

Minnesota Orchestra

Sarah Hicks, conductor

Hansel and Gretel

Friday, November 27, 2009, 8 pm	Orchestra Hall
Saturday, November 28, 2009, 8 pm	Orchestra Hall
Sunday, November 29, 2009, 2 pm	Orchestra Hall

Engelbert Humperdinck	<i>Hansel and Gretel: A Fairy Tale Opera in Three Acts</i>	
	Act I: At Home	ca. 30'
	Act II: In the Forest	ca. 30'
	I N T E R M I S S I O N	ca. 15'
	Act III: The Witch's House	ca. 40'

cast (in order of appearance)

Gretel: **Jennifer Baldwin Peden**, soprano
 Hansel: **Christina Baldwin**, mezzo
 Mother: **Lola Watson**, soprano
 Father: **Jeff Madison**, baritone
 Sleep Fairy, Dew Fairy: **Vicki Fingalson**, soprano
 Witch: **Vera Mariner**, soprano

In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre
Sandy Spieler, artistic director and choreographer
Minnesota Boychoir, Mark S. Johnson, artistic director

Robert Neu, director

Joseph Stanley, set design • **Marcus Dilliard**, lighting design • **Kathy Kohl**, costume design
Lisa Smith, stage manager • **Amber Davis**, assistant stage manager/props
Mary Beth Gagner, costume design assistant • **Laurinda Sager Wright**, rehearsal accompanist

thank you

With Friday's concert, we recognize the support of **corporate donors to the Guaranty Fund**.
 With Saturday and Sunday's concerts, we recognize the support of **Travelers**.

Minnesota Orchestra concerts are broadcast live Friday evenings on stations of **Minnesota Public Radio**. The concerts are also featured in **American Public Media's** national programs, **SymphonyCast** and **Performance Today**. Regional broadcasts are supported by the Minnesota Orchestra; **Patterson, Thunte, Skaar and Christensen, P.A.**; **UBS**; and **DTS Digital Entertainment**.



Sarah Hicks, conductor

Sarah Hicks, newly appointed as the Minnesota Orchestra's principal conductor for pops and presentations, has led an increasingly broad range of programs since joining the Orchestra as assistant conductor in 2006. She takes the Orchestra Hall podium this season to conduct the Inside the Classics series, Scandinavian Christmas concerts, pops performances with such artists as Ben Folds, John Pizzarelli and Michael Cavanaugh, and more.

Upcoming: Her commitments this year include guest conducting engagements with the National Symphony Orchestra and others.

Other posts: In September 2009 Hicks was appointed associate conductor of the North Carolina Symphony. In 2007 she completed a two-year tenure as associate conductor of the Richmond Symphony. She was earlier affiliated with the Philadelphia Singers, Reading Symphony Orchestra, Florida Philharmonic and Hawaii Symphony, which she founded in 1991.

Composer/arranger: Hicks originally studied composition; she has written several arrangements for the Orchestra's Scandinavian Christmas concerts.

More: minnesotaorchestra.org.



Jennifer Baldwin Peden, soprano (Gretel)

Jennifer Baldwin Peden is a regular performer on music and theater stages

throughout the Twin Cities. With this Orchestra she has performed on programs including Bizet's *Carmen*, Bernstein's *Mass* and a Casual Classics program of Mozart arias. She last took the Orchestra Hall stage at Inside the Classics concerts in January 2009, performing a song by Fanny Mendelssohn.

Collaborations: She has appeared in productions of numerous companies including the Guthrie Theater, Nautilus Music-Theater, Minnesota Opera, Great American History Theatre, Berkeley Repertory Theatre and Skylark Opera.

Of interest: Peden appeared in the film *Drop Dead Gorgeous* and lent her voice to the acclaimed animated film *Jona/Tomberry*.



Christina Baldwin, mezzo (Hansel)

Christina Baldwin has performed numerous works with the Minnesota Orchestra, including Bernstein's *Mass* and Stephen Paulus' *To Be Certain of the Dawn*, which she also recorded with the Orchestra in 2008. She sang Flora in *La Traviata* at Sommerfest 2008 and performed a song by Fanny Mendelssohn at Inside the Classics concerts in January of this year.

