



## **Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen*. An Animated Opera Project from an Educational Perspective**

**Olga Kolokytha**

The European Opera Centre (UK)

[okolokitha@gmail.com](mailto:okolokitha@gmail.com)

The European Opera Centre (EOC) was launched at the end of 1997 following extensive consultation with the European Parliament and the European Commission, which have provided consistent and continuing support. It is one of eight three-year funded cultural ambassadors across Europe, and the only one so designated by the European Commission which works in opera. The Centre has two broad aims: to help young Europeans from education to employment in opera and to develop audiences for opera across Europe. The Centre works through a series of projects leading to performance, whether in fully staged opera productions or in the recording studio.

The *Cunning Little Vixen* project was instigated by The European Opera Centre. Janáček's work was turned into an animated film and was recorded in English, Catalan, Castilian, Czech and French with EOC's young singers, the Deutsches Symphonie Orchester under Kent Nagano and BBC singers. It was a collaboration between The European Opera Centre, the BBC, Gran Teatre del Liceu Barcelona (Castilian and Catalan versions) and the Classical Music Department of Czech Radio-television (Czech version). The Catalan version is used by Gran Teatre del Liceu Barcelona in their education programme and the Czech version is part of the permanent exhibition of the Janáček Museum in Brno, Czech Republic. The success of this project which won numerous prizes led to the development of a similar project in 3D animation and brought opera closer to numerous people around the world.

The paper examines and discusses this project from various perspectives: from its conception to the final outcome, its particularities and limitations, but most of all its aims and its use and impact to the development of young professional singers and of different types of audiences in various European countries.

Past research demonstrates that young professional singers are not adequately prepared to enter the profession after their studies. In a fast-changing opera profession where concepts of for example tacit knowledge and continuing professional development play an important role, it is vital for young graduate artists to benefit from opportunities outside traditional, formal education. This paper also discusses the relationship between formal and informal education and training within the context of the project and argues on the importance of both for a young artist's career and development.