

TOLEDO OPERA ON WHEELS

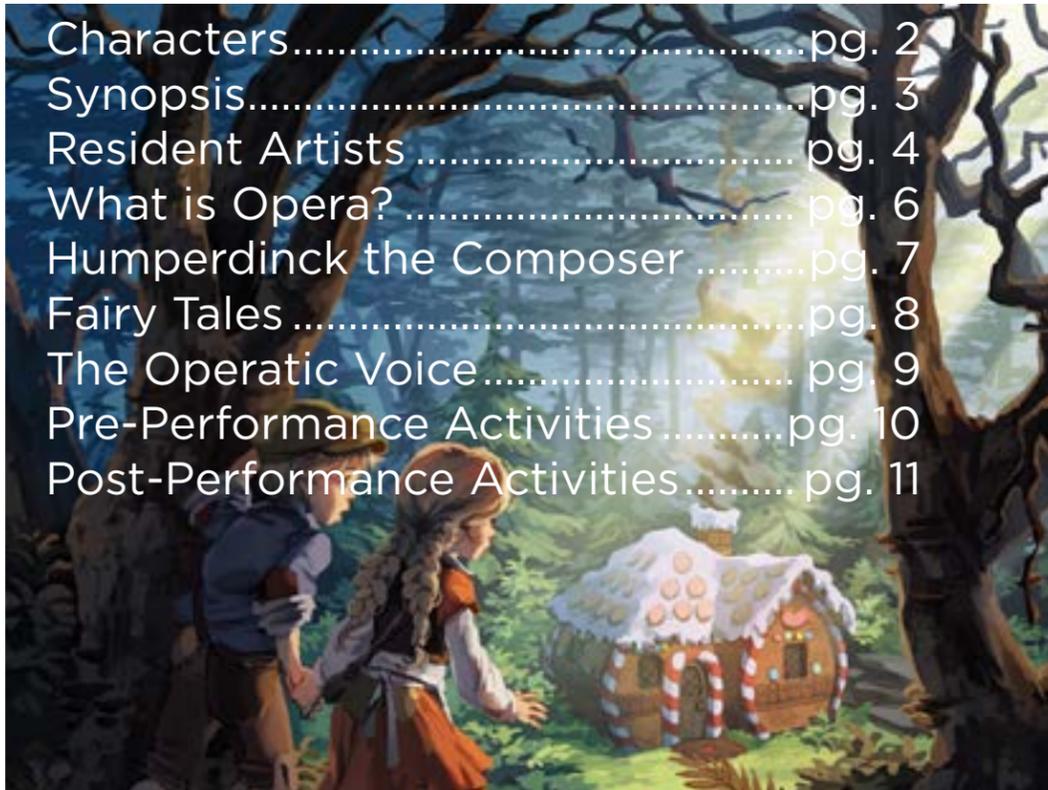


Music by Engelbert Humperdinck

Directed by James M. Norman

Created for Toledo Opera by Joshua Borths

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Cast of Characters

- Gretel, sister of Hansel
- Hansel, brother of Gretel
- Older Hansel, grown up brother of Gretel
- Father, parent to Hansel and Gretel
- Witch, magical woman of the forest
- Tom Thumb, magical character of the forest
- Sandman, magical character of the forest

Synopsis

Setting: A Bavarian Forest

Prologue:

Meet Hansel, now a man, as he invites the audience to hear the story of what happened...what really happened when he and his sister met the Witch in the woods.

Scene 1: Inside Hansel and Gretel's House

Hansel and Gretel are hungry, and though they are supposed to be doing their chores and homework while their father is away, they decide instead to distract themselves by telling stories of Tom Thumb and the Sandman. As the chaos begins, they start dancing and destroying everything in the house. Just then, their father arrives from a hard day's work and sees the mess they've made. He becomes angry and won't let his children explain. Gretel confronts him and says they will run away and never come back. Gretel grabs the basket of food brought by her father and Hansel and Gretel escape. Their father calls to them as they disappear in the woods.

Interlude #1:

Older Hansel enters and laments how they treated their father. As he introduces the scary forest, the scene transitions behind him.

