

xR StOries

XR Stories Case Study

Reaching new audiences for opera with immersive digital trailers

R&D funded by XR Stories through an Arts and Humanities Research Council grant has enabled Opera North, a leading UK arts organisation, to explore new and exciting ways of reaching audiences.

Opera North is a national company based in Leeds. The company is known for innovating across artforms and embracing a diversity of skills to make bold and ambitious new work, shared in new ways. Its aim is to create extraordinary experiences using music and opera to entertain, engage, challenge and inspire. They wanted to engage with a key facet of R&D in asking if immersive and interactive digital storytelling could bring new and more diverse audiences to its productions.

Working with the **University of York AudioLab**, Opera North's project explored the potential of interactive, spatial audio technology and 3D game engines to encourage a tech-savvy demographic to engage with a classical opera. As a result of this work, **an interactive trailer** was produced for Opera North's 2020 production of Benjamin Britten's *The Turn of the Screw*: <https://www.operanorth.co.uk/turn-of-the-screw-immersive-trailer/>

Users of the web-based experience are guided through an ethereal landscape interwoven with elements of the opera's music. Users change the environmental soundscapes to shape and affect their own emotional responses to the story.

Opera North tracked visits and click-throughs to ticket booking information pages and as of July 2020 recorded 63,862 page visits and 2,891 clicks through to ticket booking. As a result, this R&D project has confidently demonstrated the value of immersive and interactive digital storytelling to support traditional opera productions. The Opera North team will continue to develop these approaches for future work.

Further information:

Opera North: <https://www.operanorth.co.uk>

Opera North's Immersive Trailer for *Turn of the Screw*: <https://www.operanorth.co.uk/turn-of-the-screw-immersive-trailer/>

Opera North News item about the Trailer: <https://www.operanorth.co.uk/news/cutting-edge-creeps-with-new-trailer-for-the-turn-of-the-screw/>

University of York: <https://audiolab.york.ac.uk/research/>