

Painted Sky Opera | Session 5:

Children's Opera - *Starbird*

List of Required Supplies: Internet access, screens for viewing, classroom space, worksheets (link provided), art supplies, pencils

Additional Links:

https://streaming.uco.edu/media/Starbird++%28Feature+Only%29/1_ca95iuz7
(video)

<https://www.paintedskyopera.org/s/Starbird-worksheets-Opera-In-Place.pdf>
(worksheet)

Space/Facility Requirements: Internet access, viewing screens, classroom

Student Time Required: 60 minutes

Step-by-step Instructions:

At the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

Respond:

- Verbalize in their own words what the opera was about
- Provide visual adjectives to describe the music in the opera

Connect:

- Discuss how the opera's visual aspects such as costumes and scenery represented the sounds of the music
- Determine what they like and dislike about the opera
- Examine how they might have chosen to change the scenery or costumes of the production to match the music with their particular tastes

Create:

- Create artwork using coloring sheet provided

Introduction: Before starting the video, introduce the name of the opera: *Starbird*. This opera will help reinforce concepts from *Visual Opera* video.

Based on the title alone, ask the students the following questions:

- What do you think the opera is about?
- What do you think you will see in the opera?
- What types of descriptive visual words come to your mind when you hear the title, *Starbird*?

Starbird by Henry Mollicone is not a well-known opera, but it is a perfect opera for kids due to the vivid characters and storyline. The basic story follows a dog, a cat, and a donkey who are disappointed with Earth and its humans. They wish they could go somewhere else where they were more appreciated. Suddenly, a starship lands and they sneak onboard only to discover a mechanical bird in a cage – the Starbird. The Starbird describes how she used to be a normal bird but that she was taken into space by robots and became a Starbird. The robots returns and examine the dog, cat, and donkey and eventually try to capture them but the animals defeat them. They free the Starbird who returns them to Earth and then leaves once again. The dog, cat, and donkey realize how much they love the Earth despite its faults.

Since the video is somewhat long and speaks for itself, the pre-video activities don't need to be extensive except for a quick review of the concepts of using visual words to describe music.

***Starbird* video:** Play the video in its entirety and inform the students that they will have the opportunity to ask questions at the end. Remember to pay close attention, as there will be questions about the opera on the worksheet.

Question and answer time: After the video is over, hand out worksheets to be completed separately or as a group. There is also a coloring sheet that can be completed in class or at home. Some questions to ask:

- Was this opera about what you thought it would be?
- What are some adjectives that you would use to describe the opera?
- What colors would you use to describe the opera?
- What did you like about it?
- What did you not like about it?
- Do you hear arias and recitatives in this opera? From which characters?
- What voice types are each of these characters?
- How well did you think the costumes and sets match the music? How would you have changed it?