

## CLC goes to the opera again

On March 11, students from Community Learning Center (CLC) attended the final dress rehearsal of the opera *Macbeth* by Verdi. Passes to the dress rehearsal were provided by Opera Company of Philadelphia's Sounds of Learning program. This is the third year that CLC has attended the opera, a tradition that began two years ago with a trip to see *An Italian Girl in Algiers*.

For a week prior to the performance, students studied about opera, music, and singing. This music unit is part of CLC's arts curriculum, which includes components on drama, visual art, and architecture among others. In class, students listened to excerpts from famous classical music pieces and were asked to identify their sources. Many of the students recognized 'La donna e mobile' from Italian food commercials and the overture from *William Tell* as the theme from the Lone Ranger. Students enjoyed picking out the music from something they already knew about. Students then read the libretto (dramatic text) and acted out the various roles.

The CLC group that went to the show was a mix of students from the GED preparation and ESOL programs that CLC offers. The excitement began to build on the El ride to Center City as students and staff discussed the opera. As they entered the Academy of Music, the plush red velvet seats and carved, gilt columns and wall decora-

tions entranced many students. Then, the lights dimmed and the orchestra began to warm up. The conductor entered and with a flourish of his baton, the orchestra launched into the overture. As the curtain rose, the audience gasped at its first view of the stunning set. The opera takes place in Scotland and the set contained elements reminiscent of a medieval castle.

The students discussed the opera on the ride home and concluded that they would like to attend again next year. CLC student Anita Hill may have put it best when she said, "I have watched other operas on television, but nothing beats the real thing." CLC would like to thank the Opera Company of Philadelphia and Ms. Judy Williams for providing the students with this unique learning experience.