Other credits: She created the role of Myrtle in the Guthrie Theater's world premiere of *The Great Gatsby*, and she has appeared in productions of Theatre de la Jeune Lune, the Minnesota Opera, American Repertory Theater and other companies.

Of interest: In June 2009 she and her sister Jennifer Baldwin Peden premiered *Sister Stories*, four one-act operas commissioned for them by Nautilus Music-Theater.

More: christinabaldwin.net.



Lola Watson, soprano (Mother)

Lola Watson has enjoyed success on national and international opera stages and performs often at Orchestra Hall as a section leader of the Minnesota Chorale. She sang with the Orchestra most recently at Sommerfest 2009, portraying the High Priestess in Verdi's *Aida*.

Opera: Watson made her European debut as Rossane in Handel's *Alessandro* with the Sinfonia Varsovia, a performance that was recorded for release on the Schwann-Koch label. She has performed in nearly 50 productions of the San Francisco Opera and appeared in the Oscar-winning documentary about that company, *In the Shadow of the Stars*.

Of interest: She is also an award-winning interior designer whose work has been featured in local and national publications.

More: lolawatson.com.



Jeff Madison, baritone (Father)

Jeff Madison, who made his Minnesota Orchestra debut in January 2009 as a member of the Street Chorus in Bernstein's *Mass*, has recently been seen in operas on both coasts and in local productions with Skylark Opera and the Minnesota Opera, where he will return this winter as Shaunard in Puccini's *La Bohème*.

Recently: Madison sang Marcello in the West Virginia Symphony's production of *La Bohème* and portrayed the title character in *Falstaff* with UCLA Opera

Theater, among numerous other roles.
Honors: In 2006 he was a Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions district winner as well as a winner of the Schubert Club Scholarship Competition.
Educator: Madison serves on the faculty of the University of Wisconsin-Superior as an instructor of voice.



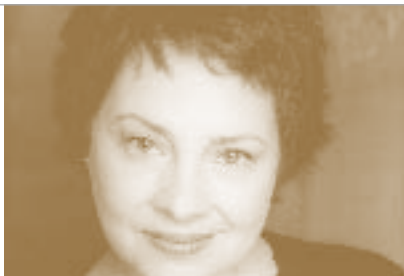
Vicki Fingalson,
soprano (Sleep Fairy and Dew Fairy)

Soprano Vicki Fingalson, now welcomed for her Minnesota Orchestra debut, has captivated local audiences in several productions of the Minnesota Opera including *Casanova's Homecoming* and *The Adventures of Pinocchio*, and in performances with Skylark Opera including *Iolanthe* and *The Red Mill*.

National stages: In addition to her work in Minnesota, she has performed at the Colorado Opera Festival and with the Western Plains Opera, Fargo-Moorhead Opera and West Virginia Symphony Orchestra, among other ensembles.

Awards: She is a two-time district winner of the prestigious Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions.

Educator: Fingalson is an assistant professor of voice at the University of Wisconsin-Superior.



Vera Mariner, soprano (Witch)

Stage veteran Vera Mariner has appeared with theater groups and orchestras across the country. She has appeared frequently with the Minnesota Orchestra in recent seasons, performing major roles in Grieg's *Peer Gynt*, Bernstein's *Mass* and two prior stagings of *Hansel and Gretel*.

Theater: Local audiences have seen her in productions of such companies as the Guthrie Theater, Children's Theatre and Theater Latté Da, where she is an artistic associate.

Concert appearances: Among the major ensembles she has performed with are orchestras of Philadelphia, Houston, Boston and the Orchestra of St. Luke's, as well as the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra.

Other credits: Mariner has appeared in several films including *Womb Music*.