Scene 2: The Forest

Hansel and Gretel are lost in the woods. They have started leaving a trail of breadcrumbs to make sure they don't get more lost. However, they realize that a bird has been eating their precious bread-trail! They are devastated when the bird then begins to talk. He reveals that he is actually Tom Thumb, and since he understands what it's like to be treated as a kid his whole life, he has devoted himself to feeding children in need. When he heard of an evil Witch in the woods, he went and confronted her, but she magically turned him into a bird. He is now shooed away from every child he tries to help, and no one heeds his warnings against the Witch. Hansel and Gretel are outraged by this story and pledge to do something about it. Tom Thumb (as a bird) is delighted and recruits his magical friend, the Sandman, to protect them through the night. Tom will also go find Hansel and Gretel's father and will help them fight the Witch. Hansel and Gretel, alone once more, sing a song their parents taught them. At this moment, the Sandman appears. He creates a magical circle around them to protect them and puts them to sleep.

Interlude #2:

Older Hansel describes how he and Gretel fell asleep, protected by the Sandman's magical circle. The scene transitions...

Scene 3: The Gingerbread House in the Forest

A magical gingerbread house has appeared. Gretel hears a voice welcoming them and thinks it is the Witch and they need to stay within the protective circle. However, Hansel thinks it is a part of the Sandman's protection and, very hungry, steps outside of the magic circle and eats a cookie. The Witch appears and is delighted with the children. Gretel, while trying to protect her brother, steps out of the magic circle and the Witch can now control both children with the use of her magic broom, freezing them in place and putting Hansel in a cage for fattening up. As the Witch enchants Gretel, Gretel learns the Witch's magic spell, frees herself, and grabs the Witch's broom (unbeknownst to the Witch). As the Witch tries to have Gretel put cookies into the oven, Gretel tricks the Witch by convincing her to give a demonstration of how to use the oven. While the Witch is distracted, Gretel frees Hansel. They begin to sing their song from the woods to make them brave and they push the Witch toward the oven and down the Witch goes.

Interlude #3:

Older Hansel freezes the scene. He informs the audience that this isn't really how everything went down. "Isn't it funny how rumors get started? What happened in real life was far more interesting..."

Finale: What Really Happened

We rewind to Gretel freeing Hansel from the cage. They are still scared, so they start to sing the song their parents taught them, the one they sang in the woods. Looking up, the Witch stops them: "Wait, I know that song!" They tell her that their parents taught it to them. The Witch says that her parents taught her the same song. She also got lost in the woods, but her parents gave up on looking for her. Since then, she has wanted all children to suffer as she did. Hansel and Gretel suggest that she change her ways with their help. Like Tom Thumb, she should use her magic to feed and protect children. Father and Tom Thumb appear and learn that the Witch is now a force for good. Older Hansel sums up all these good things, and then Hansel, Gretel, and the Witch sing about how their big, new family will work to help those in need.

Resident Artists 2019-2020

Caroline Miller, soprano, Gretel



Caroline Miller is an innovative and theatrical singer with a particular interest in contemporary opera, operetta, and film. She appeared with Ohio Light Opera as Phyllis (*Iolanthe*), Mascha (*The Chocolate Soldier*), and the dramatic diva Bellabruna (*Blossom Time*). Ms. Miller appears on the only contemporary professional recording of *Blossom Time*, produced by Albany Records. Opera News lauded her portrayal of Bellabruna, writing “Miller projects all the confident insouciance of a pampered prima donna.” She is a co-founder of The Pleiades Project, which tells women’s stories and brings opera to new audiences through film. Ms. Miller starred in the short-film *Così*, which was named an official selection in the NY Indie Theatre Film Festival. She holds a Master of Music in Vocal Performance from the Eastman School of Music and a Bachelor of Arts from Washington University in St. Louis.

Mary Cloud, mezzo soprano, Hansel



Mary Cloud is a mezzo-soprano from Atlanta, Georgia and is thrilled to join the Toledo Opera as their mezzo-soprano Resident Artist for the 2019-2020 season. Ms. Cloud performed the role of Despina (*Così fan tutte*) at the Hawai’i Performing Arts Festival and the Metro Detroit Opera Workshop. She also sang the role of the Second Lady (*Die Zauberflöte*) at the Hawai’i Performing Arts Festival. Also at home in the world of musical theater, Ms. Cloud performed the role of Ladybug in Pasek and Paul’s *James and the Giant Peach* at Tulane Summer Lyric Theater in New Orleans. Ms. Cloud was recently a member of the New Orleans Opera Chorus and performed with the company’s Opera on Tap chapter. She holds degrees from Loyola University, New Orleans (MM) and Indiana University, Bloomington (BM).

