

The Tale o' Tam o' Shanter

The resources and how they work

The Sing-along Storybook

This animated storybook is an exciting and engaging way of looking at *The Tale o' Tam o' Shanter*. Our illustrator has listened to the wonderful lyrics and music, as well as studying the original poem by Robert Burns. The drawings are a direct response to these resources, creating images which help tell the story of *Tam o' Shanter* in a light and humorous way. The music comes to life when everyone watches Tam's adventures in the animation. So when the pupils perform in the production, they are already immersed in the story.

The Score

The musical score for *The Tale o' Tam o' Shanter* is an exciting retelling of Robert Burns' greatest epic poem, *Tam o' Shanter*. There are lots of songs for the pupils to learn, and woven into this musical story are songs performed on the day by the Scottish Opera team. There are musical interludes specially written for movement sequences which everyone will learn on the day, and the pupils will even get to meet 'Robert Burns' himself as he prepares to write his greatest poem.

- Song 1: The opening song **Beware** is sung by everyone – a warning as to what might come.
- Song 2: **The Terrible Tavern** is a bawdy tongue twister with a good dose of fun to wash it all down.
- This leads us on to Song 3: **The Scary Storm**. Plish! Plash! Plosh! The quiet droplets of rain at the beginning build to a wild storm where Tam can't hold his guid blue bonnet on AND keep control of Meg the horse.
- As they approach the Kirk o' Alloway looking for shelter, Tam and Meg are astonished to hear the strange and terrifying **Witches Brew**: Song 4. Warlocks, witches and hags dance a jig while Tam looks on in horror. Caught out by the devilish mob, Tam flees.
- Song 5: **The Chase**, romps along as Tam and Meg are pursued by the Witches Crew. Tam is saved finally by crossing the River Doon, only to reflect on his own stupidity when he hears an echo of **Beware** sung to him again.

There are **three different groups of characters** involved in *The Tale o' Tam o' Shanter*:

- **The Stormy Crew**
- **The Tavern Crew**
- **The Witches Crew**

The Stormy Crew foretell of the dangers of the forest and forsaking a good wife for a night out with friends. **The Tavern Crew** are these very friends, carefree yet unreliable. Finally their comeuppance arrives in the shape of **The Witches Crew**, who frighten Tam o' Shanter (and his guid mare, Meg) into behaving himself.

In most cases, three different classes in the school can participate, with each class taking on the role of one of the groups. If your school is part of a co-operative, your pupils might be taking on just one of the groups whilst your partner schools take on the others. If this is the case, it's important that everyone is clear about which school or class is learning which role(s).

If you intend to involve three classes of different ages within the school (e.g. Primary 5, 6 and 7 classes), we recommend the following :

- **The Stormy Crew – Primary 5**
- **The Tavern Crew – Primary 6**
- **The Witches Crew – Primary 7**

These are purely recommendations, and you will know whether or not this is the best option for your pupils.

The maximum total number of pupils who can participate in the performance of *The Tale o' Tam o' Shanter* is 100, split as evenly as possible between the three groups with preferably a maximum number of 34 in any one group. (Please contact Scottish Opera at the earliest opportunity should this prove difficult.)

Learning Activities & Materials

The aims of the associated learning activities are as follows:

- To encourage pupils to undertake a range of activities, inspired by *The Tale o' Tam o' Shanter*;
- To provide a vehicle for implementing some of the experiences and outcomes of the Curriculum for Excellence;
- To help the pupils develop their capacities as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.

Additional support from Scottish Opera staff throughout the project will:

- Motivate pupils to learn the words and music for the performance;
- Make the characters in the story memorable and real for the pupils;
- Encourage the pupils to perform to an audience of peers, friends and family.

The support activities included with this pack are divided into three sections to correspond with the three groups in the show, with each 'Crew' assigned:

- An exercise to complete
- Follow up extension exercises
- Additional links made through participation in the performance

Curriculum for Excellence

The associated exercises included with this pack are designed to help staff to implement some of the experiences and outcomes of the Curriculum for Excellence.

The main curriculum areas covered by *The Tale o' Tam o' Shanter* are:

- Literary Across Learning
- Expressive Arts
- Languages
- Social Studies