

Australia's Performing Arts

WE ALL PLAY A PART

Wednesday 9th July, 2008

CASE STUDIES



wot
opera
inspiring creativity

Opera Australia – inspiring creativity

The challenge: Over six weeks write an opera, create the characters, words, music, design, costumes and sets, and give a public performance.

In May and June 2008 Opera Australia is piloting a new education initiative, *WotOpera*. Eighty students and their teachers from four secondary schools are working with Opera Australia artists and educators on all aspects of creating an opera, from character development to writing music and creating sets and costumes. The project will culminate in a combined performance day at the Sydney Theatre in which students will present the world premiere of four new operas and share in their journey from page to stage.

The initiative has been made possible through the sponsorship of Graeme Wood, who revolutionised the travel industry in Australia when he created the concept for, and co-founded, Wotif.com in 2000. "I hope this project will not only inspire students about this wonderful art form, but also show them the power of creativity," said Mr Wood.

The four schools participating in the 2008 pilot program are Miller Technological, Narara Valley, Terrigal and Kincoppal - Rose Bay Highs. Three are in the NSW Department of Education's Priority Schools Programs (PSP), serving high concentrations of low socio-economic status communities. *WotOpera* aims to reach students from diverse socio-economic groups, to provide the same opportunity and for them to experience that creativity is common and accessible to all.

Students will work collaboratively to explore and refine the potential of ideas; to create plots, characters, libretto and music, and to find imaginative solutions. Importantly, students will harness their own feelings and experiences to develop and present original operas, making choices about expressive ways to communicate their stories.

In one *WotOpera* session students at Narara Valley High completed their libretto and were guided to compose music for one of the scenes. They were thrilled with what they experienced.

"The session was much more fun than I'd expected," Corinne Hillier (15) says. "I could not believe that we'd be able to come up with music ourselves." She never realised how much work went into making "just one small part" of an opera and would never watch a production in the same way again.

To Zac Miller (15), the session was "very productive and a lot harder than I'd expected". He too, will appreciate and enjoy opera more now that he has experienced its creation first hand. "I am finding the WotOpera program very inspiring; I don't only want to see more opera, I would really like to become involved in the opera world, preferably as a composer."

Nurturing Talent • Participation & Enjoyment • Building Stronger Communities • National Pride



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