Jaewook Lee, tenor, Witch Tom Thumb



Jaewook Lee, tenor and native South Korean, received a BM from Seoul National University and a Diploma and a Master’s degree from Southern Methodist University. His operatic roles while at SMU included Don Basilio (*Le nozze di Figaro*), The Mayor (*Albert Herring*), Count Belfiore (*La finta giardiniera*) and Sam Polk (*Susannah*). He sang the role of Tamino (*The Magic Flute*) at the Amalfi Coast Music Festival in Naples, Italy, Nemorino in the Dallas Opera’s outreach production of *The Elixir of Love* and Alfredo (*La traviata*) at Opera in the Ozarks. Mr. Lee was a finalist in 2012 and 2014 at the Dallas Opera Guild Vocal Competition and 2014 at the McCammon Voice Competition and won fourth place at NATS. He just finished his Artist Diploma program at Texas Christian University where he performed the roles of Don José (*La tragédie de Carmen*), Fenton (*Falstaff*), Lysander (*A Midsummer Night’s Dream*) and Rinuccio (*Gianni Schicchi*).

Rahim Mandal, baritone, Older Hansel, Sandman



American baritone Rahim Mandal, who is known for his vocal power and charismatic presence, is thrilled to be one of Toledo Opera’s Resident Artists for the 2019-2020 season. Recently, Mr. Mandal was seen singing Usciere (*Rigoletto*) with New Orleans Opera. Other professional engagements include the Big Bad Wolf in Samuel Barber’s *Little Red Riding Hood* with New Orleans’ MetroPelican Opera Company’s outreach program, Wagner (*Faust*) with Natchez Music Festival, and Aeneas (*Dido and Aeneas*) with Teatro Lirico in Havana, Cuba. Mr. Mandal has also been a soloist for many concerts including a benefit concert of Faure’s *Requiem*. Mr. Mandal holds two degrees in vocal performance, a Bachelor of Arts from Loyola University New Orleans and a Master of Arts in Music from Florida State University.

Emily Morin, pianist



Pianist Emily Morin explores her interest in a wide range of repertoire through performances in the United States and abroad. Currently based in the Toledo, OH area, she collaborates frequently with vocalists, instrumentalists, and composers. Her most recent projects include instrumental chamber music recitals in Ohio and Massachusetts. She and Nicholas Kottman, baritone, were awarded first prize in the 2019 Dr. Marjorie Conrad Art Song Competition at Bowling Green State University. During the past several summers, she has participated in the soundSCAPE Composition and Performance Exchange (Cesena, Italy), the Corfu Summer Piano Institute (Corfu, Greece), the Amalfi Coast Music and Arts Festival (Maiori, Italy), and the Atlantic Music Festival (Waterville, Maine). Ms. Morin holds Master of Music degrees in Piano Performance and Collaborative Piano from Bowling Green State University and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Music from Providence College (Providence, RI).4

What is Opera?

Opera is a theatrical drama or comedy told in music through powerful, unamplified voices no-microphones used. Opera combines several art forms—vocal and instrumental music, theater, drama, visual art and often dance—into one complete theatrical experience.

The Basic Elements of Opera

Singing Is The Primary Method Of Expression. The most defining aspect of opera is that the majority of lines are sung instead of spoken. The characters express their thoughts and feeling in song rather than speech. Because it usually takes longer to sing something than to say it, however, the action may sometimes seem slower than in a play. Occasionally, even in an opera, characters may speak rather than sing, but the vast majority of lines will be sung.

Opera Combines Many Different Art Forms. Much of the excitement of opera comes from its use of multiple art forms. Opera combines singing, acting, orchestral music, poetry, dance, mime, theatrical scenery, costumes and lighting in a unique art form all its own. The word “opera” itself is an Italian word derived from the Latin word “opus,” which means work (as in work of art).

An Opera Tells A Story. As in a play, opera is performed on a stage with scenery, props and lighting, by actors wearing costumes, make-up and wigs to create a specific character, time, and place. While the actors sing their lines they are accompanied by a piano, small instrumental ensemble, or even a full orchestra, that may be either to the side of the stage or beneath the stage in the orchestra “pit.” Opera stories come from many different sources: mythology, the Bible, fairy tales, literary classics and history. Operas may be about mythological gods, historic heroes, royalty, or ordinary people from the past or present. The words sung in an opera are written down in a libretto (Italian for “little book”). The libretto is sometimes sung in a language other than English, depending on the nationality of the composer and librettist (the author of the libretto).

