

NATIONAL CORE ARTS STANDARDS AND OFTY (PAGE 1 OF 3)

Rusalka: A Mermaid's Tale brings a full, professionally performed opera into your gym, with your own students on stage as the chorus. Beyond the National Core Arts Standards addressed below, the residency builds public speaking and performance confidence, ensemble collaboration, and cross-curricular ties to science (coral reef ecosystems) and world culture (Czech folklore) - students learn the materials in class, and the program requires a single rehearsal-to-performance window in your gym - our preferred venue.

Opera for the Young meets the diverse needs of our partner schools across the Midwest by aligning our programs with the educational goals and measurable outcomes of the National Core Arts Standards - Creating, Performing, Responding, and Connecting. Through the use of OFTY's Tutorial Videos, Student Handbook, and Teacher Guide from preparation through performance (and beyond!), your students will engage in a meaningful and authentic arts experience.

CREATING

Anchor Standard 1: *Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.*

Enduring Understanding: The creative ideas, concepts, and feelings that influence musicians' work emerge from a variety of sources

Imagine: Students will...

- Generate musical ideas (such as rhythms, melodies, and simple accompaniment patterns) within related tonalities (such as major and minor) and meters.
- Sing expressively with appropriate dynamics, phrasing, and interpretation
- Sing from memory a varied repertoire of songs representing genres and styles from diverse cultures
- Sing in groups, blending vocal timbres, matching dynamic levels, and responding to the cues of a conductor

The OFTY Perspective: Using OFTY's Materials, teach the chorus parts to your Onstage Chorus (and Stageside Chorus, if you've chosen to add one). Encourage the children to sing with the dynamics, phrasing, and interpretation indicated in the score. Not only will this support curriculum objectives, it will help make the OFTY experience more fun and valuable for the children. They will gain experience with a variety of genres and styles within Dvořák's operatic traditions - Dvořák was deeply influenced by Czech folk music, and that influence runs through much of the opera's melodic material. Spanish-language chorus music is available for this production, so multilingual learners and dual-language programs can access the "diverse cultures" repertoire goal above in either language - see Chorus Music (p. 37).

PERFORMING

Anchor Standard 4: *Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.*

Enduring Understanding: Performers' interest in and knowledge of musical works, understanding of their own technical skill, and the context for a performance influence the selection of repertoire

Select and Analyze: Students will...

- Identify phrases and sections of music that are the same, similar, and/or different
- Identify simple music forms upon listening to a given example.

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- Demonstrate perceptual skills by listening to, answering questions about, and describing music of various styles representing diverse cultures.
- Use appropriate terminology in explaining music, music notation, music instruments and voices, and music performances.
- Identify the sounds of a variety of instruments and instruments from various cultures, as well as children's voices and male and female adult voices.

The OFTY Perspective: OFTY's Teaching Materials include a cast recording of our adaptation of *Rusalka: A Mermaid's Tale*. Using examples from this recording, teach the children about strophic forms, ABA, and rondo forms. A number of sections of the opera use a modified strophic form - a strophe of music directly followed by a varied repetition of that strophe (perhaps higher, or louder) and identifying those changes is a great way to discuss how composers build musical excitement. Explain voice types and vocal ranges to the children, and use examples from the cast recording to demonstrate these points. The Spiny Urchins and Foreign Dignitaries roles give individual performers distinct vocal and dramatic material worth analyzing on their own. Discuss how Dvořák uses music to convey his characters' emotions.

Anchor Standard 5: Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.

Enduring Understanding: To express their musical ideas, musicians analyze, evaluate, and refine their performance over time through openness to new ideas, persistence, and the application of appropriate criteria.

Rehearse, Evaluate, and Refine: Students will...

- **(Grades K-4)** Read whole, half, quarter, eighth, and dotted notes and rests in 2/4, 3/4, and 4/4 meter signatures
- **(Grades 5-8)** Read whole, half, quarter, eighth, and dotted notes and rests in 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 6/8, 3/8, and alla breve meter signatures
- Identify symbols and traditional terms referring to dynamics, tempo, and articulation and interpret them correctly when performing.

The OFTY Perspective: The music of *Rusalka: A Mermaid's Tale* is rich and complex and thus provides many opportunities to work with these reading concepts. Share the STUDENT HANDBOOK, which includes melody only parts, with students in your classes- a Spanish-language edition is also available. Refer to these when teaching the songs to the children. Ask questions about the notation, particularly rhythms and time signatures. Ask students to identify the intervals used. Explain the dynamic, tempo, and articulation marks used in each piece, and ask questions about how those markings should be interpreted.

RESPONDING

Anchor Standard 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work.

Enduring Understanding: Individuals' selection of musical works is influenced by their interests, experiences, understandings, and purposes

Select and Analyze: Students will...

- Devise criteria for evaluating performances and compositions.

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- Explain, using appropriate music terminology, personal preferences for specific musical works and styles.
- Evaluate the quality of their own and others' performances and offer constructive suggestions for improvement.

The OFTY Perspective: OFTY's Teaching Materials include age-appropriate evaluation forms for children to fill out after the performance, differentiated by grade band (Kindergarten, Grades 1-2, Grades 3-5, and Grades 6-12), with additional forms for music teachers, non-music teacher/staff, and residency or public audiences. Before filling these out, hold a class discussion about criteria for evaluating performances and compositions. Encourage students to state their own opinions and preferences about the music they have heard and/or performed. Use the evaluation forms as the basis for writing a critical review of the opera and the performance. Forms are available at ofty.org/tms, and while evaluations are submitted to OFTY to support our grant reporting and fundraising, we're happy to share the digital submissions back with your school on request.

CONNECTING

Anchor Standard 10: *Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.*

Enduring Understanding: Musicians connect their personal interests, experiences, ideas, and knowledge to creating, performing, and responding

Students will:

- Identify similarities and differences in the meanings of common terms used in the various arts.
- Identify ways in which the principles and subject matter of other disciplines taught in the school are interrelated with those of music.

The OFTY Perspective: OFTY's Teaching Materials include suggestions for pre- and post-performance activities, many of which relate to a number of subjects taught in school. *Rusalka: A Mermaid's Tale* is rich with connections to other disciplines, particularly science - the opera's underwater and coral reef setting offers a natural link to units on aquatic ecosystems. We encourage you to share OFTY's Teaching Materials with other teachers in your school so that they can plan subject-appropriate activities for their class's relation to the show. In particular, we encourage you to become involved with OFTY's Be a Designer activity, in which students design costumes, accessories, and/or school decorations relating to themes and settings in *Rusalka: A Mermaid's Tale*.

Anchor Standard 11: *Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.*

Enduring Understanding: Understanding connections to varied contexts and daily life enhances musicians' creating, performing, and responding.

Students will...

- Demonstrate audience behavior appropriate for the context and style of music performed.

The OFTY Perspective: Participation in the show brings this standard to life. Discuss appropriate audience behavior with students - OFTY artists also cover this briefly during the introduction to the show. Teach the whole school "Ah, What A Lovely Night" (minimum), and "Ho, Ho, Ho" if time allows, so every student - not just those in the chorus - has a role in the performance.