

# The Story of Hollywood

***An original children's opera***

*created by Russell Nadel*

*and students from Samuel Coleridge-Taylor  
Elementary School (PS 122), Baltimore, MD,  
in the pilot of the Baltimore Opera Company's  
"Create & Produce" education / outreach project,  
March – May 2006*

*Duration: c. 25'00"*

## Program Notes:

**Create & Produce** is an education and outreach project of the Baltimore Opera Company that received pilot funding in the spring of 2006. The Baltimore Opera Company selected Samuel Coleridge-Taylor Elementary School (PS 122), a Title I elementary school located in north Baltimore City, for the trial run of this project, and hired me to be the composer/teacher-in-residence. I had the good fortune to work with a wonderful group of eighteen third- and fourth-graders, some (but not all) of whom were drawn from the school's Gifted & Talented Education program. These students had little or no prior musical training of any sort.

Over the course of eight weeks, meeting for just over two hours per week, the students and I together accomplished a great deal:

- (1) We learned all about what opera is and the history of opera;
- (2) We wrote an original opera libretto;
- (3) We composed all the original music found in this score;
- (4) And we performed the opera for the school and the public.

These students, who had effectively no formal musical training prior to this project, brought remarkable creative energy to the project and composed nearly all the music found in this score themselves, with little help from me outside the harmonization of the songs and my conducting from the piano. This gave the students a very strong sense of ownership in the creative process and in their final production.

This project was also a marvelous opportunity for musical and cross-curricular teaching. While the students learned about opera, they also learned a lot about history, geography, mathematics, anatomy (singing posture), public speaking, diction, acting and stage gesture, stage production, the technique of singing correctly, folksong repertoire, and much, much more. It also exposed the students to a genre of music which they had not previously experienced, and generated an interest in both "new music" and "classical" or "concert" music that they almost certainly lacked before the project began.

While this pilot project was successful with a group of third- and fourth- graders (eight and nine years old), I believe that it could be equally successful with children a few years older and even (perhaps) a couple of years younger, with appropriate adaptations. The vocal ranges given below seemed to present few problems to any child in my group.

**Range:**



**Tessitura:**



– *Russell Nadel*  
*May 2006*

# THE STORY OF HOLLYWOOD

RUSSELL NADEL  
and the students of P.S. 122

**Moderato** (♩ = 112)

**Allegro moderato** (♩ = 90)  
**VAMP**

## IMPROVISE FREELY UNDERNEATH VOCAL IMPROVISATION:

NARRATOR 1: One bright, sunny California day, four friends were taking a vacation...

**ACT I, SCENE 1**  
**Allegro moderato** (♩ = 90)

5

10 **ALL** **VAMP**

Oh, what a day! I love va - ca - tion! —

B<sup>b</sup> F Fm/A<sup>b</sup> G<sup>7</sup> Cm<sup>7</sup> F<sup>7</sup> B<sup>b</sup> F B<sup>b</sup> F B<sup>b</sup>

16

## IMPROVISE FREELY UNDERNEATH VOCAL IMPROVISATIONS:

SHATIRA: I'm so glad to finally get outside my studio -

NIREASHA: And I'm so glad to give my voice a rest.

JEROME and MICHAEL: This would be a great day for a game!

JEROME: A baseball game -

MICHAEL: A football game -

JEROME: Baseball! MICHAEL: Football! (repeat)

NIREASHA and SHATIRA: Boys! Enough! Let's enjoy the weather. (JEROME and MICHAEL sulk in the back seat)

JEROME: Are we there yet?

NIREASHA: Almost, Jerome - we should see the Hollywood sign any minute now...

17 **Freely LEADS** **Allegro** (♩ = 120)

"OL - LY - WOOD?!"

*f*

Gm Dm Gm Dm Dm/C B<sup>b</sup>Δ7 D/A

21 **JEROME & MICHAEL**

It can't be! I can't be-lieve my eyes! The

**SHATIRA & NIREASHA**

It can't be! I can't be-lieve my eyes!

Gm Dm Gm Dm Dm/C B<sup>b</sup>Δ7 D/A

24 **J. & M.** **ALL BUT NIREASHA** **VAMP**

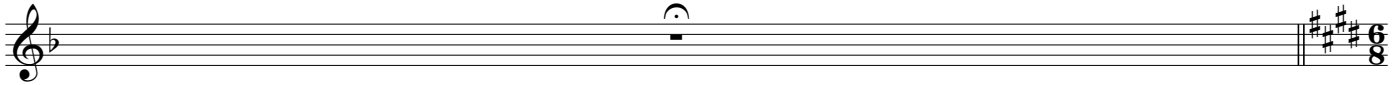
H is gone! Ni - rea-sha, can't you drive?!

**S. & N.**

The H is gone!

G<sup>#</sup>07 A Dm

29



**IMPROVISE FREELY UNDERNEATH VOCAL IMPROVISATIONS:**

NIREASHA: Who took the H? And why would they want it?

MICHAEL and JEROME: We'd better call Frank Masters and Mademoiselle. (the phone rings)

MICHAEL: Frank, Frank - have you seen the...

**FRANK MASTERS & MADEMOISELLE**

30

**Allegro molto** (♩. = 94)

clap

Sor-ry, we can't talk right now,

E B E Bm E E B E E/G# Bm

36

some - one stole the H from the Hol - ly - wood sign!

E C#m F#m/A B E Bm

39

E Bm E Bm E Bm E

43 **Freely** **JEROME** **Allegro** (♩ = 120)

I guess they saw it.

47 **ALL**

The H is gone! The H is gone! What are we go-ing to do? What are we go-ing to do?