Minnesota Boychoir

Mark S. Johnson, artistic director
Todd Price, accompanist

The Minnesota Boychoir, which appears regularly with the Minnesota Orchestra, was founded in 1962 and is the oldest continually operating boys choir in the Twin Cities. It performed at the Sydney Opera House in 2007 and toured Alaska in June 2009.

Minnesota Orchestra: The choir last appeared at Orchestra Hall in January 2009 in Bernstein's *Mass*; it also recently performed Paulus' *To Be Certain of the Dawn*, Puccini's *La Bohème* and Howard Shore's *Lord of the Rings Symphony*.

Current season: The Boychoir will collaborate with Cantus and the Zenon Dance Company, and it will travel to Oregon for a children's choral festival presented in conjunction with the Oregon Bach Festival.

More: boychoir.org.

minnesota boychoir roster

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| Luke Billota | Florin Gruen |
| Zack Cambronne | Aidan Haarman |
| Jacob Campen | Justin Hanna |
| Joe Chase | Theodore Hanson |
| Patrick Connors | Henry Henson |
| Andrew De Baker | Jack Hoeglund |
| Dawson De Baker | Edward Hoey |
| Jack Dolphin | Samuel Hohenshell |
| Mitchell Evans | William Holmstrom |
| Ethan Ferry | Jordan Hopwood |

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| Gabe Hugh | Robert Nelson |
| Paul Ihlenfeldt | Michael Oasheim |
| Theo Janke-Furman | Steven Oasheim |
| Jordan Johnson | William Olson |
| Robert Kancans | Caleb Sikorra |
| Jakob Kostecki | Josiah Sommer |
| John Kuske | Storm Stewart |
| Andrew Larson | Tyler Strobel |
| Christian Messier | Daniel Vento |
| Nelson Morlock | Eric Wilson |
| Jimmy Morrissey | Nikolai Young |

In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre

Sandy Spieler, artistic director

In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre (HOBT) produces original plays, hosts puppet shows and workshops, leads residencies throughout the Midwest, and produces the annual May Day Parade and Festival in South Minneapolis.

Minnesota Orchestra: HOBT was last featured at Sleigh Ride Young People's Concerts in December 2007.

Upcoming: Its current season includes the holiday show *La Natividad*, Saturday Puppet Shows for Kids, and a guest artist series featuring Twin Cities puppeteers.

Community: Much of HOBT's recent work has focused on water. This past year, artists have worked with communities across Minnesota in open residencies which explored issues of water quality, quantity and ownership through puppetry arts.

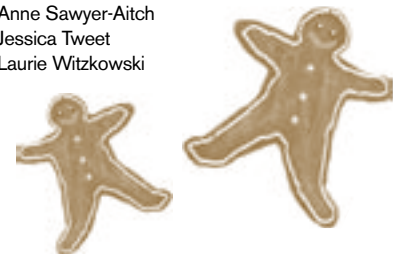
More: hobt.org

puppeteers

- Gustavo Boada
- Julie Boada
- Ramon Cordes
- Peter Erickson
- Chris Griffith
- Masanari Kawahara
- Stacy Lee King
- Maria LaNave
- Blake Love
- Julian McFaul
- Esther Ouray
- Paul Robinson
- Anne Sawyer-Aitch
- Jessica Tweet
- Laurie Witzkowski

puppet designers/builders

- Marie Gardeski
- Julie Kastigar
- Jim Koplin
- Beth Peterson
- Jason Schneider
- Sandy Spieler
- Duane Tougas



Robert Neu, director

Robert Neu has staged numerous presentations with the Minnesota Orchestra, from *La Bohème*, *Tosca* and *La Traviata* to *Candide*, *Peer Gynt* (which he co-adapted) and, most recently, Bernstein's *Mass*. His opera and musical productions have also been seen at numerous additional Minnesota theaters as well as venues in Cincinnati, New York, Virginia and West Virginia.

Upcoming: Neu will direct productions of *Oliver* for Lyric Arts Theater, *Fiddler on the Roof* for St. Cloud's Paramount Theater and *The Merry Widow* for Skylark Opera.

Of interest: Neu holds a master's degree from the Juilliard School.