The Music In An Opera Reflects The Mood And Events In The Story. The addition of music to telling a story tends to greatly increase the emotional intensity of a performance. Even if you cannot understand the words being sung, the music provides many clues. It reflects a character’s feelings; it hints at a turn in the plot; it may even describe an event (a storm, for example). If something sad or frightening is about to happen, you may hear a warning in the music before the action takes place.

An Opera Is Structured Like A Play. Most operas begin with an overture, which is an introductory piece of instrumental music that often presents musical themes heard in the opera. As in a play, an opera is divided into one or more acts and various scenes that contain a mixture of arias (one singer), duets (two singers), ensembles (more than two singers, such as trios, quartets, etc.), scenes with a chorus, and sung dialogue called recitative.

The Creative Team: Career Possibilities

Many people work together to create an opera production. Members of the creative team include the singers, the conductor, the stage director, and the designers (sets, lighting, costumes, wig and make-up). These careers often involve many years of study and hard work to master.

The Conductor. The conductor communicates information about the music and the timing of the show to the singers on the stage and to the orchestra through the gestures he or she makes, often using a baton. The conductor is usually addressed using the Italian term, as “Maestro” or “Maestra.” The conductor trains for his/her work just like the singers. He or she must have a broad knowledge of singing, the orchestra, and music in general. The orchestral score, with approximately twenty staves (individual lines) of music, must be studied and mastered long before rehearsals even begin. The conductor uses the score as a guide as he or she coaches the singers and the orchestra toward a performance.

The Stage Director. An operatic stage director faces all the challenges of a theatrical stage director, plus a few special concerns. The opera must be staged to obtain the greatest emotional effect by moving the singers about with a natural flow that enhances the meaning of the story without interfering with the music. The composer has built the framework within which the stage director must work. Entrances, duets, fights, exits, shipwrecks, and all other stage “business” must take place within a specified number of measures or beats. Action must be compressed or extended as written by the composer. Like a conductor, a stage director must be completely familiar with the musical score. He or she must know Italian, French, German, or whatever language is being sung, as well as have a working knowledge of everything and everyone both on stage and backstage. He or she is also often the person working with the designers to make sure everything on stage is a cohesive whole.

The Designers. Every element the audience sees on stage (the sets, the costumes, the lights, the wigs and make-up) requires a person with special skills to plan and implement how that element is going to enhance the story of the opera. Set designers create sets that transport the audience to a different time and place, and that remain light enough to move

around during scene changes and small enough to store in the theaters “wings” (space off to the side of the stage, out of the audience’s view). Costume designers must make each character unique through what they wear. Lighting designers take a theater that is normally completely dark and use electric light and color to create different settings (night vs. day) and moods (energized, spooky, etc.), and to draw the audience’s attention to different characters or locations on stage. Wig and Make-up designers can adjust an actor’s age, hairstyle, add distinguishing marks like scars and tattoos, and help further tailor the unique impression each character’s appearance makes on the audience.

The Singers. Singers are often hired to sing a role a year or more in advance and, in the world of professional opera, must have their roles memorized before the first rehearsal. If the role is new to them they need to not only learn all their notes but also all the words to their role, often in a foreign language. In addition, singers must learn the parts of the singers and orchestra around them so they’ll know how those elements relate to their own role. Voice teachers help singers with their vocal technique and vocal coaches help them with language, musical style, and character development. Coaches also play the orchestra score on the piano so singers can learn their parts in the context of the whole. Singers are always in the process of learning new roles so that they can work in many places, including other countries. This advanced preparation is crucial because there is rarely much time to rehearse once the cast, conductor, and director are assembled.

Rehearsals/Behind the Scenes

The cast of an opera isn’t assembled until approximately three weeks before the opening night. The singers, who are often chosen by audition, come from around the country and sometimes the world and may not have met each other before the first rehearsal. The conductor leads them through the music with piano accompaniment, showing them his or her interpretation of tempo and phrasing. The stage director shows them where and when and how to move around the stage and how to interpret the drama. This collaboration of conductor and stage director with the singers brings the opera’s plot and music to life.

