

# Magic Carpet Concerts

# Hansel & Gretel



## Educator Resource Guide

Dayton Opera

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## February 24-26, 2026

Welcome to our educator guide! We created this resource for the upcoming performance of the adapted opera, “Hansel and Gretel” to help your students discover the rich world of opera. The activities provided in the teacher guide assist students to actively listen and observe this live performance that introduces children to Humperdinck’s vibrant score. This performance, created specifically for young audiences, blends the orchestral music of the Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra and the artistry of the Dayton Opera Artists-in-Residence with narration and singing. Join Hansel and Gretel as they navigate a magical forest, encountering a delectable gingerbread house and triumphantly defeating a wicked witch in this engaging adaptation of the classic fairy tale.

Please feel free to make this guide your own, these materials are built for flexibility. We encourage you to use this guide to augment your existing curriculum in the many disciplines that are included. Please feel free to copy or adapt any part of the guide for use with your students. We sincerely hope that your experience will be genuinely rewarding, providing the catalyst for a lifelong appreciation of opera and the many art forms that combine to make this unique experience.

Thank you for sharing this experience with us; we can’t wait to see you and your students!



## Prepare for the Opera!

Before sharing the story of Hansel and Gretel, play the [\*\*overture\*\*](#) (the musical introduction) for your students. Ask them to listen closely and "draw" or write down the pictures they see in their minds. Use these questions to start a fun classroom discussion:

- How does the music feel? Does the beginning sound serious or mysterious? Does the middle sound like children playing or someone sneaking around?
- What is happening in the music? If this music were a movie scene, what would be on the screen?
- What did you hear (like a loud drum or a soft flute) that made you feel that way?
- What happens next? Based on this music, what do you think the rest of the show will be about?

**WATCH this**  
**video about**  
**Opera for kids!**

## ABOUT OPERA

Did you know that you were born with a musical instrument? It's your voice! While some people spend years practicing the violin or the flute, you can make music right now by singing, humming, or even making beatbox sounds like a drum. Just like instruments in an orchestra, every person's voice has a special sound. Some voices can reach very high notes, while others sound deep and low. In the world of opera, these different "voice heights" have special names called voice types. This helps the composer choose the right person for each character.

Usually, the women in the story are divided into two groups: the Soprano, which is the highest female voice, and the Mezzo-Soprano, which is a bit lower and warmer. Men also have their own voice types. The highest male voice is called a Tenor. If a man has a medium-low voice, he is called a Baritone. Finally, the deepest, lowest voice of all is called a Bass. When all these different voices sing together on stage, it sounds like a beautiful, living orchestra!

An opera is a special kind of story where the actors don't just speak their lines—they sing them! Because they are acting and singing at the same time, opera performers have to be great at both. While the singers are on stage, a large group of musicians called an orchestra sits nearby, playing beautiful music that follows along with the story and helps show how the characters are feeling. When one singer performs a long, beautiful song all by themselves, it is called an aria. Sometimes they sing with the orchestra, and other times they sing a cappella, which means they use only their voices without any instruments at all. If two people sing together, it is called a duet, and when a whole big group of people sings together at once, it is called a chorus.

**Write the word OPERA on the board and ask your students to share everything they think they know about it. List their ideas for the class to see! After they watch the performance, revisit your list together.**

**Refer to the Vocabulary page and crossword for Hansel and Gretel. Discuss with the students which of these terms they may hear and/or see during the performance.**

- Are any of these words familiar in other settings?
- Are there root words, prefixes or suffixes that are familiar or lend an idea to the meaning of the term?
- Use the activities that follow to familiarize students with these terms.





