



The Snow Queen

Sheet 6: Reflection and discussion - opposites, eternity and warmth of heart (Kay and Gerda)

Activity 1: Singing the Rose Song (sheet music 7)

In the original text of Andersen, Gerda sings a song that she has learned in the church. Marius Felix Lange has written a new text that avoids the direct relation to the Christian religion and allows scope for further interpretation. Symbolically, the Rose Song, also in the opera, stands for the warmth and empathy of Gerda. It also stands for the optimistic trust in God, or the belief in a predetermined order of the world in which everyone finds their way, even if not everything seems to be explainable.

The melody of the song forms an essential leitmotiv of the opera and acts as a connecting element between Gerda and Kay. In order for the students to recognize this peculiarity while watching the performance, the song should be discussed in advance with the children. Depending on the age, the melody can be rehearsed in sections or completely and possibly also interpreted instrumentally. With younger students, it is recommended to sing only the last section (from bar 13).

Activity 2: Playing out a dialogue (Material 3)

A key moment in the opera is the beginning scene, in which Kay gets a splinter of the devil's mirror into his eye. The subsequent reaction of the two children gives a good insight into the basic conflicts of the opera, which should be reflected in the following exercises.



The students receive an excerpt from the libretto and improvise the end of the scene on their own. After a short rehearsal phase, the results are presented and compared with their classmates' and against the original score.



Reflection - head against heart

In *Die Schneekönigin*, opposites form a central element of the plot. The good-hearted, hopeful, empathic, optimistic, fairytale and "warm" world of Gerda and her grandmother is opposed to the rational, explainable, perfect and "cold" world of the Snow Queen.

Discuss the following questions with your class: how do the grandmother and the Snow Queen differ? How is Kay changing? What is important in the world of the Snow Queen? How does Gerda see the world?

Opinion barometer (introductory reflection)

The opinion barometer is useful to give the students a first insight into the basic conflicts and themes of the opera. The game master reads out quotes and statements from the opera, and the pupils directly take a personal position. The room becomes a "barometer" with one side of the room symbolizing "I fully agree with the statement", while the opposite side means "I totally disagree". Children move to one side or the other according to their personal beliefs. The transition between them is fluid. The aim of this exercise is a direct identification of children between the fundamental conflicts of opera and their personal world. The individual positions and opinions should be justified and discussed, especially if the opinions are very different.

- I like summer better than winter.
- You can learn a lot while traveling.
- If a friend is sad, then I have to help him / her.
- If a friend is suddenly mean to me, s/he is no longer my friend.
- If a friend is suddenly mean to me, I want to know why.
- I'm scared to be alone.
- It is very important to be kind to strangers.
- There are people who are always sad and angry.
- People who cry look ugly.
- Sometimes children are smarter than adults.
- Love is the most important thing in the world.
- It is only when you are no longer living with your parents that you are grown up.
- Everything in the world can be explained by science.
- Some decisions can only be made with the heart.



Activity 5. Discussion: solving problems - head against heart

The following exercise will illustrate the contrast between thinking guided by compassion and purely rational thinking in which children discuss the solution to different problems. Students pair up: while one partner is given the task of making a rational decision, the other partner assumes the emotional position. Afterwards the different solutions are presented:

For younger children:

- Your house catches fire. You can only save one thing. What are you saving?
- You can either eat only salad or just cake for one month. What do you choose?
- You can choose a pet. Which one do you choose?

For older children:

- Should you donate to poor people?
- If you could choose any profession, which one would it be?
- Is it okay to cheat when it makes you feel better?
- What happens after a person dies?

