

Fourlanesend C P School presents 'Carmen' (Autumn 2017)

When asking the children about opera at the beginning of the Autumn term, most explained that it was for posh people and that it was very difficult to sing because the notes were very high and that you needed to hold them for a very long time. In the weeks that followed, the children across KS1 and KS2 were inspirational in their approach to learning about the opera Carmen. Their enthusiasm never wavered when warming-up, practising the songs and drama scenes or when finding out about the characters - this gave us the idea to make a behind-the-scenes film to highlight the different areas of learning that came together to create our final piece.

We were very lucky to be able to perform at our local secondary school on a stage that was large enough to hold our 90 children (Y1 to Y6 inclusive). The children were a little overwhelmed by the scale of the hall and our first song ended up being a little speedy so we stopped and re-started - to their credit, they were extremely professional and the final performance was engaging, thought-provoking and emotional.

As a school, we would like to thank the Royal Opera House for giving us the opportunity to take part in this very rewarding project.

Children's comments

It was epic! Everyone used their values.

I like singing as a whole school together.

Before doing Carmen, O (Don Jose) was quiet and shy but he comes across as confident now.

R (Carmen) has inspired me as she is so good I might want to be a leading lady too!

It was an extravaganza because the main characters used their expressions instead of speaking.

It was out of this world because everyone was taking part and using confidence.

R (Escamillo) adds a stomp as she swishes her cape which makes her very strong looking.

I liked the way Don Jose pretended to fight Carmen so he didn't hurt her in real life.

I liked the way J and G acted as the gatekeepers.

I like the slow Toreador song as it makes me feel excited because the music is mysterious.

I thought the film was brilliant because everyone was doing the right thing.

Parents' comments

Parent of KS1 and KS2 children - It was a great show and amazing to see the children taking part in opera so genuinely and enthusiastically. My children have even been singing themselves to sleep. The children were able to get so much out of it due to the support and enthusiasm from all of the staff, even those that are not directly involved have to support the whole school production from covering staff to supervising excited children. The course that Mrs Illingworth attended gave her the confidence to direct this production but it also needed the

commitment from the school teachers, children and parents. A very big well done to all involved!

Parent of KS2 child - The school's involvement in this project has made opera more accessible to a younger generation. It was a joy to see the children engaged in such an invigorating, cultural experience. Hugely enjoyable to watch too!

Parent of KS1 child - It was a fantastic performance, all the children did really well and beginning the show with a video of how it was made and how you got the children to understand in their own way was amazing. We really loved it.

Parent of KS1 child - Our daughter is a year 1 and has so enjoyed learning the songs from Carmen, there has been much practising at home. The performance at Torpoint Community College with the larger stage and greater seating capacity was excellent. Children and parents entered into the spirit of the event, dressing up smartly for a night at the Opera. The lights went down, the curtain raised and the children sang with gusto till Carmen fell. Furlanesend School, once again, excelled by providing proactive encouragement with their typical can-do approach. Huzzah!

Parent of KS1 and KS2 children - The children did an excellent job of performing Carmen, it was an unfamiliar stage to them - all sang with great enthusiasm and the lead players acted out the story really well.

Parent of KS1 child - The show was excellent, it was arranged well and all the children were smiling and happy singing - it looked like everyone enjoyed themselves. We did. Amazing singing.

Parent of KS1 child - My daughter really enjoyed learning all about Opera and practised her singing all of the time! The performance was wonderful to watch. We have been listening to Opera music and watching it on tv as a family as we have all enjoyed it.

Parent of KS1 child - A memorable performance achieved by very young children. Excellent.

Parent of KS1 child - We were very proud of all the children and teachers. All their hard work was well worth it and paid off.

Parent of KS1 and KS2 children - Absolutely fantastic! It was wonderful to see the children so enthusiastic about opera! It is great to know that this performance has inspired the next generation of opera-goers and performers.

Parent of KS1 child - I thought the performance of Carmen was brilliant. All of the children were clever and brave to remember all of the lyrics and acting and to stand up in front of everyone like that was incredible.