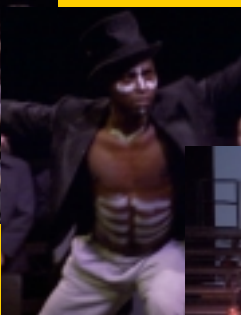




# opera

up close and personal  
Education and Community Programmes



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Charity Number: 1052704 / Company Number 03294827

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## PEGASUS OPERA COMPANY

Pegasus is the leading professional, multi-racial, mid-scale touring Opera Company in the United Kingdom and was founded in 1992 by its current Artistic Director, Lloyd Newton. Pegasus creates opportunities for young professional singers from all backgrounds to develop and perform in high quality and innovative opera productions, thus preparing them for national and international houses. We feel that it is only through the nurturing of these diverse talents that a new form of cultural harmony can be achieved. This harmony encourages talent equally without regard to cultural heritage or ethnic background.

The Company also seeks to demystify opera by making it accessible to as wide an audience as possible, actively involving a cross-section of the community. This includes programming an accessible range of works and touring to a variety of medium-sized venues with the aim of reaching communities who would not normally have access to high quality opera. The company's community and education programme develops new audiences through special workshops and outreach programmes.

harmony in diversity





## EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

With over thirteen years experience and dedication to its education work, Pegasus has presented workshops for virtually every opera in its repertoire including *Carmen*, *The Magic Flute*, *The Love Potion*, *Falstaff* and *I Pagliacci*. It has established good working relations with a large number of London boroughs and beyond, including Westminster, Lambeth, Haringey, Southwark, Lewisham, Brent, Hackney, Barnet, Havering, Enfield and Hornchurch.

As part of its ongoing commitment to the development of access and participation amongst young people, Pegasus also provides a matinee performance where over 500 pupils have the opportunity to see a fully staged, professional production free of charge. Pegasus Opera's Education Programme has become an integral part of the company's work. It is designed to run alongside or independently of the main opera productions.





Pegasus Opera recognises that it is not sufficient simply to introduce young people to opera by offering cut-price tickets to performances. Instead, for the true development of children's creative powers, appreciation and involvement in opera, it is vital to work with pupils and teachers to explore the creative potential educational possibilities of working with music, drama and design.

The education projects enable children to work with singers, composers, directors and designers, to explore issues of identity, tolerance, and positive social interaction. The workshops offer participants the opportunity to develop in key areas of the curriculum. They provide a thought-provoking creative experience introducing participants to music-theatre and opera both as audience, creators and participants. They



also provide an ideal means to contribute to broader curriculum learning and enhance life skills such as self-confidence, communication, creative problem-solving and teamwork. In addition to workshops relating to the opera in repertory, Pegasus has introduced a one-day workshop independent of any tour which is intended for the most disadvantaged children (families on income support or in receipt of free school meals). The workshops provide a close encounter with opera, giving them the opportunity to explore the art form on their own terms.





## ACCESS AND PERFORMANCE

In this course the creative teams work one day a week over a five week period, introducing pupils to opera and music-theatre. The children study various aspects of opera, working to create costumes, learn music, develop their singing skills and stage a scene. The course will culminate in a performance of their piece to their peers.

## Aims of the project:

- To investigate the main themes of the opera, using exercises relevant to the pupils' curriculum.
- To enable students to work with professional singers, a director and a répétiteur for rehearsals, discussing work and directing each other.
- To develop skills in criticising and evaluating creative work.
- To create a forum for questioning the professionals on their work.

## CREATION AND PRESENTATION

This five-day course is designed to assist the participants in developing their own narrative, writing words, composing music and designing sets and costumes. Pupils are encouraged to think in terms of being a professional opera company, defining their different roles and taking on responsibility for a particular area of the production. A team of arts practitioners work with the children, fostering and facilitating their ideas and developing the skills required for them to fully explore their own particular response to the characters, themes and aesthetics. Teachers work with the Pegasus team to maximise the educational experience of the project.