Joseph Stanley, stage design

Joseph Stanley has designed sets and lighting for a broad range of theater, music and dance companies, including the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts, Children's Theatre Company, Mixed Blood Theatre, Theater Latté Da, Skylark Opera, Mu Performing Arts, SteppingStone Theatre and James Sewell Ballet.

Background: He earned a bachelor's degree from Indiana University and a master's at the University of Minnesota.

Of note: Stanley was a founder and artistic director of 15 Head-A Theater Lab from 1995 to 2004.

Marcus Dilliard, lighting design

Marcus Dillard has created lighting designs for stage productions and operas across North America and Europe. With the Minnesota Orchestra, he has designed lighting for productions of *Candide*, *Falstaff*, *Don Giovanni* and *The Marriage of Figaro*, among others.

Credits: He has designed lighting for productions of the Guthrie Theater, Minnesota Opera, San Diego Opera, Opera Pacific, American Repertory Theater, Boston Shakespeare Company and Athens Festival and other presenters.

Awards: Dilliard won McKnight Artist Fellowships in 1998 and 2006, among other honors.

Kathy Kohl, costume design

Kathy Kohl has designed costumes for prominent Twin Cities theaters for more than 20 years and has been the head costumer at Norcostco since 1997.

Recently: Her work has been seen in the Ordway's staging of *The Sound of Music* as well as recent productions of the Frank Theatre, History Theatre, Jungle Theater, Park Square Theatre, Ten Thousand Things Theater and Theater Latté Da.

Honors: She was named Outstanding Costumer for Smaller Theaters by the *Star Tribune* from 2002 to 2006 and received awards from *Lavender* magazine and the University of Minnesota.

Lisa Smith, stage manager

Lisa Smith last collaborated with the Minnesota Orchestra in January 2009 as assistant stage manager for performances of Bernstein's *Mass*. She was stage manager for *Flower Drum Song* at the Ordway Center and *Yellow Face* at the Guthrie Theater, as well as for several productions with Mu Performing Arts.

Additional credits: Smith was assistant stage manager for productions of *Old Wicked Songs* at the Guthrie and *Passages* with Theater Latté Da.



Hansel and Gretel, illustration by Bill Burgard.



Engelbert Humperdinck

Born: September 1, 1854, Siegburg, near Cologne, Germany

Died: September 27, 1921, Neustrelitz, near Berlin

Hansel and Gretel: A Fairy Tale Opera

The opera *Hansel and Gretel* was an unqualified success from the day of its premiere in 1893. Within a year it had been produced by more than 50 theaters as well as a touring company, and its lovely *Dream Pantomime* was being performed in the U.S. It also became the first complete opera ever to be broadcast on radio (1923, from Covent Garden, London), and it was chosen to inaugurate the Metropolitan Opera's long-running series of live broadcasts, beginning on Christmas Day of 1931.

sister and brother

The lovely tale that has held audiences spellbound for all these years focuses on a pair of siblings, and it is no coincidence that a close brother-sister relationship was also central to the opera's genesis.

Engelbert Humperdinck had won a good number of prizes while studying composition in Cologne and Munich and enjoyed impressive connections, having become part of Wagner's Bayreuth establishment. But true success had eluded him.

Then his younger sister, Adelheid Wette, a writer, asked a favor of him: to provide music for four songs in a little play she had put together, based on the fairy tale of Hansel and Gretel, for her children to perform on her husband's birthday. Everything went as planned, and the charming play took place at the Wette family home in Cologne on May 16, 1890.

Humperdinck's luck was soon to change. A conversation

with Cosima Wagner, the composer's widow, about a fairy tale dramatization she had seen gave him the idea of changing his work into a *Singspiel*, an opera with spoken dialogue. Next he took composer Hugo Wolf's suggestion to enlarge the work into a full-scale opera. When it was premiered at the Weimar Court Opera on December 23, 1893, Richard Strauss, who had conducted, proclaimed it "a masterpiece of the highest quality."

