

**San Francisco Conservatory of Music  
Opera & Musical Theater Program**

# ***Hansel and Gretel***

**Music by Engelbert Humperdinck  
Libretto by Adelheid Wette  
English Translation by Marcie Stapp**

**Heather Mathews, *director*  
Curt Pajer, *conductor***

Thursday, November 18, 2021, 7:30 pm  
Friday, November 19, 2021, 7:30 pm  
Caroline H. Hume Concert Hall

# Cast

---

Role	November 18	November 19
Hansel	Alexandra Sanchez	Leora Gilgur
Gretel	Jayne Diliberto	Cassi Gardner
Mother/Gertrude	Sydnee Johnson	Whitney Campbell
Father/Peter	Dante Mireles	Kurt Winterhalter
The Witch	Megan Mateosky	Melissa Dufort
The Sandman	Gabriela Linares	Gabriela Linares
The Dew Fairy	Mackenzie Jacquemin	Cassie Dixon
Chorus	San Francisco Girls Chorus	
Witch's Helper	Michelle Skylar	
Witch's Helper	Allegra Kelly	

## Members of SFGC Chorus School Level IV

Sofia Alling	Sierra Valencia Lyon
Gloria Cebrian	Magdalena Sambajon Mercado
Julia Howe	Vighuti Singh
Rebecca Jia	Shiva Swaminathan Strickland
Aram Kim	Anayah Tin
Francisca Li	Venus Yu

## Acknowledgements

The Opera Program would like to thank Elaine Robertson and the entire staff and performers of the San Francisco Girls Chorus for their collaboration.

We would also like to thank Marcie Stapp for her participation and guidance in our production.

Thank you to Carrie Weick and Katherine Baltrush of the San Francisco Opera for their help with the orchestral materials.

# Orchestra

---

## **Violin I**

Clara Schubilske, *concertmaster*  
Anna Nordmoe  
Cuna Kim  
Mingyue Xia

## **Violin II**

Aleksi Zaretsky  
Xingyu Guan  
Archer Brown  
Xiaoman Ke

## **Viola**

Ricardo Ibarra  
James Nelson  
Laura Huey

## **Cello**

Clark Evans  
Julian Bennett

## **Bass**

Alexandria Kelley  
Audrey Giancaterino

## **Flute/Piccolo**

Hyejung Baik

## **Oboe/English Horn**

Andrew Port

## **Clarinet I**

Lindsey Ha

## **Clarinet II/Bass Clarinet**

Caleb Rose

## **Bassoon**

Nicolle Souza

## **Horn I**

Gretchen Bonnema

## **Horn I Asst.**

Seth Shumate

## **Horn II**

Ben Engelmann

## **Trumpet**

Jacob Merrill

## **Bass Trombone**

Jason Hebert\*

## **Harp**

Vicki Chen

## **Timpani**

Connor Yeackley

## **Percussion**

Adrienne Anaya  
Jeremy Smith

\* indicates guest artist

Orchestral edition by Bryan Higgins, by arrangement with Motet Music Publishing Company.

## **Fall Opera Theater Production Staff**

---

Scenic Designer	Peter Crompton
Costume Designer	Robert Horek
Lighting Designer and Technician	Cassie Barnes
Wigs and Makeup Designer	Heather Sterling
Stage Manager	Diana Bodie
Assistant Director	Sergey Khalikulov
Hair and Make-up Artists	Berenice Gallegos

Scenery engineered and built at Rooster Productions, LLC, Richmond, CA

## **Fall Opera Theater Music Staff**

---

Associate Conductor	Dana Sadava
Musical Preparation	Dana Sadava Sun Ha Yoon Emily Senturia
Supertitle Operator	Connor Buckley

## **SFCM Artistic Operations Staff**

---

Associate Dean of Artistic Operations	Hank Mou
Manager of Ensemble Operations	Abbey Springer
Assistant Ensemble Manager & Librarian	Sydney Apel
Senior Director of Recording Services	Jason O'Connell
Studio Manager	Cory Todd
Director of Production Services	John Jaworski
Director of Concert Operations	Chris Ramos
Concert Operations Manager	Ann-Marie Daniels

# Opera & Musical Theater Program Staff

---

Chair and Associate Director of Opera & Musical Theater	Heather Mathews
Musical and Managing Director of Opera & Musical Theater	Curt Pajer
Professor of Opera <i>Carol Franc Buck Endowed Chair</i>	Jose Maria Condemi
Director, Musical Theater Ensemble	Michael Mohammed
Opera Pianists and Coaches	Dana Sadava Emily Senturia Sun Ha Yoon Robert Mollicone
Musical Theater Music Directors	Michael Horsley Lauren Mayer
Costume Coordinator	Robert Horek
Graduate Assistants	Jackson Allen Diana Bodie Kyle Tingzon