### Aims of the project:

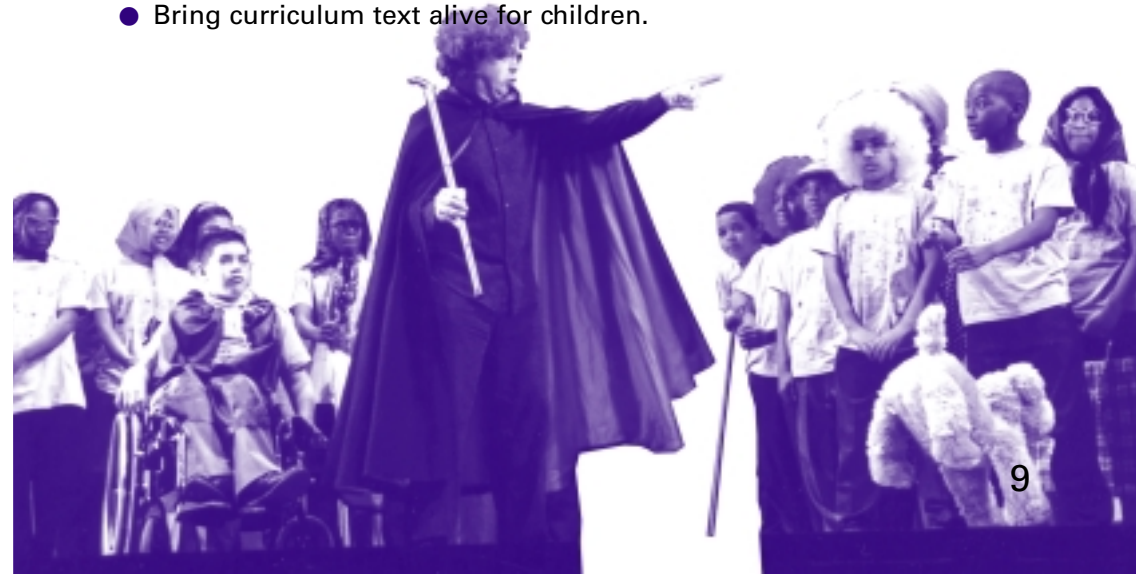
- Inspire and enable the children to express themselves through words, music, design and staging.
- Expand the musical and dramatic horizons of the children.
- Stimulate thought and discussion about personal development and citizenship.
- Support and develop the creative, singing and acting skills of the children.
- Create a lasting and sustainable legacy of appreciation and creation of music theatre and opera.

## THE ONE-DAY EXPLORATIONS MUSIC AND CITIZENSHIP PROGRAMME

A one-day course led by a workshop director, répétiteur and professional singer during which a particular style of music is explored; music of religion, music of the oppressed, music of celebration. The professional team illustrates how music can be used to create an atmosphere, depict moods and emotions or a particular event. Pupils are encouraged to discuss stories and relate them to a particular style of music. The class agrees a story and, with the help of the professional team, devises a short piece of music to be performed.

### Aims of the project:

- Relate learning to the actualities of everyday life.
- Promote discursive and exploratory discussions about themselves, their culture and their community.
- Explore moral and social issues.
- Equip children with the skills to work independently and in groups.
- Develop the creative, singing and acting skills of the children.
- Develop communication skills (listening, negotiating, co-operation, verbal).
- Develop literacy skills.
- Bring curriculum text alive for children.





## MAKING A DRAMA OUT OF AN OPERA/ART FOR ART'S SAKE

Following upon the success of our inaugural “close encounter” with opera, we will continue our day visits on the theme *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Because the project is a one day “try me”, we hope to engage not only students with interests in music, literature, dance and movement, but also those who previously have shown no interest in the arts.

### 1. Making a Drama out of an Opera

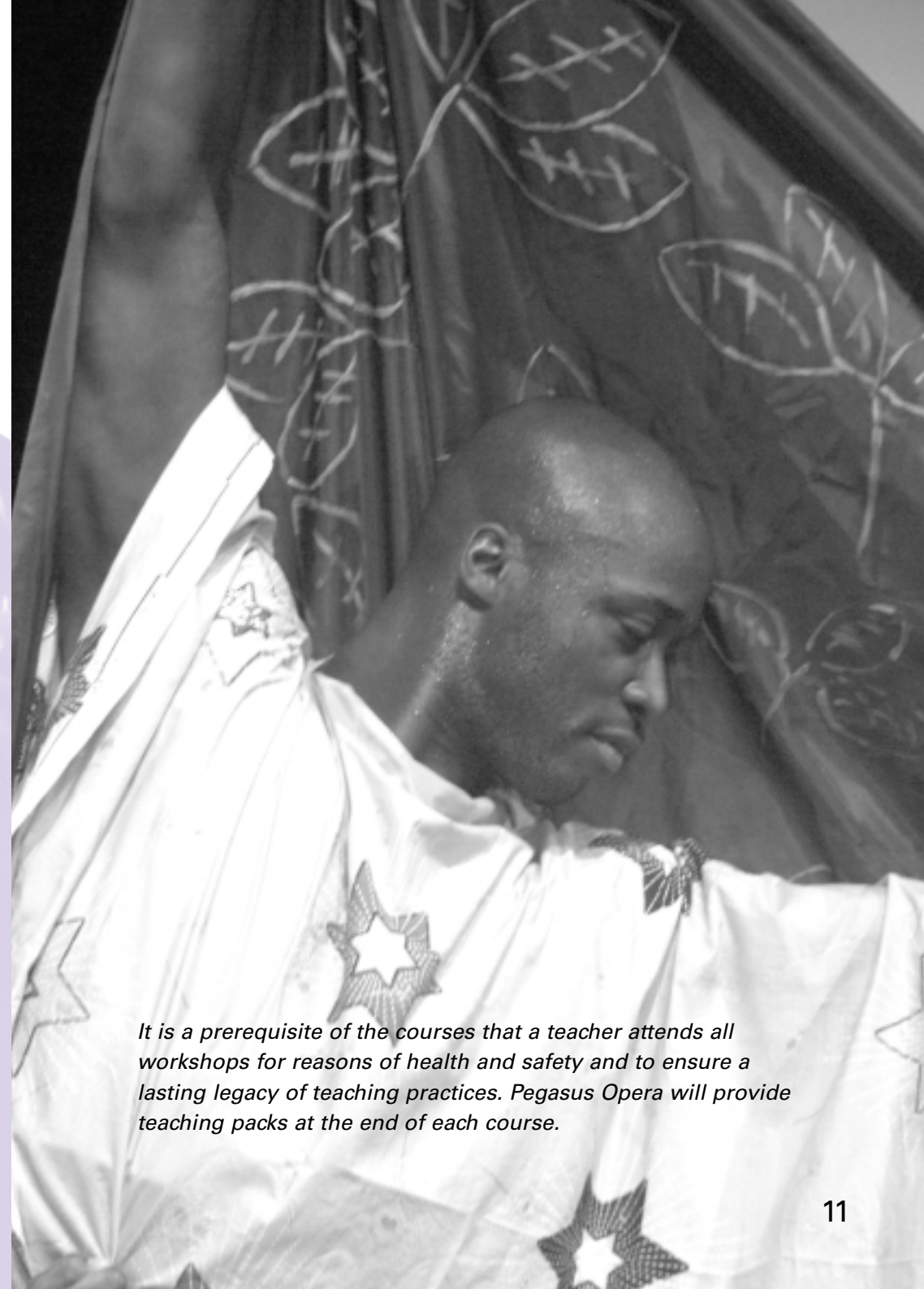
An exploration of the themes, characterisation and setting of the opera through imaginative play, debate and practical listening skills: the participants will devise and perform a short dramatic scene inspired by the story of the opera and its music through its text, arias, duets and ensembles.

