

## Zoom-Based Opera for Preschoolers

BY RYAN SKILLE

**M**OST READERS, SEEING THE title of this article, may think that this is a satire based on how ridiculous schools have had to get to reach their students during the pandemic. It may be surprising to learn that this is not satire at all. Zoom-based opera for preschoolers is a legitimate activity that Opera Lafayette in Washington, D.C. is offering over Zoom, and it has gained recent attraction as its popularity has started to soar.

Titled, *Opera Starts with Oh!*, the event aimed at children, ages four to seven, is held weekly with new guest speakers appearing each month. Emma Jaster, internationally trained director, choreographer, and teaching artist leads the half-hour long sessions and then assigns at-home activities for each student to continue working on throughout the week. “What’s a fun way to take what we’ve learned and make it something that these children will do and be engaged with beyond and outside of this 30 minutes?” Jaster asked the *Washington Post*. “As a parent, 30 minutes is not a lot of the time that I actually need to occupy from my child’s day. So the more the children that can be inspired to take this along and then go and make their own performance for all of their stuffed animals — that’s where I want to be.”

For Jaster, the movement and activeness of the music is just as important as the artistic aspect. “I’m a movement director and choreographer; that’s how I came to opera,” says Jaster, “But I have a 5-year-old and I live and witness every day how much children need to move their bodies. Now that we’re mostly confined to the same places every day, our bodies start to sink and settle into smaller and smaller habits.” Instead of just sitting and listening to the music, Jaster has the students dancing, doing vocal exercises, and performing functional exercises for different musical instruments.

The instructors seem to do an excellent job of keeping the lessons simple and interesting as opposed to getting bogged down by the complexity of the art form. “You think, ‘Oh, opera. How on Earth are we gonna get them to engage?’” says Michael Tooke, a grandfather of one of the students in a post-workshop talk-back. “But rather than trying to figure out who Lucia was and why her brother didn’t like her, they give the basic elements of movement, emotion, dance and how much fun it is to play an instrument. Very, very simple. It’s been very rewarding for our girls.” It has even inspired some students to seriously pick up instruments to try to follow paths of their own. Helen, one of the students, stated, “I think I want to play the violin” at the end of one of the sessions.

Perhaps this ridiculous sounding by-product of the COVID-19 pandemic is actually a legitimate way for young children to easily get involved in a rich and historic artform from the comfort of their very own home. After all, who are we to say that any method of teaching is inferior to any other?

## St. Paul Art Crawl

BY BRITTANY MCCARTY

**A**RE YOU AN ARTIST? Do you know others who perhaps are? Or do you simply have a genuine appreciation for the traditional and modern art alike? Well, chances are you may have heard that this year, due to no other than the coronavirus pandemic, long-held art festivals in the twin cities such as the St. Paul Art Crawl and the Art-a-Whirl in Minneapolis have been moved to all virtual formats.

For the St. Paul Art Crawl, which will take place April 24-26 2021, will be held on the

Facebook platform. Here, artists can post work for sale, musicians livestream, and viewers can create “watch parties” with friends. While they scroll through the page, people will be able to see the paintings hung in various artists’ homes.

The Minneapolis Art-a-Whirl will take place May 14-16, 2021, but instead of Facebook, this art festival will be held on the Northeast Minneapolis Arts Association website (NEMAA). Normally, the Art-a-Whirl would open 60 locations, featuring approximately 800 artists and this year

## CSP’s New Recording Studio

BY RENE ELIAS

**C**ALLING ALL ARTISTS OR anyone who has an interest in music production at Concordia! CSP now has a recording studio on campus available to students. According to Dr. Klein, “The studio includes a variety of microphones to choose from, a 16 channel digital mixer, professional-level recording software like Logic Pro, a high-quality keyboard that records directly into the digital audio workstation, and space designated for isolated recording. The studio is open for any current student to use after completing an orientation session that can be scheduled through the music department.” It is a truly exciting addition to campus.

While speaking to students on campus, I ran across a freshman by the name of Ameer Stora. She said “I’m excited to have access to such an essential resource for my future career at my school, as well as having the opportunity to learn about all of the different areas of music that I have never seen before. This allows me to be able to grow into the artist that I have been dreaming about for the last six years and want to become in the future. It builds new pathways for students never before seen and it is nice to know that the school believes in artists like myself. I am excited to complete the orientation and be able to use the studio”. Dr. Klein states “The CSP Recording Studio offers students a place where they can make professional-level recordings.” As you walk into the room you are greeted with sound panel covered walls and all the equipment needs to start recording. For more information contact Dr. Murray at [murray@csp.edu](mailto:murray@csp.edu).

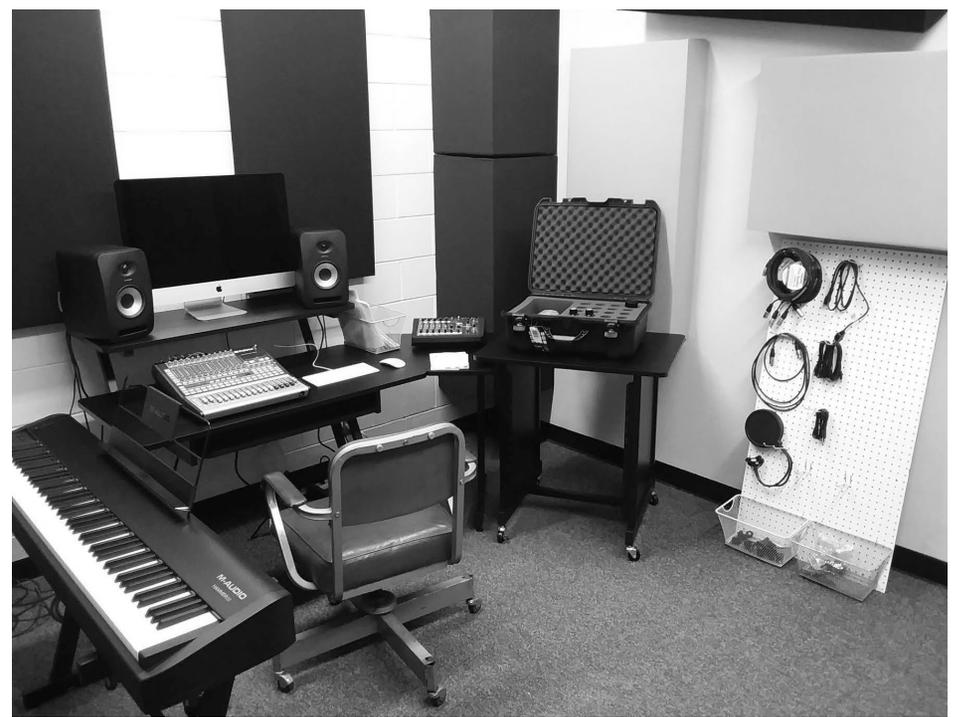


Photo Credit: Rene Elias

also celebrating its 25th anniversary. But now, the virtual event becomes an “online promotion of the arts community in northeast Minneapolis, coupled with resources and training for members to develop, or further develop, their online presence,” NEMAA president Brian Burke said in a statement posted to the association’s website.