## Opera Vocabulary

Aria (AH-ree-ah)	A musical piece for solo voice.
Baritone (BARE-ih-tone)	The middle range male voice.
Bass (BASE)	Lowest male voice.
Bravo or Brava	Great Job- What you say at the end to show you like it
Conductor	The person who leads the orchestra.
Composer	The person who writes the music.
Dancers	People who move their whole body to tell a story or express a feeling
Designer	Person who creates the scenery, costumes, and light.
Libretto (lih-BREHT-toh)	Literally "little book," this is the text or words of an opera.
Mezzo-Soprano (MEH-tso soh-PRAH-noh)	The middle female voice.
Orchestra	A large group of musicians playing instruments.
Opera (AH-peh-rah)	A play that uses singing instead of speaking and is accompanied by instrumental music.
Soprano (soh-PRAH-noh)	The highest female voice.
Tenor (TEH-nor)	The highest male voice.



Name:



## Opera Vocabulary Matching

Draw a line matching the word to the definition.

Aria (AH-ree-ah)

The middle range male voice.

Tenor (TEH-nor)

Lowest male voice.

Baritone (BARE-ih-tone)

The highest female voice.

Bass (BASE)

The highest male voice.

Dancers

The person who leads the orchestra.

Mezzo-Soprano

(MEH-tsosoh-PRAH-noh)

The middle female voice.

Soprano

The person who writes the music.

Bravo or Brava

A musical piece for solo voice.

Designer

People who move their whole body to tell a story or express a feeling

Conductor

A large group of musicians playing instruments.

Orchestra

Literally "little book," this is the text or words of an opera.

Composer

Person who creates the scenery, costumes, and light.

Libretto (lih-BREHT-toh)

A play that uses singing instead of speaking and is accompanied by instrumental music.

Opera (AH-peh-rah)

Great Job- What you say at the end to show you like it

Name:

## Word Search

X	I	D	I	H	X	G	E	H	B	K	F	J	Y	C
Y	R	W	K	U	C	E	R	J	O	A	A	D	T	R
V	V	M	P	P	K	T	H	E	T	U	N	B	R	U
H	A	N	S	E	L	A	I	H	T	A	S	W	A	M
C	J	F	D	I	V	W	E	W	C	E	V	E	I	B
J	H	F	A	R	F	R	U	O	H	O	L	V	L	S
C	R	B	E	I	C	I	N	G	V	L	O	Q	O	C
K	R	W	R	Z	N	G	N	E	B	I	H	N	B	T
X	J	U	B	V	A	X	N	L	G	T	W	K	G	L
Y	C	U	K	A	I	U	Q	W	T	S	E	R	O	F

