"Opera per tutti"
Expanding opera audience through accessibility

Today's core issues

- Senior project: Macerata Opera Festival (MOF) accessibility programme: origins and growth

- Audience expansion

- Audience engagement

- Pros/cons of opera accessibility, room for improvement
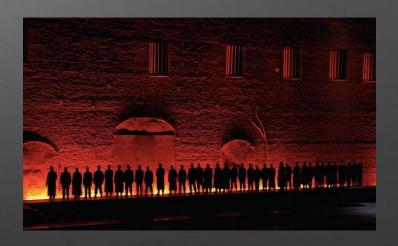
- The present and future

Accessible MOF in **pictures**

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pmi5hf7eXOQ

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ViBDJ3SPHlU

MOF access services

- Audio description – Blind and Partially Sighted (BPS)

- Audio introduction Ita-Eng – BPS/All

- 3D/Tactile material - BPS

- Touch tours – BPS/All

- Sign language tours –
Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHoH)

- Assistive listening -DHoH

- Surtitles – DHoH/All

A gradually developing *all*: 2008-2017

- 2008: self-funded AD for 2 operas

- 2009: AD for 2 operas fully funded by the theatre, Italian surtitles for all performances

- 2011; AD for 3 operas (pre-recorded and launched live), surtitles

- 2012: AD for 3 operas, 2 touch tours, surtitles (never stopped since)

- 2014: all of the above, collaboration with Museo Omero (tactile maps and sketches)

- 2015: AD for 3 operas, 3 touch tours, surtitles, AI in Italian available online, tactile material, tours.

- 2017: AD for 4 operas, 3 touch tours, Italian and English surtitles (MSU), AI in Italian and English available online, tours in Italian sign language for the deaf, dedicated system for mobile devices..

- 2018: accessibility labs for blind and deaf children, new mobile app system

Research, practice, fruition

- From research and training to practice (Unimc to MOF)

- From practice to awareness (MOF managers, blind/deaf community)

- From awareness to engagement (orchestra, technicians, directors)

- Practice feeds back into research (publications, PhD, international relations)

- Training and practice become international (Montclair State University)

- End users are always involved (before, during, after)

MOF audience expansion: 2015 and 2017 in figures

Live intralingual surtitles for 11 performances (25,000 viewers)	Live intralingual and interlingual subtitles for 16 performances (31,000 viewers)
Pre-recorded AD launched live for 3 performances: 130 participants from all over Italy	Pre-recorded AD for 4 performances: 190 participants from all over Italy
Touch tours: 90 participants	Touch and sign language tours: 120 participants
	Website: accessibility page 1,500 visits in 2 months (August/September)
	Audio Introductions: 700 listeners in 2 months
	Media coverage: approx. 50 articles, including major newspapers.

Audience engagement

Accessibility project design: Stage 1 - establishing contacts with local end users, associations, groups, etc.

Workflow: end users involved in AD drafting and revision, touch tour/sign language tour design and development, feedback form design, feedback collection, short interviews. They are also our main promoters. :-)

Performances and audiences

Willis (1990): audiences as cultural producers

Abercrombie and Longhurst (1998): a performance involves a relationship between performer(s) and audience(s), in which a liminal space is opened up.

Bruns (2008): produsage as the active -and creative-involvement of consumers in the production stage.

Performing, creative audiences have so far supported audience but also project expansion.

Opera is alive

PROS and CONS

AD, AI, tours are created and designed during rehearsals.

Performances are never the same.

More than one operator is needed.

The audience is *there with you*.

Each theatre is different.

Training for **opera** accessibility

Still experimenting...

Role division *but* prepared for blurred roles

Training whom ? Who provides training? For whom?

From **MOF** to other theatres

- Teatro Grande Brescia:
2017: 4 performances
2018: 6-8 performances

- Teatro dell'Opera di Firenze:
starting May 2018

Open challenges

Project design: further testing and revision

Testing and improving technologies

University spin off

PhD to develop flexible, universal feedback collection system

A network of accessible opera houses?

You're all invited to the Macerata Opera Festival 2018, the Teatro Grande 2018 opera season, the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino 2018.

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