

Dear Educators,

We hope the *Emancipation* videos and course materials will equip you to prepare your students to benefit from lessons presented in the opera *Emancipation*. Our goal is to help teachers guide students to identify what racism is and to learn how to overcome and prevent it. Students can make positive changes in their world by understanding how and where the damage from racism has been done and by engaging in thinking and talking about how to repair it.

The story of *Emancipation* is based on historical records. It is a dramatic/musical reenactment of the events leading up to President Abraham Lincoln signing the Emancipation Proclamation, which marked a change in his view of slavery. The opera *Emancipation* traces that shift and posits that it was Lincoln's relationships with a few African-American friends that made him rethink his position.

This course has been created to help teachers educate students about the roots of racism in this country and to understand the progress that has been made to overcome it, as well as the distance there is yet to go before we can claim ultimate victory. The course consists of videos of ten pivotal scenes from the opera, which are subtitled for ease of understanding what is being sung. Accompanying these videos are a synopsis of each scene and a timeline and resource materials covering the history of opera, biographies of people important to the fight for Black human rights, and articles about events that have been important to the furthering of racial equality.

We have also developed ideas for assignments to help students think more deeply about the issues raised. You should also feel free to develop your own ideas for discussion and assignments based on your own response to the videos.

Since 1997, GGO has brought short opera programs into schools, benefiting more than 200,000 children. Students have sent us hundreds of letters and drawings to let us know of the value of our outreach. We trust that this online course will continue that trend.

Emancipation, with its professional cast of singers and historically-accurate costuming, will bring the era of the Civil War to life for students. They will gain exposure to all the arts—singing, acting, costumes, scenery, props, movement and music—and will be made aware of an important issue of our own day that has its roots in the dawn of our republic. Only the arts can beautifully and subtly convey such important lessons. We hope that this will be of value to you in your role as educator.



Roberta Wain-Becker
General Director, Golden Gate Opera