HANSEL  
WITCH  
CRUMBS  
CANDY  
HOUSE  
FOREST

GRETEL  
BREAD  
FATHER  
ICING

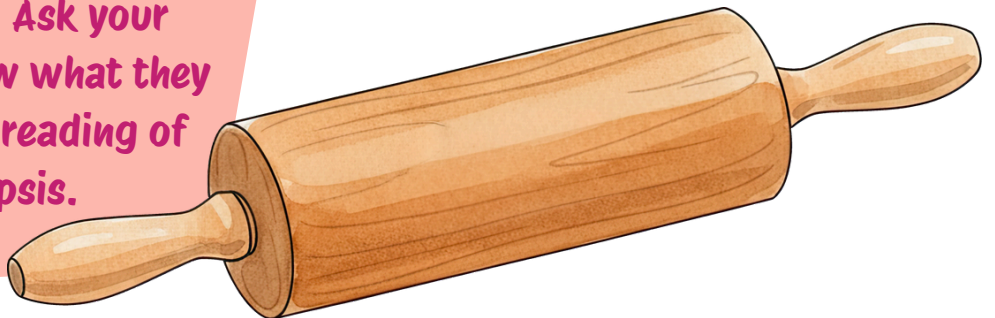


# Synopsis

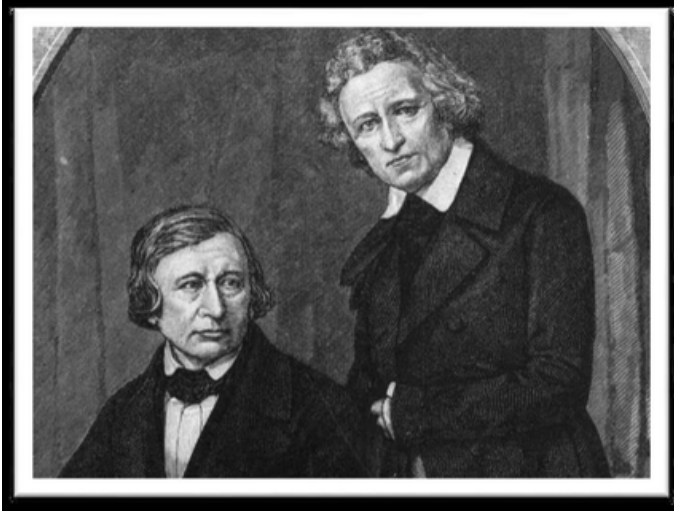
In both the original Brothers Grimm story and the famous opera, the main adventure is the same: two siblings named Hansel and Gretel get lost in a dark forest and find a magical house made of candy. However, while the original book version can be a bit scary with a mean stepmother, the opera version created by Engelbert and Adelheid is much more whimsical and musical. In the opera, the children aren't left in the woods on purpose; they simply wander off while playing and picking strawberries!

In our production, Hansel and Gretel are busy completing their chores and singing. While they wait for dinner their mother sends them out to the woods to pick strawberries for dessert. As the sun goes down, they realize they are lost. Instead of being afraid, they sing and are watched over by guardian angels to help them sleep safely on the forest floor. The next morning, the children wake up and discover the amazing Gingerbread House! A nibbling "Witch" tries to trap them like the other children who have been turned to gingerbread, but Hansel and Gretel use their bravery and teamwork to outsmart her. In the end, they use the Witch's own magic to save themselves. With a happy song and a big hug from their father, the opera ends with a celebration of courage and the power of family.

**Read the synopsis of the Opera Hansel and Gretel. Discuss the characters and ask your students how they think these characters will sound, look, behave, etc. What do they think the set will look like? Ask your students to draw what they see during the reading of the synopsis.**



# The Brothers Grimm



The original story of Hansel & Gretel was a fairy tale that was first published in Grimm's Fairy Tales, by the Brothers Grimm in 1812. Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm were two brothers from Germany who loved books and history. After their father died, they had to work very hard to help their family, but they stayed focused on their studies. While they were training to be lawyers, their true passion was collecting the old stories and songs of the German People to make sure their culture was never forgotten.

At that time, fairy tales were only told out loud, and the brothers feared these stories would disappear forever. They spent years listening to farmers, nannies, and villagers tell tales of magic and adventure. They carefully wrote down famous stories like Snow White, Hansel and Gretel, and Cinderella so that children everywhere could read them for the first time. The brothers became famous for their big book of fairy tales, which brought pride to their country and joy to readers. They spent their whole lives working together to preserve the magic of "once upon a time." Today, we still remember the Brothers Grimm because they saved the world's favorite stories for us to enjoy.

## Engelbert Humperdinck and Adelheid Wette

The opera Hansel and Gretel was written by Adelheid Wette and composed by Engelbert Humperdinck in 1893. Engelbert Humperdinck was a musical prodigy from Germany who wrote his first song at age seven. His father wanted him to build buildings as an architect, but Engelbert knew he was meant to build melodies. He was a brilliant student, winning several big awards like the Mozart and Mendelssohn prizes. He even got to travel to Italy and work as an assistant for the famous composer Richard Wagner, who taught him how to make music sound grand and powerful.

The idea for his most famous work came from his sister, Adelheid Wette. She loved writing family plays and asked Engelbert to write music for a version of Hansel and Gretel she was creating for her children. Adelheid wrote the words (called the "libretto") based on the Brothers Grimm story, and Engelbert filled it with beautiful German folk tunes and the sounds of a full orchestra.