### 2. Art for Art's sake?

The themes of the opera are introduced and discussed with the Pegasus designer. The participants are then encouraged to explore the text and characterisation, comparing the opera and its literary inspiration and developing their own ideas for either costume, mask or set design. Through discussion, support and the advice of the professional costume/set designer, participants realise their ideas in a three-dimensional form. The resulting pieces will be exhibited in the school.

### What we hope to achieve:

A primary objective is bringing the opportunity of a close encounter with opera to young people who would usually feel excluded – or indeed exclude themselves – from experiencing this spectacular art form. We aim to provide diverse and positive role models through the arts practitioners taking part. Pegasus Opera also provides the creative environment where it will be possible for every child to contribute to the best of his/her ability, thus creating a lasting and sustainable legacy of appreciation and creation of music, theatre and opera in all participating schools.



*It is a prerequisite of the courses that a teacher attends all workshops for reasons of health and safety and to ensure a lasting legacy of teaching practices. Pegasus Opera will provide teaching packs at the end of each course.*

## COMMUNITY PROGRAMME

Pegasus Opera is continuing this programme in response to popular demand. Members of the community and semi-professionals are selected by audition to be incorporated into the London performances of Pegasus Opera's touring production. Workshops take place over several months, led by a professional team including a director, choreographer, répétiteur and professional singers. The project requires long term commitment by the participants, and provides a unique opportunity to develop vocal and dramatic skills alongside professional staff. In 2004 a specially commissioned opera *Uncle Remus* was presented at Hackney Empire. The finished performances were enthralling for both audiences and performers.



The next Community Opera will be *Koanga*, written at the close of the 19th century by Frederick Delius. The opera tells the story of oppression, love, voodoo, tragedy and treachery set against the background of the American slave culture. Before Gershwin or Joplin, Delius can be credited with creating the very first African-American opera. This project enjoys the support of the Delius Trust and will be presented as a major production in a London theatre.

*"I thought opera was boring, but I really enjoyed it."*  
Ben, age 9: Marshalls Park School

*"...I never knew I could compose music. I learnt new things, new songs and how to write music."*  
Ewan, age 10: Brockwell School

*"I enjoyed performing the play at the end, it made it all seem more professional. I learnt more about opera and found out I really like it."*  
Lucy, age 9: Thorpe Hall Primary School

*"It was a good experience and inspired me to go and watch opera."*  
Aimee, age 10: Mandeville School

*"The music workshop was really good. The best bit was when we were playing with the musical instruments."*  
Fatma, age 10: Morningside School

*"I think it was a good experience because it was fun!"*  
Louis, age 8: Kingsmead Primary School

*"The thing I enjoyed the most was the first time I heard Uncle Remus sing."*  
Matthew, age 8: Elmwood Primary School

*"The children responded with enthusiasm and focus and, for a number, English was a second language."*  
Teacher, St Stephen's School (Lambeth)

*"Icky and his team were GREAT! The children and myself had a lovely day. Thanks again for all."*  
Teacher, Alfred Salter Primary School (Southwark)