Hansel and Gretel

THE MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA
Courtney Lewis, Conductor

Christina Baldwin, Hansel
Jennifer Baldwin Peden, Gretel
Vera Mariner, The Witch
In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theater

November 30, December 1 & 2, 2011
10:00am and 11:35am each day

The Minnesota Orchestra gratefully acknowledges generous support from:
July 1, 2011

Dear teachers and homeschool educators

Materials follow for the Minnesota Orchestra Young People’s Concert you are attending in December, *Hansel and Gretel*.

Concerts will present highlights of the semi-staged production of this classic children’s opera, in a production designed by the Minnesota Orchestra’s General Manager Robert Neu. The highlighted version you will attend as part of the Young People’s Concert series will feature three characters from the opera: Hansel, Gretel and the Witch, performed by Christina Baldwin, Jennifer Baldwin Peden and Vera Mariner, respectively.

You will also see giant puppets from In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theater as part of the Dream Pantomime section of the opera.

The opera will be sung in English, and will also include English supertitles projected above the stage.

We hope you will enjoy this production, and that you will find these materials helpful in preparing your students!

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MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA
2011-2012 Young People’s Concerts

HANSEL & GRETEL

Table of Contents

Concert Program 4

Performer Section 5

Opera Q & A 7

Who Wrote the Music? 9

What Is the Music About? 10

Teaching Ideas 13

• Explore the Music- Scene 1 18
• Explore the Music- Scene 2 21
• Explore the Music- Scene 3 25
• Extensions 26
MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA
2011-2012 Young People’s Concerts

HANSEL AND GRETEL

Concert Program

Highlights from
Hansel and Gretel
by Engelbert Humperdinck

Courtney Lewis, Conductor
Christina Baldwin, Hansel
Jennifer Baldwin Peden, Gretel
Vera Mariner, The Witch
In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theater

Director: Robert R. Neu
Stage Design: Joseph Stanley
Lighting Design: Marcus Dillard
Costume Design: Kathy Kohl
The Minnesota Orchestra is now in its second century and led by Music Director Osmo Vänskä, ranks among America’s top symphonic ensembles, with a distinguished history of acclaimed performances in its home state and around the world, award-winning recordings, radio broadcasts and educational outreach programs, and a visionary commitment to building the orchestral repertoire of tomorrow.

The 98-member ensemble performs nearly 200 programs each year and its concerts are heard by live audiences of 400,000 annually. Its Friday night performances are broadcast live regionally by Minnesota Public Radio, and many programs are subsequently featured on American Public Media’s national programs, Symphony Cast and Performance Today.

In addition to traditional concerts, the Minnesota Orchestra connects with more than 85,000 music lovers annually through educational programs including Young People’s Concerts (YPs), Target Free Family Concerts and Kinder Konzerts. In the last decade more than half a million students have experienced a Minnesota Orchestra YP. Musicians also engage in such Minnesota Orchestra-sponsored initiatives as the Adopt-A-School program (founded in 1990), Side-by-Side rehearsals and concerts with young area musicians, and the UPbeat program, which establishes multi-year relationships with communities throughout the Twin Cities and around the state.

Courtney Lewis, conductor

Born in Belfast, Northern Ireland, Courtney Lewis has worked with orchestras and chamber ensembles from London to Venezuela, earning recognition as one of today’s top emerging conductors. He is founder and music director of Boston’s acclaimed Discovery Ensemble, a chamber orchestra with the unique mission of introducing inner-city school children to classical music while bringing new and unusual repertoire to established concert audiences. He recently completed his second season as Zander Fellow with the Boston Philharmonic Orchestra, a prestigious conducting apprenticeship under the ensemble’s music director, Benjamin Zander. In addition to his work with the Boston Philharmonic, he has assisted Zander with the London Philharmonia, Toronto Symphony, Saint Louis Symphony and Símon Bolívar Youth Orchestra of Venezuela.

In November 2008 Lewis made his major American orchestra debut with the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra, leading a series of five concerts. He subsequently spent several weeks assisting conductors David Robertson, Marc Albrecht and Yan Pascal Tortelier. In recent seasons he has also worked with the BBC Philharmonic, Tulsa Symphony and Liverpool Mozart Orchestras, as well as smaller groups including the Nash Ensemble and Alban Berg Ensemble.