The opera is staged in a rehearsal room first, using tape on the floor to let the singers know where sets and stairs will be. It moves to the theater’s stage just a few nights before opening. It is then that the orchestra is brought into the process, along with the technical aspects of theater such as lights, costumes, sets, and make-up. Technically and logistically, the opera usually comes together in just five days.

Once in the theater, a stage manager runs rehearsals. Although invisible to the audience, the stage manager is responsible for coordinating the efforts of the stage crew who work backstage (including props people, lighting people, stage hands, costumers, electricians, carpenters, and more), the singers (helping them time entrances, costume changes, and breaks), and conductor (letting him or her know when everything is ready to begin). Video and audio monitors make it possible to see the conductor and hear the orchestra throughout the backstage areas of the theater, and the stage manager can communicate with the singers in their dressing rooms using a PA system. Everyone must be in the right place, at the right time, in the right costume, holding the right prop through many changes and throughout a long drama that cannot stop once it’s begun.

Given that most operas are around three-hours long, in a foreign language, performed entirely from memory, and involve the coordination of many people and art forms, it is a truly incredible feat that they can be performed with only a few weeks of rehearsal and a few days of work in the theater. It takes a team of extremely skilled, very hard working people for opera to be successful.

Activity

Pre-Performance Class Discussion:

What is an opera? Describe the roles of the many different people who prepare for and perform in an opera. Which role appeals to you as a possible career?

Post-Performance Class Discussion:

Now that you have experienced an opera, would you like to change your opera career choice?

Humperdinck the Composer



Engelbert Humperdinck
1854-1921

Engelbert Humperdinck (1854 – 1921) was a German composer from the Romantic era, best known for his opera, *Hansel and Gretel*.

Humperdinck’s musical career started at a very early age when he began taking piano lessons, and produced his first composition at the age of 7. His first attempt at writing music for the stage came when he was just 13 years old when he attempted to compose singspiel. At 18, he began taking music classes at a Conservatory where he was awarded the opportunity to move to Munich, Germany to continue his studies.

Humperdinck’s musical style was greatly influenced by Richard Wagner. Humperdinck served as Wagner’s assistant in Naples, Italy, when he assisted in Wagner’s production of *Parsifal*.

In 1890, Engelbert Humperdinck originally composed four songs to accompany a puppet show his nieces were giving him at home. After his sister wrote a libretto, Humperdinck composed a singspiel of 16 songs with piano accompaniment which he quickly used to begin working on a complete orchestration. This orchestration turned into *Hansel and Gretel!*

Singspiel is a form of German-language music drama which is now considered a genre of opera. It is characterized by spoken dialogue, which is alternated with ensembles, songs and arias. Singspiel plots are generally comic or romantic in nature, and frequently involve elements of magic, fantastical creatures, and comically exaggerated characterizations of good and evil. Not unlike *Hansel and Gretel!*

Hansel and Gretel premiered in 1893, under the baton of Richard Stauss. Since then, *Hansel and Gretel* has always been Humperdinck’s most popular work. The Royal Opera House in London chose it for their first complete radio opera broadcast, and it was the first opera transmitted live from the Metropolitan Opera.

The Romantic Era was a literary, musical, artistic, and intellectual movement in the late 18th century to mid-19th century. Taking a turn away from the Enlightenment, where emotion was tempered and logic reigned supreme, Romanticism emphasized affect, fantasy, and individualism. In opera, the move from the Enlightenment meant a new emphasis on emotion. Some composers found more expressive techniques to tell their stories (bigger voices, bigger orchestras, more epic narratives), creating more equality between vocal and instrumental elements. In the Romantic Era, the orchestra was the most important part of the opera.

Fairy Tales

THE MAGICAL WORLD OF FAIRY TALES



Hansel and Gretel. (Image: No known copyright restrictions / copyright expired. Grimm, Jacob and Wilhelm; The Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm; Mrs. Edgar Lucas, translator; Arthur Rackham, illustrator; London: Constable & Company Ltd, 1909.)

Contrary to what many may think, fairy tales were not originally intended for children. In fact, many of the fairy tales we know and love today were originally harrowing stories with gruesome endings that were told mainly by adults to other adults. For thousands of years, these stories were passed along only by word-of-mouth, changing gradually along the way. By the time the versions of fairy tales we are familiar with came to be, they had changed drastically from their original form. It wasn't until people began to write them down that fairy tales became popular with children.