Adelheid Wette's husband Hermann, a writer and physician, had the greatest responsibility for shaping the opera's text. However, largely because of the closeness of Engelbert and Adelheid, who identified with the brother and sister in the story, Adelheid received exclusive credit for the libretto.

beauty and depth

With each transformation—from play with songs to *Singspiel* to opera—*Hansel and Gretel* took on more psychological and emotional depth. Humperdinck was greatly influenced by Wagner, which shows in the opera's rich harmonic language and sumptuous orchestrations. In writing the song tunes, Humperdinck chose the melodic intervals that were familiar to listeners from hymns to create music that seemed both fresh and traditional. He also used several genuine folk songs ("Susie, little Susie" and "There stands a little man in the woods alone") while composing new melodies using patterns similar to those in folk music—and managed this so well that some critics, assuming the opera consisted mainly of folk songs, chided the composer for lack of originality.

Hansel and Gretel abounds with exquisite music. A wonderful horn quartet opens the *Overture*, foreshadowing the prayer of the children as they get ready to sleep in the forest at night. Also famous is the touching *Dream Pantomime*, when protective angels take their places around the children. Expressing playfulness or fear, delight or redemption, Humperdinck's music is as eloquent today as in 1893. It casts a timeless magical spell.

—Program note by **Karen Koepf**,
with thanks to **Michael Steinberg**.



Above: Marie Elba as Hansel and Joanne Douste as Gretel in the opera's first London performance, 1894.

synopsis

act 1: at home

Hansel and Gretel are a brother and sister in a desperately poor family. They are home alone, Hansel sweeping the floor (their father makes and sells brooms to earn a living), Gretel knitting a stocking. Unable to resist the urge to play, they begin to sing and dance. Their mother, Gertrud, comes home and is furious to find the children at play rather than working. In her anger she knocks over a carton of milk brought by a kind neighbor, spilling the milk they would have had for supper.

Gertrud, angry, sends the children out into the forest to pick wild strawberries. Alone and exhausted, she voices her despair, then falls asleep. Her husband, Peter, comes home, jolly because he has sold many brooms at a fair and is bringing sausages, eggs, bacon, butter, all sorts of vegetables, even tea, for his hungry family.

But wait, where are the children? Gertrud explains, and Peter reminds her that in the forest where she has sent Hansel and Gretel, there is a horrible witch who captures and eats children. The parents head out together to find Hansel and Gretel.

act 2: in the forest

After the Orchestra plays a prelude called *The Witch's Ride*, we see Hansel and Gretel as they look for strawberries, singing and playing as they go. But somehow they manage to eat all the berries they have picked. And now that night is falling, it is too dark for them to pick more berries to replace what they have eaten or even to find their way home. They lie down to sleep and the Sleep Fairy comes to sprinkle sleepy-dust into their eyes.

The children pray that angels will come down from heaven to protect them. Their prayer is answered, and angels position themselves around the children as the Orchestra plays the beautiful music known as the *Dream Pantomime*.



act 3: the witch's house

It is morning, and the Dew Fairy comes to wake Hansel and Gretel. With daylight they discover they are close to a little house made of cake and candy, bits of which they break off and eat for their breakfast. Suddenly the Witch emerges from the house. She is delighted—she thinks Hansel and Gretel will make an excellent breakfast.

She casts a spell that prevents the children from moving and goes for a wild ride on her broomstick.

The Witch puts Hansel into a cage, where she plans to keep him while fattening him up. She puts Gretel to work, making her help with the baking. Gretel pretends to be confused and tricks the Witch into showing her how to check on the food in the oven—upon which she shoves the Witch in and slams the door shut. Hansel and Gretel then discover that a wall of gingerbread is actually made of children previously captured by the Witch.

Hansel and Gretel free the gingerbread children. Their parents, who have been searching anxiously for Hansel and Gretel, now arrive, and everyone joins in a prayer of thanksgiving.

Above: The gingerbread house as seen by illustrator Paul O. Zelinsky, in the 1984 Caldecott Honor book *Hansel and Gretel*.