Lewis attended the University of Cambridge, where he studied composition with Robin Holloway and clarinet with Dame Thea King, graduating at the top of his year with starred first class honors. After completing a master’s degree with a focus on the late music of György Ligeti, he attended the Royal Northern College of Music, where his teachers included Sir Mark Elder and Clark Rundell.
Performers Section

Christina Baldwin (Hansel)
Mezzo Christina Baldwin’s career spans theater, musicals and opera. She has degrees from Lawrence University Conservatory of Music in Appleton, Wisconsin, and the University of Minnesota. A frequent performer in the Twin Cities, she has appeared with the Minnesota Orchestra, Minnesota Opera, Theatre de la Jeune Lune, the Guthrie Theater and more.

Jennifer Baldwin Peden (Gretel)
Soprano Jennifer Baldwin Peden is a frequent performer on music and theater stages throughout the Twin Cities. She holds a bachelor’s degree in music from DePaul University, and a master’s from the University of Minnesota. She has performed in A Christmas Carol and other productions at the Guthrie Theater, with Theatre de la Jeune Lune, and many other area stages. She appeared in the films Drop Dead Gorgeous and Jona/Tomberry.

Christina Baldwin and Jennifer Baldwin Peden are sisters, and are known locally as “The Baldwin Sisters.”

Vera Mariner (Witch)
Soprano Vera Mariner has appeared with theater groups across the country. She is artistic associate with Theater Latte Da, and has performed with the Minnesota Orchestra, the Guthrie Theater, Children’s Theater Company, Illusion Theater, and the Minnesota Fringe Festival. She is active as a voice and acting teacher, and appears regularly with the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra on their Xplorchesra! concerts.

In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre

From the company’s website:

_Puppetry’s power lies in the act of transformation—of bringing something inanimate to life._

This act in itself speaks to our lives, which rise and fall and rise again. As we share this act of building and performing, we find that theater brings people together. It builds community. It is with great respect and awe that we see the power and joy of this ancient art flourish in unsuspecting ways and places.

Since 1973, In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre has been using water, flour, newspaper, paint, and unlimited imagination to tell stories that explore the struggles and celebrations of human existence. Drawing inspiration from the world’s traditions of puppet and mask theatre and its lively roots in transformative ritual and street theatre, HOTB creates vital, poetic theater for all ages and backgrounds.

More: [www.hotb.org](http://www.hotb.org)

Puppets designed and performed by In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre appear during the _Dream Pantomime_ section of the opera, when Hansel and Gretel are asleep in the forest, surrounded by fourteen angels who protect them.
Opera Q and A:

1- What is an opera?

An opera is a powerful combination of music, theater (and often dance), that tells a story. Like a play, it is often divided into acts and scenes, with plot, setting, characters and action. Like a play, it is performed on a stage with scenery, costumes, props, lighting and sometimes special stage effects. Unlike a play, the characters sing their words with an orchestra playing from a pit beneath the front of the stage. (At Orchestra Hall, the orchestra is on the stage with the singers). The music adds a very powerful expressive element to the production. Many people consider opera to be the greatest art-form, since it combines so many artistic elements.

2- What's the difference between an opera and a musical?

Basically, musicals (like The Lion King, Phantom of the Opera, etc.) involve characters speaking part of the time, with songs interspersed. An opera is usually all singing.

3- Why are operas always in different languages?

Operas are written in the language of the intended audience. Many of the most famous operas are in Italian because opera developed there, and has been an important part of that country's culture.

4- Are operas ever in English?

Operas by English or American composers are written in English. Sometimes, operas that were written in other languages are translated into English. More often, though, operas are sung in the original language since the composers write the music to fit the text and the particular qualities of the language. Often, there is a translation projected on a screen above the stage so audiences can easily tell exactly what is being sung. The Hansel and Gretel performance you will see will be sung in an English translation, but we'll also project the text above the orchestra.

5- When and why did people start writing operas?

Opera was “invented” by a group of people in Florence, Italy around the year 1600. They thought they were reviving the theatrical tradition from Ancient Greece.
6- Are people still writing operas?
   Yes, there are new operas being written all the time. The Minnesota Opera company has received a grant to produce a new opera each year for five years.