One of the first people to record fairy tales in writing was a 17th century French writer named Charles Perrault. Perrault was born into a wealthy Parisian family in 1628, and was able to attend the best schools during his youth before becoming a lawyer as an adult.

In 1697, he wrote *Tales from Times Past*, along with *Morals: Tales of Mother Goose*, which earned him great popularity. Among his most famous fairy tales, we find *Blue Beard*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Puss in Boots*, and *Cinderella*. Now remember: Perrault did not make up these stories himself. Many of these tales were already well-known across France. Perrault simply wrote them down with great wit and charm that has been popular with children and adults for many generations.

After Perrault, the Brothers Grimm were the next writers to become well-known for recording fairy tales in written form. Many children may know the story of *Hansel and Gretel* from *Grimm's Fairy Tales*. Eventually, that tale

made its way to the stage as an opera by Engelbert Humperdinck. In 1890, Humperdinck began composing a singspiel consisting of 16 songs, using a libretto that was devised by his sister, Adelheid Wette. *Hansel and Gretel* includes nursery rhymes that are well known to German children. The opera was an immediate success and has since been translated into many different languages.

Fairy Tale

The term "fairy tale" originated during the 17th century as French writers coined the phrase "conte de fee." You may be wondering why these stories are called "fairy tales" in the first place. It is difficult to know for certain, but many people think that it is because female characters typically possessed the magical powers in these stories, and women with magical powers were equated to fairies.

The Operatic Voice

Being an opera singer is hard work! Singers need to be physically strong and have superb technique in order to sustain long phrases (musical thoughts): this means they have excellent control of both the inhalation and exhalation of their breath. Likewise, their voices must maintain a resonance (using the cavities in the face to increase the audibility of the voice, even when singing quietly) in both the head (mouth, sinuses) and chest cavities. All this resonance is necessary to achieve the volume required to be heard above the orchestra that accompanies the singers. Opera singers do not usually use microphones, so they must project their voices throughout a whole theatre using only their muscles and technique! All voices are defined by both the actual voice "type" and the selection of repertoire for which the voice is ideally suited. The range, pitch, and tone of a singer's voice will determine what kind of role they will play in the opera. Below are a list of the voice types (and ranges) commonly found in operas:

Female Voice Types

• Soprano ("sopra" = "over")

The highest pitched female voice. Soprano voices vary by sound type: there are coloratura sopranos, who can sing very high notes and rapid passages with ease, dramatic sopranos, whose voices have great power, and lyric sopranos, whose voices have exceptional beauty and can sustain long passages. Composers often (but not always) write the female lead role in an opera for a soprano.



• Mezzo-Soprano ("mezzo" = "medium")

Lower than the soprano and higher than contralto. Usually plays either the character of a young boy (this is called a trouser role) or a complex character with energy and awareness of life, or an evil character. Bizet's *Carmen* is one of the most famous mezzo roles in opera, and is a rare lead role for a mezzo.



• Contralto ("contra" = "against" & "alto" = "high")

The lowest pitched female voice, these singers have a deep, well rounded sound. Contraltos more rare than sopranos or mezzos, and they are usually given the role of a maid, mother, or grandmother. Olga in Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* is one such role.



Male Voice Types

• Tenor ("tenere" = "to hold" - central notes of harmony)

The highest sounding male voice: often the leading role. Tenors, like sopranos, can have lyric or dramatic sound quality. Luciano Pavarotti was one of the world's most famous lyric tenors. Tenors typically play characters that fall in love with Sopranos, such as Alfredo in Verdi's *La Traviata*.



• Baritone (from the Greek term for "deep sounding")

These voices are more mellow-sounding and slightly lower than tenors. The roles sung by baritones are usually father figures or counts and other nobles, and these are often important roles in the story (like Rigoletto in Verdi's *Rigoletto*).



• Bass ("low")

Basses are the lowest sounding human voices, and they often play roles of wise and older characters in opera, like kings, emperors, or gods. They can also play profoundly evil characters, like Satan in *Mephistopheles* or *Faust*. The basso profundo is the lowest voice in singing, and is commonly heard in Russian opera. One of the most recognizable bass roles in opera is Leporello in W.A. Mozart's *Don Giovanni*.



