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## Rheem Sings a Story

By Bonnie McNab



Rheem 1st graders sing with Kristin Jones Photo provided

language that transcends all cultures and barriers, a bond is formed that can only strengthen the kinship in the classroom.

The San Francisco Opera Guild has put together a program, under the direction of Jennifer Ashworth, called "Sing-A-Story" designed to bring opera directly into the classrooms of public and inner-city schools. The idea is to engage young children directly both as audience and performers.

Sing-A-Story is managed by Caroline Altman, the Education Director at the San Francisco Opera Guild. She has expanded the program so they are now going to more than 250 classrooms a year and have five Teaching Artists.

Kristen Jones, a long time singer and performer, has been with Sing-A-Story for five seasons. Last week she came to Rheem Elementary School in Moraga, to Ms. Strohmeyer's first grade class, to present Mozart's "The Magic Flute."

She first takes the children through the opera explaining the characters and story via action and song. They then are given the opportunity to perform the individual parts themselves under her expert guidance. Jones feels that by giving them a chance to get up and perform, a child who is not excelling in one area can have a chance to shine on "stage" in front of their peers. As music is a

Reach the reporter at: [info@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:info@lamorindaweekly.com)

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