7- Are operas always serious?
   Operas can be very serious, but there are also comic operas. Some operas combine both.

8- Where can I see more opera?
   The Minnesota Orchestra occasionally programs semi-staged operas. The Minnesota Opera has a full season of operas every year at the Ordway, and occasionally offers student matinees. The Metropolitan (Met) Opera from New York City is broadcast live on Minnesota Public Radio Saturday afternoons during their season. Met productions are also shown live in movie theaters several times a year.

9- What are some good children's books about opera?


   *Opera Cat* by Tess Weaver, illustrated by Andrea Wesson. Published by Clarion Books, 2002. A picture book about a singing cat who fills in for her owner, an opera star who loses her voice the night of a big performance.

   *The Great Poochini* by Gary Clement. Published by Groundwood Books, 1999. A picture book about an ordinary dog by day, who each night appears as the star in an all-dog opera company, performing for an all-dog high society audience.
Engelbert Humperdinck was a German composer who lived from 1854 to 1921. Like many composers, Humperdinck began work early, writing his first compositions at age seven after beginning piano lessons. He wrote two operas when he was 13. His parents would rather he had studied architecture, but instead, he entered the Cologne Conservatory of music at age 18 and was very successful. He won many prizes for composition, and traveled throughout Europe teaching and working on stage productions. He worked for a time as an assistant to German composer Richard Wagner. In 1914, according to Wikipedia, Humperdinck applied for the post of Director of the New South Wales Conservatory of Music in Sydney, Australia. Because of the politics of World War I, it was not considered possible for a German to hold this position in Australia, and the post went to Belgium’s Henri Verbrugghen. Seven years later, Verbrugghen became the second music director of the Minneapolis Symphony (now the Minnesota Orchestra).

His best known composition is the opera *Hansel and Gretel*, which has been associated with the Holidays since its premiere in Weimar, Germany in December, 1893. It was the first full length opera ever to be broadcast on radio, from Covent Garden, London. It was also the first to be transmitted live from the Metropolitan Opera house in New York City. After Humperdinck’s death in 1921, the Berlin State Opera performed Hansel and Gretel as a memorial.

The opera is scored for both Hansel and Gretel to be played by female singers. In opera, when a woman sings the role of a young man or boy, it is referred to as a “pants role.”
What is the music about?

Here is a synopsis of the entire opera, which is in three acts. A description of the highlighted Young People's Concert version follows.

**Hansel and Gretel, complete synopsis**

**Act 1:**

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:**

After the Orchestra plays a prelude called *The Witch's Ride*, we see Hansel and Gretel 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:
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.

Hansel and Gretel Synopsis Copyright 2006, Minnesota Orchestra
The following is the highlighted version of the opera that you will see at the Young People’s Concerts will take place in three scenes:

See the complete libretto, at the end of these materials, for the full text of the Young People’s Concert version.

**Scene #1:**
Hansel and Gretel are at home, and are supposed to be doing chores. Gretel sings a folksong (“Susie, little Susie”). Hansel complains about going hungry, and Gretel reminds him of a prayer their father has taught them to sing when things don’t look good. The prayer reappears later in the opera. Soon, Gretel offers to teach Hansel to dance and the two happily forget their work and hunger.

**Scene #2:**
Hansel and Gretel’s mother has sent them into the woods to look for strawberries. They realize they have lost their way, and that they will have to spend the night in the woods. They kneel together and sing their Evening Prayer and fall asleep. While they sleep, angels appear and hover over the two. In this production, the angels are portrayed by the In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theater, and have qualities of both “traditional” angels, and the forest animals who were around the sleeping children.

