

21 - Opera

What do you think of when you think of an opera singer? Most people think of a large lady in a hat with horns! But on today's episode you'll learn opera singers come in all shapes and sizes. Now, we know some kids might think of opera as long, loud and boring, but our resident Opera Superfan will make your kid see that opera is actually... cool! Read on to find out how....

Your kids will discover that opera isn't singing at all - it's actually a form of 'controlled screaming'. Now, what parent doesn't want their kids learning about how to control their screaming???

They'll also learn that opera is in foreign languages because France, Germany, and Italy were the birthplace of opera. Turns out, that if you live in France, Germany or Italy, opera is not in a foreign language!

Oh and about Harry Styles? Opera was the pop music of the day hundreds of years ago, so in 1734 some kid in France was begging their mother to make them a colorblock sweater.

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AND ANOTHER THING....

Some more fun facts to share if you want your kid to make a connection to opera.

Katy Perry was trained as an opera singer.

Beyonce's first vocal teacher David Lee Brewer was himself an acclaimed opera singer and opera coach and he trained her for more than a decade.

Taylor Swift's grandmother was a professional opera singer who not only inspired Taylor but gave her early vocal coaching.

Lady Gaga's vocal coach since she was 13 - Don Lawrence - is known in the industry for having adapted classical opera voice training to coach pop singers and used this same training for Gaga.

Harry Styles has never trained in singing opera. But he looks great in a color block sweater!

Keep the learning going:

As the teacher in today's episode said, opera is all about "guts and passion" - aka feelings. Ask your kids to identify a recent event that gave them strong feelings - happy, loving, sad, excited, scared, or whatever they felt. Have them describe to you what the feeling "felt" like and why they felt that way.

Now, work with them to make up a song about the feeling. Anything goes - the idea is to get them being descriptive about emotion, while also developing the ability to express themselves musically.

Then ask them to act out the song, using props and costumes if they'd like!

¹More opera resources:

[PBS and the Metropolitan Opera for Kids](#)

This extraordinary resource from the NYC Metropolitan Opera and PBS makes six operas available to stream for free, along with guides to the characters, plot, and educational resources and discussion materials. Honestly, we're digging this one for adults too!

[Music Explorers](#)

Free online curriculum from Savannah Music Festival to help kids dive deep into exploring opera.

[Minnesota Opera Free Curriculum](#)

Another truly incredible free resource, the Minnesota Opera has created in-depth lesson plans for dozens of operas, along with making the scores available for free.

¹ This activity guide is for the Who Smarted? podcast www.WhoSmarted.com