

Muse machine



Opera Takes Flight Performance Guide

Soar through the world of opera as Dayton Opera’s Artists-in-Residence explore different ways to fly. Winged flight isn’t the only way to take off! Take a flight of fancy or follow a flight of musical notes. This brand-new program will allow students to explore flight through all types of music, including opera, art song and Broadway. Music has always transported the listener to new heights and *Opera Takes Flight* will be no exception!

This guide is divided into three parts:

- **Before the Show:** Learn more about Dayton Opera’s Artists in Residence and review opera voice types.
- **After the Show:** Answer a brief student survey about the performance.
- **Dive Deeper:** Consider opera’s capacity to tell emotionally complex stories based on real life, and how comedy can help us process pain.

BEFORE THE SHOW:

Meet the Artists

Dayton Opera was founded in 1962 to enrich the cultural life of the Miami Valley. Since that time, the company's budget has grown from \$30,000 to nearly \$2 million. Audiences have grown from 3,000 in its first season to over 20,000 in recent years. In 2003, Dayton Opera moved from its long-time home of Memorial Hall to its current home at the Benjamin and Marian Performing Arts Center. Many accomplished and well-known singers have been heard in Dayton Opera productions throughout the years. They include Martina Arroyo, Placido Domingo, Robert Merrill, Roberta Peters, Jerome Hines, Erie Mills, Samuel Ramey, James Morris and Mary Jane Johnson.

The Dayton Opera Artists-in-Residence Program was established in 1987 to serve as a professional training program for young singers as a bridge to move from the university/conservatory education experience into the arena of a professional opera company.



Amandalynne Perzyk
(soprano)



Henry Benson
(tenor)

Pre-Show Student Activity: Two Truths and a Lie

Choose one of the Artists in Residence to read more about here: <https://daytonperformingarts.org/opera/artists-in-residence-program>. Come up with two truths and a lie about each singer based on their biographies. Your lie should be believable! See if you can stump your classmates.

Get Ready: Introduction to Operatic Voice Types

Watch this quick intro to opera's voice types:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hLfvkwTnJVM>

Then reflect: Have you ever seen an opera? What kind of training do you think opera singers have? What types of stories do you think could be best told through opera?

AFTER THE SHOW:

Student Survey

We want to hear from you! Answer the survey below and turn it in to your Muse advisor or answer online at the link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ZH8L3M5>

Your school:

Your grade:

Which piece of music in the performance made you feel most connected to the theme of flight?

What qualities of music might composers use to elicit feelings of flight?

What types of stories do you think would be interesting to tell through opera?

What did you like best about this performance?

What else would you like Muse Machine to know about your experience?

DIVE DEEPER:



Explore how opera can tell contemporary, emotionally complex stories and use humor to do so. This Flipgrid topic can be accessed with the **guest password** `muse123!`. Your responses won't be made public to anyone except Muse Machine. We may like your response well enough that we want to share it with the community, but we will ask your teacher's permission first.

Flipgrid: Turning Pain into Laughter

<https://flipgrid.com/e07d1af2>



Image © Philip Newton

British composer Jonathan Dove wrote the opera *Flight* after being inspired by the real story of Mehran Karimi Nasseri, an Iranian refugee who lived in an airport in France for 18 years.

Watch an excerpt of an interview (7:30-8:30) with *Flight*'s composer (he wrote the music), Jonathan Dove, and the librettist (she wrote the words), April De Angelis. De Angelis talks about how, even though the opera is a comedy, there is real pain behind it.

How does comedy help us cope with or process pain? Can you think of examples in movies or TV shows where comedy is used to express something deeper?

Respond in a short video (2:00 minutes) at the link above.

Additional Resources

- <https://youtu.be/72oq2qO4nAY?t=450> - The original video linked in the Flipgrid above.
- <https://historyofyesterday.com/the-man-who-was-stuck-in-an-airport-for-18-years-cb1c9037cfa5> - Read more about Nasseri here.
- <https://youtu.be/O35L90nbSVI> - Seattle Opera's trailer for Jonathan Dove's *Flight*