**Scene #3:**
Hansel and Gretel awake after their night in the woods and find a gingerbread house, with a stable and huge oven attached. They begin to nibble on the house, and soon an old woman appears. She tempts them to come inside, promising as much wonderful food as they can eat. The children try to flee, but she soon casts a spell, and the children are motionless. She locks Hansel in the stable, intending to fatten him up before she eats him! She checks his finger to see if he is getting fatter, but Hansel instead shows her a thin bone, tricking her into believing that he needs more time to fatten up. He also warns Gretel to be very careful around the old woman, realizing of course that she is a dreaded witch who eats children! The witch asks Gretel to check the progress of the fire she is preparing in the oven. Gretel pretends to not understand, saying that the Witch will have to show her how to do this. When the Witch demonstrates, Hansel and Gretel push her in the oven. Hansel and Gretel are saved and sing triumphantly.
Teaching ideas for Hansel and Gretel:

#1 Review and respond to the story:

Ask students what they know about the Hansel and Gretel story, or tell them the story if it is unfamiliar. See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hansel_and_Gretel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hansel_and_Gretel) for information on the history and various versions of the story.

Local libraries, bookstores or on-line dealers offer several Hansel and Gretel children’s books. A google search for “Hansel and Gretel” will result in several versions of the story as well.

The story offers many opportunities for student learning activities.

Readers Theater

Divide the story into a series of small, one or two sentence segments. Use the segments below, or create your own based on the reading ability of your students. Number the story segments, and give individual students a strip of paper with one numbered story segment. Have the individual students read their segments, in order, to tell the entire story. Students should read their segment with a rich dramatic voice! If you’re teaching any of the songs (see below), have the class join in with the songs at the appropriate points in the story.

Sample Reader’s Theater segments (Young People’s Concert version). Print and divide the paper into individual segments.

#1 Hansel and Gretel are home alone in their small house. Hansel is sweeping, and Gretel is mending some clothing, singing a folksong.

All sing “Susie, little Susie” ([see page 18](#))

#2 Hansel complains that they have had hardly anything to eat, since they are so poor. He and Gretel talk about food. Gretel decides to teach Hansel how to dance.

All sing, “Brother come and dance with me” ([see page 19](#))
#3 Hansel and Gretel have gone into the woods to look for wild strawberries. They realize they have lost their way, and since it is getting dark, will have to spend the night in the woods.

#4 Before going to sleep, they sing the evening prayer.

All sing “Evening Prayer” (see page 21)

#5 Hansel and Gretel curl up and sleep in the woods. When they wake up, they see an amazing house made of gingerbread and all kinds of sweets.

#6 Since they are very hungry, they decide to go up to the house, break off a part and eat it. As soon as they do, a voice from inside asks “Nibble nibble mouse-kin, who’s nibbling at my house-kin?”

All sing: “Nibble Nibble”

\[
\text{Nibble, nibble, mouse-kin, who’s nibbling at my house-kin?}
\]
#7 Hansel and Gretel at first think that they are just hearing the wind, but soon realize that there is an old woman inside the house.

#8 The old woman invites them in, promising huge amounts of food to eat. Hansel and Gretel do not trust the old woman, and try to run away.

#9 As soon as they try to run away, the old woman, who is a witch, casts a spell, causing Hansel and Gretel to “freeze”.

#10 The witch puts Hansel in a cage, and makes Gretel work as her servant. She intends to fatten Hansel up until she can eat him!

#11 The witch tells Hansel to stick his finger through the cage, to see if he is fat enough to eat. He tricks her by sticking out an old bone instead of a finger. The witch thinks he’s not getting fat enough, and continues to feed him lots of food.

#12 Happy that she has captured the two children, the witch sings and takes a ride on her broomstick!

(All sing: “Witches Ride”)

So hop hop hop ga lop lop lop, my broom stick nag come do not lag.

At dawn of day I ride a way, am here and there and ev’ry where.

#13 The witch asks Gretel to stand on her tiptoes and check the size of the cooking fire inside of the oven. Fearing a trick, Gretel pretends to not understand what she is supposed to do. She tells the witch that she should show her how to check the fire.

#14 The witch opens the oven door to show Gretel how to check the fire, and the two children push her in and lock the door! Immediately, all of the spells are broken and the children are free. They celebrate their victory over the witch, and are soon found by their parents.
Storyboard and/or Quilt making activity

Using the segments from the Reader’s Theater activity (above), or segments that you create yourself, have students or groups of students create poster-sized storyboards for each segment of the story. Create a caption and artwork for each portion of the story. Or, divide the story into smaller parts, and ask students to create individual scenes from the story on 12-inch square pieces of paper. Captions can be written around the edge of each square, with artworks in the middle. Connect all of the squares to make a Hansel and Gretel story quilt.

