

VICTORIAN
OPERA

ENGELBERT HUMPERDINCK

**HANSEL AND
GRETEL**

7-12 June 2018
Arts Centre Melbourne,
Playhouse



SYNOPSIS

Hansel and Gretel are playing in their house in the woods, waiting for their Mother and Father to come home. They should be making brooms, but are playing games instead. Hansel is hungry, so Gretel tries to distract him by teaching him a dance. She also shows him a surprise hidden away for later – a jug of milk.

Their Mother comes home and is cross because they have been playing instead of working. In her anger she accidentally knocks over the jug of milk, so she sends the children out into the woods with a basket to gather strawberries to eat. The poor Mother is upset that she doesn't have any food for her family.

Father comes home, very happy that he has sold many broomsticks and managed to buy the family a basket full of good food. Mother tells Father that she has sent the children to the woods to gather strawberries as punishment for their bad behaviour. Father is worried because the woods are the home of the 'Evil One'.

This 'Evil One' is a Witch, who lives in a crispy, crunchy house of sugar and spice. She magically entices children into her house, puts them in her oven and turns them into Gingerbread Children.

Out in the woods, Hansel and Gretel are gathering strawberries in their baskets. They hear a cuckoo and are scared by the whispering of the leaves in the trees.

A mysterious man appears, the Sandman, who reassures the children and sprinkles magic sand in their eyes to help them sleep. Hansel and Gretel sing their evening prayer before falling asleep. As they sleep, angels appear in their dreams to watch over them, keeping them safe.

Morning comes, and the Dew Fairy wakes the sleeping children with dewdrops. As the morning mist clears, they see a house made of delicious sweet treats. Hansel breaks off a piece of the house and the children begin to eat. The Witch startles them and entices the children into the house.

The Witch attempts to cast a spell on the children with her magic wand, but Hansel and Gretel are too clever to be tricked by her magic. The Witch tries to make Gretel get into the oven, but together the children trick the Witch and push her into the oven, closing the door behind her.

The Witch's Gingerbread Children appear, and can now open their eyes. The children thank Hansel and Gretel for breaking the Witch's spell, and everyone dances and sings together.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Victorian Opera would like to thank 5Stream, Jim Atkins of Sounds Solo, and Kelsey Henderson.

PRODUCTION

World premiere 1893, Germany
First performed by Victorian Opera on 18 June 2014
Running Time is 55 minutes, with no interval
Sung in German with English scene descriptors

Composer **Engelbert Humperdinck**
Librettist **Adelheid Wette**
Chamber Orchestra Arrangement
Julian Langdon

CREATIVE TEAM

Conductor **Simon Bruckard**
Director **Elizabeth Hill**
Set and Costume Designer **Ross Hall**
Lighting Design **Peter Darby**
Production Manager **Eduard Ingles**
Stage Manager **Liam Murray**
Assistant Stage Manager **Lija Simpson**
Repetiteur **Phillipa Safey**

CAST

Hansel **Shakira Dugan**
Gretel **Cleo Lee-McGowan**
Mother/Angel/Child **Kirilie Blythman**
Father/Angel/Child **Stephen Marsh**
Angel/Child **Matthew Thomas**
Sandman **Douglas Kelly**
Dew Fairy **Michelle McCarthy**
Witch **Tomas Dalton**

Photography: Hilary Walker

ORCHESTRA

1st Violin **Peter Clark**
2nd Violin **Jessica Oddie**
3rd Violin **Cameron Jamieson**
Viola **Susanna Ling**
Cello **Mee Na Lojewski**
Double Bass **Giovanni Vinci**
Flute/Piccolo **Kim Falconer**
Oboe **Jasper Ly**
1st Clarinet **Andrew Fong**
2nd Clarinet **Cameron Smith**
Bassoon **Colin Forbes Abrams**
1st French Horn **Tim Skelly**
2nd French Horn **Phoebe Smithies**
Keyboard **Jacob Abela**



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