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PRESS RELEASE

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Thurrock Trailblazer schools take on *The Flying Dutchman*

## Thameside Theatre hosts performance to mark culmination of project

The Thameside Theatre was filled with the sound of young voices joining together to sing opera on Friday 24 March as five Royal Opera House Thurrock Trailblazer schools celebrated their work on their Trailblazer projects with a Big Sing event.

More than 100 students from **Hathaway Academy, Harris Academy Chafford Hundred, St Cleres School and Hassenbrook Academy** gathered at the Thameside to join Royal Opera House practitioners in workshops and rehearsals of Richard Wagner's 1840 opera *The Flying Dutchman*.

Students took part in three dramatic singing workshops; they learnt new repertory in harmony with **Stuart Overington**, had a vocal technique masterclass with opera singer **Dawid Kimber** and pulled the elements together to create a dramatic performance with **Greg Eldridge**.

**Teacher Anna Burgin** from **Harris Academy Chafford Hundred** said: 'My choir engaged brilliantly with the Flying Dutchman resource following CPD with Stuart Overington. Each rehearsal they were enthusiastic about learning new sections. The Big Sing Day was an excellent culmination event having all the schools come together. The girls from my school really enjoyed the day and it was great to see them engaging in workshops with professional singers, then coming together in an excellent performance at the end of the day.'

**Gabrielle Forster-Still, Head of Learning and Participation Thurrock for Royal Opera House** said 'It was wonderful to see the students tackling opera with no hesitation and with

great gusto. Singing together is such a powerful thing and the atmosphere was tremendous. What a fabulous end to the schools' Trailblazer project.'

Trailblazer is an innovative programme that boost creative learning in schools and accelerate pupils' development. To find out more about Royal Opera House Thurrock Trailblazer, please go to [www.roh.org.uk/trailblazer](http://www.roh.org.uk/trailblazer).

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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](http://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](mailto: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](http://www.roh.org.uk/visit/tours/thurrock-tours) for further details.

In April 2012, the Royal Opera House agreed to become a [Bridge](http://www.bridge.org.uk) 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](http://www.hhpp.org.uk)