Create a Gingerbread house- think like an opera stage designer!

a) Use on-line instructions to create Gingerbread houses, either with groups of students or as a class project.

See:
http://homecooking.about.com/od/specificdishes/a/gingerbreadhous.htm
or
http://www.elise.com/recipes/archives/004212how_to_make_a_gingerbread_hous e.php

b) Use paper to transform your classroom door into the door of a Gingerbread house. Ask students to think like an opera stage designer. What will look good to the audience? What do they think Orchestra Hall’s gingerbread house will look like? How will it be moved on and off the stage quickly? What will it be made of? Will it be a “real” house, or something very simple that will “suggest” a real house?
Create a shoe-box theater- more stage design!

Shoe box theaters can be great classroom art projects, and this story offers several potential scenes (inside Hansel and Gretel’s sparse house, in the forest at night when the 14 angels appear, the witch’s cottage, etc.)

You can think like an opera lighting designer by experimenting with the lighting holes in the shoe-boxes.

Look at this site for instructions:

http://www.papergoods.com/shoe_box.shtml

Be an opera Costume designer:

All of the costumes at an opera are the result of a costume designer making many decisions. A google image search for “Hansel and Gretel” will result in many different pictures of the two characters. Show students some “traditional” pictures with the children in German clothes, including Gretel in pigtails. How might a more “modern” production have the two costumed?

Be an opera director! An important decision for theater and opera directors is whether to “set” the play in the time originally intended by the author, or to get creative and change the time and setting. Romeo and Juliet, for example, has been set into many different eras, including New York City in West Side Story. Once students are familiar with the story, ask or have them brainstorm some “what if” questions.

- What if Hansel and Gretel were two city kids- how would the story change? Instead of a deep forest, where might they go for the strawberries? Where would they sleep that night? Instead of a fancy Gingerbread house, what might the witch’s house look like?
- What if they lived in the Rain Forest? Or in an igloo? Think of other “what if” settings for the story, and play out the same questions.

The Metropolitan Opera’s recent production of Hansel and Gretel is very untraditional. The witch (played by a man) has a house with a giant mouth, and the 14 angels are portrayed by chefs who bring food as the children sleep.
Explore the music of Hansel and Gretel

There are several famous melodies in the opera that students may enjoy learning. As suggested above, these can be interspersed into the Reader’s Theater activity above.

SCENE 1

“Susie, Little Susie”

The opera opens with Hansel and Gretel singing “Susie, Little Susie”. This was apparently an existing folksong that the composer used in the opera. In the opening scene, Hansel and Gretel interrupt each other before the last word of each verse.

*“Eia popeia” at the beginning of the second verse can be translated as “lullaby baby”.

Show students that the piece is in a triple meter (3 beats per measure). It can be played in a waltz style (Oom pah pah). You can play the piece with a simple two-chord accompaniment as indicated above. Once students are familiar with the song, use classroom instruments to also play the waltz style accompaniment while singing.
“Brother Come and Dance with Me”

This music sounds like a folk song, but was written by Humperdinck for the opera. It is one of the most famous scenes in the opera.
SCENE 1 cont.

Once students have learned the song, develop gestures or movements that students do in pairs, or in two lines. Or, have groups of students develop gestures that are suggested by the lyrics, especially the “tap, tap tap”, “click, click, click”, “nick, nick, nick”, “Round about and back again”, etc. Have each group perform their choreography for the class.

Watch a preschool group learning to dance to this melody on Youtube:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bwKcHzFyHn0

Help students notice that “Susie, Little Susie” and “Brother Come and Dance with Me” share the same pitches, in the same order, at least in the beginning:

![Musical notation]

There are more examples of one melody changing shape and “morphing” into other music throughout this piece.
SCENE 2

“Evening Prayer” and Dream Pantomime

Gretel sings the first line of the Evening Prayer near the beginning of the first scene, in response to Hansel’s complaints about having nothing to eat for weeks. This melody is one of the most famous and well-loved melodies in all of opera, and Humperdinck uses the melody, and fragments of it, throughout the piece.