# San Francisco Girls Chorus Staff

---

Artistic Director	Valérie Sainte-Agathe
SFGC Chorus School Level IV Director	Dr. Anne Hege
Choral Preparation	Tonia D'Amelio

# Synopsis

---

## **ACT I**

Once upon a time, there was a family who had fallen on very hard times. They had no money and no food to eat. One day while their parents were out, Hansel and Gretel were left at home to complete their daily chores. Overcome with hunger, Gretel reminds Hansel to be grateful for what they have. The children begin to sing and dance to try and forget their sorrows. Their mother arrives back at home and interrupts their fun to scold them for not completing their work. She then sends them into the woods to search for berries. The mother laments over the hunger of her family.

While the children are off in the woods, their father, a woodcutter, returns home with baskets of food having had a successful day at the market. The parents discuss their children's mischief. When the father discovers that they are wandering about the Ilsenstein woods at night he worries for their safety knowing that an evil witch that enchants children and eats them lives deep within the woods. The parents vow to go and search for their children.

## **ACT II**

While in the Ilsenstein, Gretel collects flowers while Hansel gathers berries; however, as they play, hunger overtakes them and they begin to eat them all. They soon realize that it is dark, and they are lost. In the distance, they hear voices calling for them. Suddenly, a magic Sandman comes upon them, shares a cup of comforting chamomile tea with the children, and tells how his tea can make children fall asleep and dream happily. Hansel and Gretel say the prayer that their father has taught them before they go to sleep. During their slumber they are surrounded by candlelight and visions of nourishing food.

## **ACT III**

As dawn breaks, the Dew Fairy, fueled by a sweetened cup of coffee, finds Hansel and Gretel and wakes them up. Both Hansel and Gretel had wonderful dreams and slept soundly. They soon discover that they had the same dream of beautiful angels. The children come upon a tremendous cake cottage, and they decide to taste it. Suddenly the Witch

# Synopsis

---

emerges from the cake house after hearing the children's munching. The Witch grabs hold of the children and places them under a spell. The Witch convinces the children that she is courteous to her guests but places Hansel in a cage and puts Gretel to work.

Hansel and Gretel fear the Witch, but Hansel warns Gretel that they must follow her orders and watch her closely to learn her tricks. The Witch gloats about her evil plan to fatten up the children and bake them into gingerbread. The Witch then starts her plan by telling Gretel to check on the muffins by sticking her head in the oven. Gretel wittily asks the Witch to demonstrate first. They then shove the Witch into the oven and celebrate their victory. The Witch's helpers and fellow children are set free as Hansel and Gretel have broken the Witch's spell. Their mother and father arrive and rejoice, as their children have been found safe and learned a valuable lesson.

The End.

# Program Notes

---

## *Hansel and Gretel (1893)*

### Engelbert Humperdinck

Born: September 1st, 1854; Kingdom of Prussia.

died: September 27th, 1921; Neustrelitz, German Republic.

Instrumentation: solo vocalists, children's chorus, women's chorus, flute, 2 oboes, 3 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, 2 bass drums, castanets, cuckoo instruments, cymbals, glockenspiel, tambourine, tam tam, triangle, xylophone, harp, and strings.

Engelbert Humperdinck showed musical promise from a young age, but at the insistence of his parents, studied architecture. However, his love for music persisted, and only after a year of architecture, he made the permanent switch to music. Humperdinck, a longtime admirer of Richard Wagner, met the elder German composer in Italy. Wagner quickly took the younger composer under his wing, recruiting Humperdinck to assist on some of his later operas. While Humperdinck yearned to create a sound unique from his mentor, he remained close to Wagner and would be greatly shaken by his death in 1883. *Hansel and Gretel*, Humperdinck's first and most popular opera, was incredibly well-received with fans ranging from musicians and composers to the German Emperor himself. Richard Strauss declared the score a masterpiece when he first heard it, and eventually conducted its official premiere.

