera Colorado's mainstage performances. High school students in another community might apply creative thinking and teambuilding skills by writing, producing and performing their own original work using one of the mainstage operas as inspiration. Generation OC is truly unique. It can be adapted to any curriculum model or class subject and can be tailored to meet the specific needs of teachers and students.

The Ellie Caulkins Opera House becomes a living classroom with the **Backstage Workshop** program. Here students participate in interactive workshop session focusing on the skills needed to produce opera, such as lighting, wig and makeup design, costumes, singing, conducting and more. This program is truly a unique way to give students a special look at the world behind the curtain.

Students can view world class opera performances in their own city through **Student Dress Rehearsals** or **Student Matinee** performances. Student Dress Rehearsals provide opportunities for students to view the working dress rehearsals of Opera Colorado's mainstage productions; for 2012-2013 the productions will be *Romeo and Juliet*, *Don Giovanni* and *The Scarlet Letter*. Once each year students can also attend a special Student Matinee performance. This performance is abridged to allow the students to see the entire story of the opera in 90-minutes and the leading roles are sung by the Opera Colorado Young Artists. For 2012-2013, the Student Matinee will be *Romeo and Juliet*.

The **SCFD Alliance Project** combines the talents of 25 arts, science, and cultural organizations sponsored by the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District by integrating the arts into middle schools in Colorado. These organizations enhance the standard curriculum and help schools provide workshops, performances and presentations for their students.

BY THE NUMBERS – 2011-2012 SCHOOL YEAR

- Total audience members: 35,647
- Student audience members: 20,950
- Adult audience members: 14,697
- Schools served: 112
- Scholarships awarded: \$8,749.50 to 3,959 students from 19 schools; 3 community venues