The children sing the entire Evening Prayer before falling asleep in the forest during scene 2. The music of the prayer becomes the basis for the entire dream pantomime section, which follows, and if you listen carefully you can hear snippets of the theme in other parts of the opera as well.

Teach students the entire Evening Prayer.

A youtube search for “Hansel Gretel Evening Prayer” will result in many different performances.
Help students discover various musical elements of the Evening Prayer:

- The style of the music is *legato* (smooth) throughout. Compare this to the more *staccato* style of “Brother Come and Dance with Me”, or of the music associated with the Witch’s house in scene 3 (see below).

- Discuss how the rhythm of the Evening Prayer is different from “Susie, little Susie” or “Brother Come and Dance with Me”. Point out that the more steady rhythm of the prayer, (less dance-like) indicates that this is more serious, reverent music. Discuss how a choir might process into a church service singing this piece, as opposed to the dance gestures from “Brother Come and Dance with Me.”

- Notice that the melody begins with the notes of the tonic chord (do-mi-sol). This particular part of the melody will appear in other parts of the opera.

- Notice that the melody is built with two-measure phrases, some of which combine to create larger four-measure phrases. Some of the two measure phrases are heard in *sequence*, meaning that the same music is repeated higher (or lower) than the previous. The last phrase expands to five measures, with a kind of “built-in” ritard (slowing down).

- Trace the contour (shape) of the larger melody on a marker board, or with a finger in the air. Notice that the melody gradually moves upward, with the highest point (climax) on the word “heaven”. The Prayer ends one octave above where it started.

- Notice also the contour of each individual phrase, many of which also are built with ascending notes. Have students create visual art showing either the contour of the entire melody, or of each shorter phrases one after another.
After Hansel and Gretel sing the Evening Prayer, they gradually fall asleep, and the “Dream Pantomime” begins, which is a section with just orchestra and action on stage (no singing). The score indicates that during this section, 14 angels descend and hover around the sleeping children. It is a beautiful visual moment in the opera. In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theater will provide the angels, which share qualities of “traditional” angels as well as the forest animals who were around the sleeping children.

Use this listening map to help teach this music:

Immediately after the evening prayer concludes, the orchestra repeats the melody, which rises higher and higher, presumably an image of the prayer moving upwards to heaven.

The music begins to descend, as the angels come down from heaven. Have students track the melody from the previous section with an ascending gesture, and then switch to a descending gesture when the music changes.

Notice that much of the music in this section, both melody and accompaniment, is based on the same do-re-sol idea as the Evening Prayer itself. A new melody is heard, which is roughly based on the Evening Prayer melody:

A new melody is heard:
Notice that while this melody descends, the accompaniment figures ascends, becoming more and more agitated, depicting angels coming up and down. If you have studied various note values, point out where the bass line changes from 8th notes to 16th notes.

The Evening Prayer melody returns with the massive sound of the Brass section. During your first listening, ask students to raise their hand when they hear this melody return.
SCENE 2 cont.

The climax of the entire Dream Pantomime section begins at this point. Remind students of the climax of the sung Evening Prayer, on the word “heaven”. This new climax “replays” the music of the earlier climax twice, before going even higher for a “super climax”. Have students develop a gesture with arms for the two “almost” climaxes at this point, and then another bigger gesture for the “super climax”.

At the concert, this climax will be depicted visually in a very powerful way! Ask students to predict what this might look like.
SCENE 3

Musical Highlights

In the third scene of our Young People’s Concert production, Hansel and Gretel have awoken, and discover the witch’s house. They are placed under her spell, Hansel is locked in a cage to be “fattened up”, and Gretel and he finally defeat the Witch by pushing her in the oven.

There is a device in opera called *leitmotif* where a certain melody or musical idea is “assigned” to a particular character, or even an object or an emotion. The great opera composer Richard Wagner is well-known for using this technique. Engelbert Humperdinck was a student of Wagner and employs the same technique in Hansel and Gretel. As a result, you will hear many musical ideas recurring throughout the third scene.

Students familiar with the *Star Wars* films may know how characters are associated with certain music or melodies. This is another example of *leitmotif*.

Listening highlights. Use these to provide students with musical “landmarks” for this section of the opera. For the complete text and story details, see the complete libretto (text of the opera) at the end of these materials.