*Hansel and Gretel* started as a collection of four folk songs based on the Brother's Grimm fairytale, composed by Humperdinck for a private family performance. It was met with such enthusiasm that Humperdinck later enlarged it to become a sixteen song singspiel, which he would present to his fiancée as an engagement present. Eventually, Humperdinck and his sister, Adelheide Wette, teamed up as composer and librettist for the purposes of expanding it into a full opera. Wette adapted the classic fairy tale with a religious focus; the moral of this version is the omnipresence and omniprotection of God. The pair also wanted it to remain accessible to children in its language; the result was a unique combination of dramatic Wagnerian-like style paired with an uncharacteristic happy ending.



# Program Notes

---

Wagner's so-called leitmotif technique, which Humperdinck had the opportunity to absorb while working on a production of *Parsifal* at Bayreuth, is especially prominent in *Hansel and Gretel*. Many of these motifs are introduced in the overture, and come to represent certain characters or themes. For example, the witch's motif appears throughout the opera in the overture and in Act II when the children are lost in the woods. However, the theme only comes to the fore when sung by the witch in her aria. Because they are featured in the orchestration, there is a sense of recognition when the music is finally sung.

Humperdinck's writing also recalls Wagner in its heavy orchestration, which sustains a dense texture of simultaneous thematic material and creates powerful stage effects at many points in the opera. An example of this is Humperdinck's treatment of the forest scene at the opening of the second act; we hear a cuckoo bird singing as the children play and pick strawberries. As the day turns to night and children realize they are lost, the orchestration becomes denser and the vocal lines more chromatic, evoking a sense of fear and foreboding.

This heavy musical language contrasts with the other strong influence in the score: the simple folk tunes Humperdinck's sister requested for the original piece. These remained prominent in the final version, with almost every character singing them at some point. In the opening scene, Gretel sings a folk song to herself as she and her brother work, and later reprises it in the forest. The father has his distinct theme, which is later sung by both the parents as he returns home with food for the starving family. Perhaps the most recognizable one is the "Evening Prayer" where the siblings pray for protection as they sleep in the woods. The familiar melodies of these folk tunes are part of what makes this opera so accessible for children and are found peeking through the density of the orchestration.

Because *Hansel and Gretel* is intended for a young audience, it is usually performed in an appropriate vernacular, its popularity has prompted many translations. While a fairy-tale opera featuring children and fantastical adventures, the piece has a strong emotional and musical heart and continues to be performed worldwide. With lyrical tunes and Romantic orchestrations, this is an accessible, memorable, dramatic work.

# About the San Francisco Girls Chorus

---

Praised by Gramophone Magazine as a “remarkable tapestry of teenage voices,” the five-time GRAMMY Award-winning San Francisco Girls Chorus (SFGC) is recognized as one of the world’s leading youth vocal ensembles. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Valérie Sainte-Agathe, SFGC presents subscription performances throughout the Bay Area and regularly performs both nationally and internationally as a cultural ambassador for San Francisco. SFGC is a frequent collaborator with leading arts organizations such as Kronos Quartet, San Francisco Symphony and San Francisco Opera, as well as numerous world-renowned guest artists.

Over the last year, SFGC has embraced the challenges of distance learning by presenting eight virtual performances, premiering seven new works as well as five commissions, and collaborating with renowned guest artists and ensembles from across the Bay Area, United States and beyond, including Virtual Artists-in-Residence The King’s Singers (Fall 2020), Roomful of Teeth (Spring 2021), and TENET Vocal Artists, among many others. Recent highlights over the past few seasons include debut performances at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. with The Knights and Carnegie Hall with the Philip Glass Ensemble. In September 2019, SFGC released *My Outstretched Hand* on Supertrain Records featuring The Knights and Trinity Youth Chorus, following the success of its February 2018 release, *Final Answer*, featuring Kronos Quartet on Philip Glass’ Orange Mountain Music label.

In addition to its Premier Ensemble, the San Francisco Chorus School is renowned as a regional center for choral music education and performance for girls and young women ages 4-18. Through its innovative Online Learning Program, SFGC has utilized technology to keep its hundreds of choristers engaged and advancing in their musical activities and performing live together from their own homes.

# Upcoming Operas at SFCM

## ***La Clemenza di Tito***

**March 11, 2022 at 7:30 pm**

**March 13, 2022 at 2:00 pm**

**Caroline H. Hume Concert Hall**

Heather Mathews, *producer*

Curt Pajer, *conductor*

## ***The Enchanted Pig***

**April 28, 2022 at 7:30 pm**

**April 29, 2022 at 7:30 pm**

**Caroline H. Hume Concert Hall**

Heather Mathews, *director*

Curt Pajer, *conductor*

For more information, please visit  
[www.sfcm.edu/performance-calendar](http://www.sfcm.edu/performance-calendar)