

The Perfect Opera - Relaxed Performance Pack

Hello there!

We're Virtually Opera, and we're delighted to have you join us for our relaxed performances on the 7th and 8th of August. This pack will give you a look at what the show is about, what access provisions there are, and give you a guide to what happens in the show. We're looking forward to having you there!

Leo, Peter, and Erika
(Director, Composer, and Conductor, Virtually Opera)

Guide To Relaxed Performances

Relaxed performances are performances for people who find normal theatre etiquette difficult. There are a few differences in how we run these shows:

- You can enter and leave during the performance if you need some time out.
- We will keep the house lights on so that you can see as you leave and re-enter.
- **Note:** Because Paradise in the Vaults is a small venue, it does not have a designated *Chillout Zone*. You will be welcome in the bar, or waiting just outside the show.
- There will not be any strobe lighting or flashing lights.
- Ear defenders will be available for audience members from Front of House.
- When we have started rehearsals, we will make a **Sound Map**, showing where the loudest bits of music are.
- There will be announcement at the start of the show, telling the audience about all of the above. The performers will also introduce their characters and any triggering moments.

Show Guide

The Perfect Opera is a parody of opera, but you don't have to know anything about opera to enjoy it. The story and the show are very silly, and we think anyone can laugh at them.

Some people really like opera. People have been watching opera for over 400 years, and there are a lot of different things people like to see in operas. This show takes a list of things that people like to see and puts them all into one show. Because some of the things do not fit together, the results are very silly (which you can see in the **Synopsis** below). This parody of opera, and the list of things people like to see in operas, are part of the fun of the show.

Like musicals, operas have a lot of singing, and the audience can laugh and clap throughout. Opera singers have a special way of singing, which you may not have heard before. Some of the singing is quite loud. When we have started rehearsals, we will make a **Sound Map**, showing where the loudest bits of music are. We will also project a red dot when there is a loud bit coming up. Some people around you may also make loud noises when they laugh or clap at something that they liked.

A lot of operas are very serious, and often include things which are sad, like death and violence. The way operas show these things can be very over-the-top and silly. In this show, we will be making fun of the over-the-top way that opera shows these sad things. Our performers do not actually die, and they are only pretending to be the characters in the show.

Character List



Conductor - Erika Gundesen. The Conductor is in charge of the whole show. She tells people how fast and how loud to sing, and what people want next in the perfect opera. Sometimes, she gets annoyed with the singers not doing what they're meant to do.



Tenor/Macbeth - Robin Horgan. The Tenor is used to playing the main character, and this has made him really vain. He gets to play Macbeth, who is really in love with his camel. But Macbeth is afraid of what Lady Macbeth, and everyone else, is going to say about him when they find out. He dithers a lot.



Mezzo-Soprano/The Camel - Rosalie Warner. The Mezzo-Soprano is used to playing the love interest, and really wants to do something more political. She gets to play the camel, who is totally in love with Macbeth, and would do anything for him.



Baritone/Lady Macbeth - Samuel James Dewese. The Baritone is used to playing the bad guy, even when it's a woman. He gets to play Lady Macbeth, who really loves her husband, and doesn't like him being in a relationship with a camel. She thinks every problem can be solved by stabbing her enemies.

Synopsis

Three singers and a conductor want to make a perfect opera. The conductor tells the audience that they have done a lot of audience research, and made a list of everything that people want in a 'perfect' opera. The list is shown at the back of the stage, and is a big part of the show.

Because it has to be based on a classic story, one singer is playing Macbeth. Because it has to be completely original, another singer is playing a pantomime camel. Because it has to have a love story, they are in love. They sing about their love, and agree to go to Macbeth's home in Dunsinane.

The third singer decides to play Lady Macbeth. Lady Macbeth is in Dunsinane, waiting for her husband (Macbeth) to come home. Because she is a strong, empowered, female character, and also evil and magic, she can tell that Macbeth is having an affair with the camel. She decides she will kill the camel.

When Macbeth gets home, Lady Macbeth tells him that she is going to kill his camel and she leaves. He is upset because society will not accept him loving a camel. He tries to sing a big solo, but the conductor stops him.

The list says that they have to do a ballet scene and a chorus. The conductor dances. Because there is not a chorus onstage, the conductor asks the audience to join in. (*Please note: you do not have to join in.*) They sing happy birthday together, and welcome the characters back onstage.

The camel enters. It knows that Lady Macbeth wants to kill it, and is worried. Lady Macbeth threatens the camel, and is very rude to it. She asks the camel to say its name. The camel refuses, because if humans hear its name, they will go mad. Lady Macbeth threatens the camel again, and the camel tells her its name. Lady Macbeth goes mad. The camel is ashamed of itself, and decides to die rather than live in shame (This is a thing that happens in a lot of operas). It jumps off the tower. Lady Macbeth wants to kill the camel first, so she jumps after it.

As the camel falls off the tower, it sings about how sad it is. At the same time, Lady Macbeth sings about how she wants to stab the camel. Macbeth joins in, singing about how much he loves the camel. Macbeth decides he wants to save his lover just as the camel hits the ground, shortly followed by Lady Macbeth, who bounces off the camel, stabs it, and leaves.

Macbeth wonders whether any gods could allow such a sad thing to happen, and realises that he will never know. The singer playing Macbeth forgets his words, until the conductor points out that the list requires them to

sing in lots of different languages. The singers sing in those languages, and Macbeth finishes his song.

The conductor thanks the audience for coming, and says that people have asked for a moral. But the singers have not got one prepared, and try to make one up on the spot. The conductor suggests that the moral should be: if you want to make a point that will reach lots of people, don't write opera.

Everybody leaves.

Sound Map

When we have started rehearsals, we will make a **Sound Map**, showing where the loudest bits of music are, and saying what comes before them. Check back on our website when we get closer to the performance.

We will also project a red dot on the screen before particularly loud moments.

Trigger Warnings

The show contains comic references to operatic suicide, death, violence, and drug use.

At the back of the stage, there will be a big list of operatic tropes, which will say the next one coming up. That will usually give you a warning that someone is about to mention suicide or death.

None of the above is presented in a realistic or graphic way. It is much more like pantomime or slapstick comedy.

Strong Language

This show contains strong language and sexual references. We would recommend it for a 14+ age rating.

If You Liked This

If you like *The Perfect Opera* and want to see more opera, there are lots of other operas you can see.

- As well as making shows like this, we make little operas and put them online at Virtually Opera on YouTube.
- You can find loads of operas on websites like YouTube for free.
- There are often livestreams and cinema broadcasts of operas.
- There are loads of opera companies in the UK. The biggest ones are the Royal Opera House (London), English National Opera (London), Welsh National Opera (Cardiff), Scottish Opera (Glasgow), and Opera North (Manchester).
- There are also lots of small opera companies, and you can often find really exciting new opera in your local city if you look it up online.

If you want to see opera, this show was particularly inspired by:

- *Der Rosenkavalier* - it's a comic opera with lots of silly twists and turns, which was a big influence on this show.
- *Tosca* - it's a fast-paced opera about a woman trying to protect her lover from political oppression.
- *Eugene Onegin* - it's a very sad opera about love and social rules.