



ROYAL
OPERA
HOUSE

THE ROYAL OPERA

Music Director
SIR ANTONIO PAPPANO
Director of Opera
OLIVER MEARS

HANSEL AND GRETEL

MÄRCHENSPIEL (FAIRYTALE) IN THREE ACTS

Music **ENGELBERT HUMPERDINCK**
Libretto **ADELHEID WETTE**

Conductor **MARK WIGGLESWORTH**

Director and Designer **ANTONY MCDONALD**
Lighting Designer **LUCY CARTER**
Movement Director **LUCY BURGE**
Associate Set Designer **RICARDO PARDO**
Translation **KELLEY ROURKE**

Orchestra of the Royal Opera House
Concert Master **MAGNUS JOHNSTON**

Co-production with **SAN FRANCISCO OPERA**

Exceptional philanthropic support from

Royal Opera House Principals
JULIA AND HANS RAUSING

Generous philanthropic support from
THE ROYAL OPERA HOUSE ENDOWMENT FUND

FRIDAY 15 DECEMBER 2023 AT 11.30AM

APPROXIMATE TIMINGS

The performance lasts about 2 hours and 15 minutes, with one interval

LANGUAGE

Sung in English with English surtitles

GUIDANCE

Suitable for all ages

CAST

Gretel **ANNA DEVIN**
Hansel **ANNA STÉPHANY**
Gertrud **SUSAN BICKLEY**
Peter **DARREN JEFFERY**
Witch **ROSIE ALDRIDGE**
Sandman **ISABELA DÍAZ***
Dew Fairy **SARAH DUFRESNE***
Echoes **VEENA AKAMA-MAKIA*, SARAH DUFRESNE*,
KIERA LYNNESS, VALENTINA PUSKÁS,
MIRANDA WESTCOTT**

*Jette Parker Artist

Dancers

**DAN COOKE, ALEXANDER FADAYIRO, BIANCA HOPKINS,
HANNAH MACDONALD, SALLY OWEN, AUDREY PAGE,
ROSIE SOUTHALL, SOPHIE TIERNEY, RÓISÍN WHELAN,
LEWIS WILKINS**

The children's chorus is provided by **CARDINAL VAUGHAN
MEMORIAL SCHOOL** and **THE GREY COAT HOSPITAL**,
with special thanks to music directors **SCOTT PRICE** (Cardinal
Vaughan Memorial School) and **KATY AMBROSE** (Grey Coat
Hospital).

PRODUCTION

Music preparation **MARK PACKWOOD, SUSANNA
STRANDERS, ANDRÉ CALLEGARO***
Dialect Projection Coach **FELICITY PALMER**
Assistant Directors **DANIELLE URBAS, HARRIET TAYLOR***
Assistant to the Movement Director **RÓISÍN WHELAN**

*Jette Parker Artist



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SYNOPSIS

ACT I

Hansel and Gretel are meant to be working, but are bored and hungry. Gretel tells Hansel that their mother has been given a jug of milk and will make a rice pudding for supper. Hansel tries to steal the cream and Gretel scolds him. Brother and sister decide to stop work, and have some fun. Their mother Gertrud returns home to find them dancing, and is angry. She accidentally knocks over the jug of milk. Now there is no supper, so Gertrud sends the children out into the forest to find strawberries. Gertrud is exhausted and depressed, and worried about her family's poverty.

The children's father Peter returns, cheerful after a successful day's work selling brooms. Gertrud at first suspects he is drunk, but is overjoyed when she sees the vast quantities of food he has purchased. Peter wonders where the children are, and Gertrud explains that she has sent Hansel and Gretel out into the forest. Peter is worried, and tells Gertrud about the terrifying witch who lives there, who lures children into her home to eat them. The parents hurry off to find their children.

ACT II

Gretel makes a garland of flowers while Hansel gathers strawberries. Hansel crowns Gretel queen of the forest. The children hear a cuckoo and mimic it. They pretend to be cuckoos themselves, and feed each other strawberries until they are all gone. Gretel worries that their mother will be angry with them. She tries to look for more berries, but it is too dark.

Hansel and Gretel realize they are lost. The sound of their voices echoing scares them. The tiny Sandman arrives, and soothes the children with a song. Hansel and Gretel become sleepy. They say their evening prayers and fall asleep. Fairy-tale creatures from the forest come to watch over them.

INTERVAL

ACT III

The Dew Fairy arrives to wake up the children. Hansel and Gretel tell each other about their mysterious and marvellous dreams. They now feel ready for anything.

Suddenly the children see a house appear as if by magic. It is partly edible, and they can't resist it. As Hansel and Gretel nibble at the house, they hear a voice, and the Witch emerges. She tells the children that her name is Rosina Leckermaul and invites them in.

When Hansel and Gretel try to run away, the Witch stops them with a spell. She traps Hansel, orders Gretel to lay the table and eagerly anticipates her forthcoming meal.

The Witch decides that Hansel isn't fat enough to eat yet and must be fed. While she does this, Gretel steals her magic wand to free Hansel. The Witch asks Gretel to check how her baking is doing. Gretel pretends that she doesn't know what to do. When the Witch demonstrates, Hansel and Gretel push her into the huge bowl of chocolate mixture.

Children who the Witch trapped and blinded appear. Hansel and Gretel restore their sight by touching them, and Hansel frees them using the Witch's wand. Hansel and Gretel's parents arrive to find their children safe and happy. The family are overjoyed to be together again, and everyone celebrates.

THE ROYAL OPERA

Patron **THE FORMER PRINCE OF WALES**

Music Director **SIR ANTONIO PAPPANO**

Director of Opera **OLIVER MEARS**

Director of Casting **PETER MARIO KATONA**

Administrative Director **CORMAC SIMMS**

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