52

**IMPROVISE FREELY UNDERNEATH VOCAL IMPROVISATIONS:**

SHATIRA: All right, enough - don't panic, don't panic!

NIREASHA: Here, Shatira, you hold the phone, / You call the police! / Do you think they know? (*phone rings*)

SHATIRA: Hello, police? Have you seen the...

53 **Allegro** (♩ = 94) **POLICE CHIEF and POLICE** **clap**

Sor-ry, we can't talk right now,

59

some - one stole\_ the H from the Hol - ly - wood sign!

E C#m F#m/A B E Bm E Bm

63

E Bm E Bm E

NEWS CREWS:

Repeat mm. 48-60

66

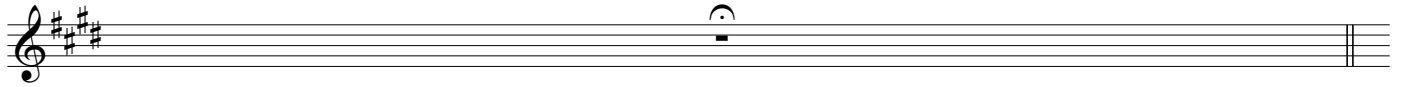
**IMPROVISE FREELY UNDERNEATH VOCAL IMPROV:**

(piano tacet:) SHATIRA: Yes, I think they know.

(piano plays:) JEROME and MICHAEL: We'd better call the news crew too!

SHATIRA and NIREASHA: Yes, hurry! (*phone rings*)

74

**IMPROVISE FREELY UNDERNEATH VOCAL IMPROVISATIONS:**

JEROME: Look, we're close to Frank and Mademoiselle's apartment! Let's stop and pick them up. (*Mademoiselle and Frank climb in*)

NIREASHA and SHATIRA: Oh, Mademoiselle, I love your shoes!

NIREASHA: I've never seen such high heels and pointy toes before!

MADemoisELLE: Who can think about shoes at a time like this?

FRANK and MADemoisELLE: Oh how awful, how terrible! What can we do?

ALL (*repeat motive sung by FRANK and MADemoisELLE*): What can we do????

(*pause*)

MADemoisELLE: We'd better drive up to the sign and see if we can help.

OTHER LEADS: Good idea, good idea!

FRANK: Wait! We have to stop at my fashion store. (*gets out of the car, runs off stage, comes back onstage*)

I have just the perfect thing - / I designed them last week! (*passes out detective caps*)

75

ALL

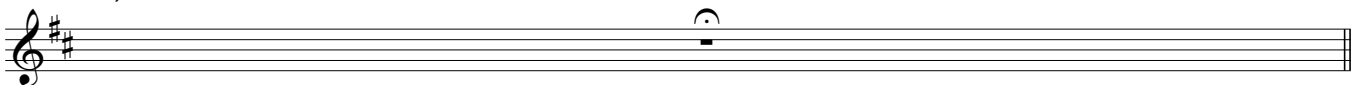
O - K, we're

80

VAMP

(*exeunt*)

rea- dy, now let's go!

**ACT I, SCENE 2****IMPROVISE FREELY UNDERNEATH VOCAL IMPROVISATIONS:**

NARRATOR: When they got to the base of the sign, there was already a crowd of police and news crews on the scene...



**Allegro non troppo** (♩ = 72)

86 D Bm G#m7 G#m7/B D D/CBm E7 A7 D Bm C C#7 F#7(#9) G#7

93 ALL

Oh, no, the "Ol - ly - wood" sign! It's

G#07 A7 D D Bm G#m7 G#m7/B

98

tall and it's white but it's mis - sing an H! Oh, what - ev - er will we do?

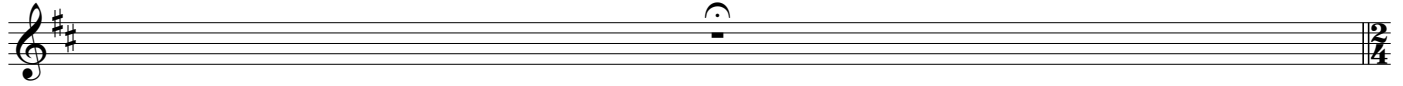
D D/C Bm E7 A7 D Bm C C#7

102 POLICE CHIEF & POLICE

Don't wor - ry folks, we're on the case!

F#7(#9) G#7 G#07 A7 D

107

**IMPROVISE FREELY UNDERNEATH VOCAL IMPROVISATIONS:**

LEADS: Chief, oh Chief, how can we help?

POLICE CHIEF: Well, first we have some questions for you...

108

**Bossa nova** (♩ = 90)

Chords: D A Em/G A G A D A

112

**NEWS REPORTERS**

snap

**Repeat for Channels 3 & 4**

Lyrics: This is Chan-nel 2, re - por-ting from Hol - ly-wood.

Chords: D A Em/G A G A D A D A

118 Moderato (♩ = 72)

D Aadd9 G D A<sup>9</sup> D

124 POLICE CHIEF & POLICE

ALL OTHERS

We've round-ed up the u - su-al sus-pects, we've dus-ted all o-ver for fin - ger-prints; We've dus-ted all o-ver for

D Aadd9 G D A<sup>9</sup> D D

130 POLICE CHIEF

fin - ger-prints, We'll in - ter-view all of the sus-pects to-night, so come to the sta-tion and we'll set things right!

A<sup>9</sup> D D Aadd<sup>2</sup> G/D Bm<sup>7</sup> G A<sup>9</sup> D

135 Più mosso (♩ = 92)

ALL

VAMP

O - K, let's go! NEWS CREWS: We'll be back after this message from our sponsors...