



PRESS RELEASE

Monday 20 June 2016

Thurrock Trailblazer schools learn about the first dog in space

Thameside Theatre plays host to English Touring Opera and 1,500 children

Royal Opera House Thurrock Trailblazer schools attended the **Thameside Theatre** in force during the week beginning 13 June to see **English Touring Opera's** production of *Laika the Spacedog*.

Almost 1,500 children and school staff packed the Thameside Theatre to see the brand new opera for children and families, which tells the story of the Soviet dog Laika, the first animal to orbit the Earth, through music, puppetry and filmed animation. 21 schools from across Thurrock attended five performances of the show and learnt about how the stray dog was rescued from the streets of Moscow to become a space traveller.

The show linked in with schools' science topics and also introduced them to opera.

Karina Latham from Gable Hall School said: 'This has given them an opportunity to see something different and open their eyes to another form of theatre.'

Aveley Primary School said: 'It was great! The children could all follow the story though it was all sung. Very educational. It gave the children a great knowledge of the "Space Race".'

Mark Allinson, Arts Manager at the Thameside Theatre said: 'We were thrilled to welcome *Laika the Spacedog* to the Thameside. There is

nothing quite like having 1,500 excited children visit, to brighten up a rainy day. It was great to see a show that brought recent history to life, mixing opera and puppetry, comedy and tragedy, love and loss. We hope the children enjoyed it as much as we did.'

The Thurrock Trailblazer programme offers access to high quality arts and cultural activities that can support and develop the curriculum within schools. It is currently working with 28 Thurrock schools and recruiting for 2016/17.

To find out more about the Thurrock Trailblazer programme, please go to www.roh.org.uk/trailblazer or email Thurrock.trailblazer@roh.org.uk

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Notes for Editors

Royal Opera House Learning and Participation in Thurrock

Royal Opera House Learning and Participation in Thurrock has been offering innovative and creative projects and programmes in schools, colleges and across communities in the Thames Gateway since 2006.

Since then, more than 60,000 people have participated in activities ranging from schools projects to teacher training, from work-based learning to fully-staged community operas. People in Thurrock have both been able to watch special performances at the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden and gain a very special insight into the behind-the-scenes process.

The Learning and Participation team runs the Royal Opera House Thurrock Community Chorus which currently has over 140 members of all ages and regularly performs across Thurrock and at the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden. For further information, please go to: www.roh.org.uk/learning/learning-in-thurrock/community-chorus. Details

of future performances and taster session for the Community Chorus can be obtained by emailing getinvolved@roh.org.uk or calling 01708 891200.

Regular public tours of the state-of-the-art Bob and Tamar Manoukian Production Workshop where the sets and scenery for the Royal Opera House stage in Covent Garden are built, and the Bob and Tamar Manoukian Costume Centre which opened in October 2015, are now available. Please go to www.roh.org.uk/visit/tours/thurrock-tours for further details. Inspiration Days offer a more in-depth look at the work of the Production Workshop. More information can be found at www.roh.org.uk/inspiration

In April 2012, the Royal Opera House agreed to become a [Bridge](#) organisation, working to connect children and young people to great art and culture across Essex, North Kent, Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire.

The Learning and Participation team is based at the High House Production Park in Purfleet which is supported by a unique partnership including Arts Council England, Creative & Cultural Skills, the Royal Opera House and Thurrock Council: www.hhpp.org.uk