The scene opens as Hansel and Gretel discover the Gingerbread House. They are giddy when they realize that it is made from real sweets, and decide to eat some of it. Discuss with students how the orchestra helps create the mood of the story, and how the music contributes to the joyful quality of the story at this point. The orchestra doesn’t simply accompany the singers, it creates a mood on it’s own, much like the soundtrack in a movie. Discuss how the orchestra could be considered a “fourth main character” in this story.
There is a new melody in this section:

Much of the music in this scene is in a 6/8 meter, with a smooth, lyrical dotted rhythm. This gives the music a gentle, calm, dreamlike feel, even when the story intensifies.

This is the first appearance of the Witch as she sings:

At first, Hansel and Gretel aren’t sure if they heard someone, or whether it was just the wind. The orchestra creates some wind effects.

The witch also laughs her high, cackling laugh at several points.

Notice that when the witch sings “That’s why the children to me are so dear”, the orchestra slips into “Susie, little Susie”, the playful children’s song from the first act.
**SCENE 3 cont.**

- Discuss whether the witch’s music is scary, or not-so-scary? How does it compare to the witch’s music in *The Wizard of Oz*? What might it mean that much of her music is very happy and light-hearted? Perhaps it could help us understand that this is only a fairy tale, and help children remember that there’s really nothing to be afraid of!

- The witch’s “Nibble Nibble” music changes from short and choppy to smooth and flowing as she sings “Come, little mousey, Come into my housey”. Again, this is only a fairy-tale witch!

There is a musical idea that often recurs when food is referenced:

![Musical notation]

You will hear this repeated many times, often in the orchestra, and often when the witch is talking about eating Hansel and Gretel. Some people think it’s a musical idea depicting swallowing! After students have heard the music for the first time, and after they are familiar with the story, ask them to listen for how often this musical idea appears.
Depending on your particular teaching situation, you may wish to teach the music that the witch uses to “freeze” Hansel and Gretel:

**The Witch’s Ride**

The witch gets more and more excited as her plan to fatten Hansel up continues. In her delight, she grabs her broomstick and proceeds to fly around the stage. She sings:

The Witch Waltz. Based on the music from the Witch’s Ride, but changed into a waltz. Compare this music to “Ding Dong the Witch is Dead” from *The Wizard of Oz*. The lyrics are remarkably similar!
EXTENSIONS:

- After the concert, discuss with students how the actual production compared with what they expected:
  - Were Hansel and Gretel dressed as they expected? What was it like to have Hansel played by a woman? Did the angels in the Dream Pantomime look like what students thought they would look like? Why did they look like forest animals? Did the witch look like what they expected? How scary was the witch? How did she compare to the witch in *The Wizard of Oz*? Did the music make her more or less scary?
  - What was it like to experience the story as an opera, where everything was sung? How did the music help enhance the story? Did students use the supertitles (words projected above the stage?) Did they help to understand the story?
  - Discuss the ways in which food is an ongoing theme in the opera, and how for very poor children such as Hansel and Gretel, getting enough to eat is a constant worry.
    - During the first scene, Hansel and Gretel talk about how hungry they are due to being so poor, and about what they would like to eat.
    - They lose their way in the woods on a mission to collect strawberries.
    - The witch’s house is made entirely out of sweets, and she tempts the children to come into the house where they will be treated to more wonderful food.
    - The witch also talks a lot about food, unfortunately mostly about eating Hansel and Gretel!
    - The witch plans to fatten Hansel up before eating him, so encourages him to eat.
    - Explain that in the Metropolitan Opera’s famous version of the opera, each scene takes place in a kitchen: the first scene in a large but very sparse kitchen from a house, the angels in the Dream Pantomime section appear as chefs who bring the dreaming children a great deal of food, and the Witch’s house is actually a HUGE industrial kitchen.
- The entire opera begins with a *prelude*, (overture), which will not be performed at the Young People’s Concert. It contains several of the melodies that you will hear, and could serve as a good musical re-cap of the concert.
- Ask students to write a review of the concert, as if they worked for a newspaper that still included a music reviewer on their staff. A good review should comment on all aspects of the production (*Singers, orchestra, costumes, staging, lighting, props, etc.*)