Class Activities

Pre-Performance:

Grades K-5:

On Being Lost: Class Discussion

Describe a time when you were lost. How did you feel? How did it turn out?

Design a Promotional Poster

Create a poster to promote the upcoming performance of *Hansel and Gretel vs the Witch*. Display the poster in your school a week before the performance.

Grades 5-8:

On Fairy Tales: Class Discussion

What do you know about fairy tales? Can you remember the names of any? What do you know about the story of *Hansel and Gretel*?

Music Listening Activity

Before writing *Hansel and Gretel*, Humperdinck had been invited to Bayreuth to help Richard Wagner with his production of *Parsifal*. Humperdinck leapt at this opportunity to learn firsthand the inner workings of Wagner's methods of opera composition and production. *Hansel and Gretel* is Wagnerian in a number of important ways. Humperdinck uses musical phrases that are repeated in similar circumstances, like Wagner's leitmotifs.

Folk tunes play an important role in *Hansel and Gretel*. They ground the sometimes-fantastical plot in the world of real, flesh and blood people. The simple folk tunes within the complex musical world of Humperdinck's writing are part of what make the opera accessible to young audiences. The folk tunes are immediately hummable and are often excerpted from the opera and taught in elementary school music classes or published in beginning music books.

The first performance of *Hansel and Gretel* took place on December 23, 1893, in Weimer's Hoftheater. It was originally scheduled to premiere nine days earlier in Munich, but the singer scheduled to play Gretel, Hanna Borchers, fell ill. Another illness, this time of the singer playing Hansel in Weimer, caused a shift in casting. The soprano slated to play Gretel switched to Hansel, while another singer took over the part of Gretel on short notice. Richard Strauss, who had declared the score a masterpiece when he first saw it, conducted. The premiere was not perfect. In addition to the casting difficulties, the orchestral parts for the overture had not yet arrived in Munich, and the performance was played without it.

Despite its inauspicious beginning, the opera was received well, and it was taken on the rounds of theaters throughout Germany. Its rapid progress was helped along by the creation of a *Hansel and Gretel* touring company in 1894. In Berlin, even the emperor enjoyed the opera. Soon theaters in other countries began to put on productions of *Hansel and Gretel*. In Germany, the opera is generally associated with Christmastime, but it is performed throughout the year worldwide. Because *Hansel and Gretel* is meant to be experienced by children, it is often performed in the vernacular. Its first English-language translation was performed in 1894 and there have been many since, including Toledo Opera On Wheels' current production.

Listening Activity

Listen to *Hansel and Gretel*'s Act I duet: "Little brother, dance with me" from the Pittsburgh Opera's production and review the discussion questions below. https://youtu.be/OUqjq_lIgl0

- If there were no lyrics in this excerpt, how might you be able to tell that the song is about dancing?
- When *Hansel and Gretel* are giving each other dancing instructions, what do you notice about the "action words" (clap, click, nick)? Does the repetition of the words have an effect on the music?
- Does there seem to be a pattern in the music? Specifically, listen for the repeated melody or tune that repeats several times with different words.
- Do you notice any changes in the melody? How would you describe these changes?
- As the piece continues, how would you describe how *Hansel and Gretel* are interacting with one another? Are they loving siblings? Are they playing and poking fun at each other?

Class Activities

Post-Performance:

Grades K-5:

Main Idea: Class Discussion

What do you think is the main idea or main theme of *Hansel and Gretel vs the Witch*?

On Being Lost: Class Discussion

How did *Hansel and Gretel*'s experience of being lost differ from your own ideas about what to do when you are lost?

Grades 5-8:

Personal Response: Class Discussion or Writing

How do *Hansel and Gretel*'s feelings, emotions or experiences in the opera relate to your own life?

At what point(s) in the opera would you have acted differently than *Hansel and Gretel*?

What do you think is the main theme or moral of the *Hansel and Gretel vs the Witch* story?

Grades K-8:

Fan Letters

Using the words in the word bank below, write a letter to one or more of the performers from *Hansel and Gretel*. What did you like most? What did the music sound like? Did the singers use props or costumes to help tell the story? Who was your favorite performer? If you prefer, draw your favorite part of the performance. Give the letter or the drawing to your teacher to send back to Toledo Opera.

WORD BANK

Hansel

Puppets

Witch

Gretel

Father

Sandman

Acting

Singing

Forest

Candy

Opera