When the opera finally opened in 1893, it was a superstar success! Within just one year, it was performed in over 70 theaters. People loved it because it felt like home, using traditional songs that parents had hummed to their children for years. Because of a brother and sister working together, this magical story became a treasure for the whole world.





Think about what the  
witches voice sounds like  
compared to Hansel or  
Gretel's respective voices.  
Does this tell us anything  
about their characters?

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Father	Evan Fleming, Baritone
Hansel	Isabel Randall, Mezzo-Soprano
Gretel	Malone Blaich, Soprano
Witch	Aaron Hill, Tenor

The Dayton Opera Artists-in-Residence Program was established in 1987 to serve as a professional training program for young singers as a bridge to move from the university/conservatory education experience into the arena of a professional opera company. Artists are selected by audition and, in addition to their training schedule, they work together to perform education and outreach programs in our community, helping to ensure the future of this magnificent art form in our area.

To learn more about the artists:  
See their BIOS



Discuss the difference between attending a live performance and listening to music or watching a television show at home.

By the time you see a scheduled performance, many people have worked very hard to bring you their best efforts. Attending a live performance is an opportunity to talk with your students about their responsibilities as an audience member. Musicians, Dancers, and Singers concentrate and perform their very best when appropriate concert manners are observed.

Here are a few ways to be a good audience:

- Sit Quietly while the music is played or sung
- Participate from your seat when we encourage you to do so
- Laugh when it is funny
- Applaud or say “Bravo or Brava” at the end to show how much you like it.
- Have FUN!

# ABOUT THE CONDUCTOR



## About our Ballet Dancers

Members of the Dayton Ballet School will perform as Angels and Gingerbread.

Dayton Ballet School Ensemble provides pre-professional training for the most advanced students in the Dayton Ballet School. These talented dancers have many performance opportunities throughout the year, including The Nutcracker, Wright State University's Dance Concert and appearances with the Dayton Philharmonic Youth Orchestra, Dayton Opera and the Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra.

Isaac Selya  
Interim Staff Conductor



Birthplace: Cincinnati

First Music Lesson: Cello when I was 5

Instruments I play: Cello, piano, voice (and French horn on a very basic level)

I became a conductor because: I love music!

My job as a conductor is: To help other musicians do their best

Favorite Dessert: Some of my favorites are donuts, baklava, and ice cream (especially ice cream flavors that have crunchy chocolatey things in them)

Favorite childhood book: Redwall series

Favorite candy: Almond Joy or Reese's

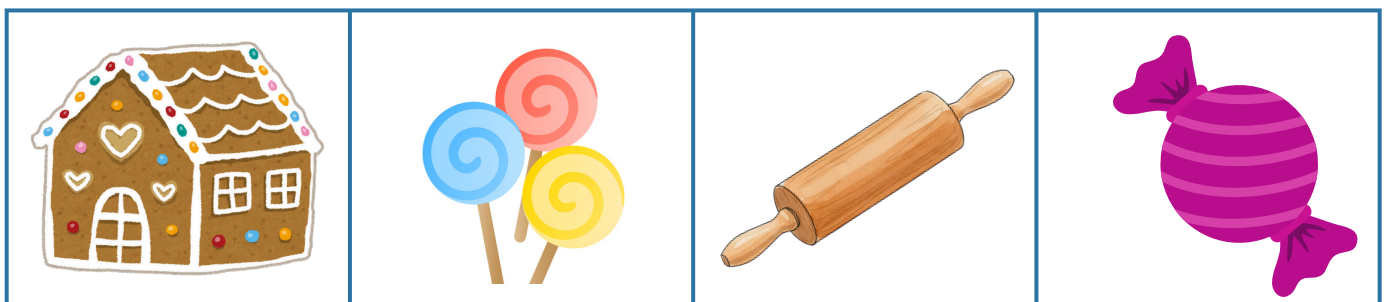
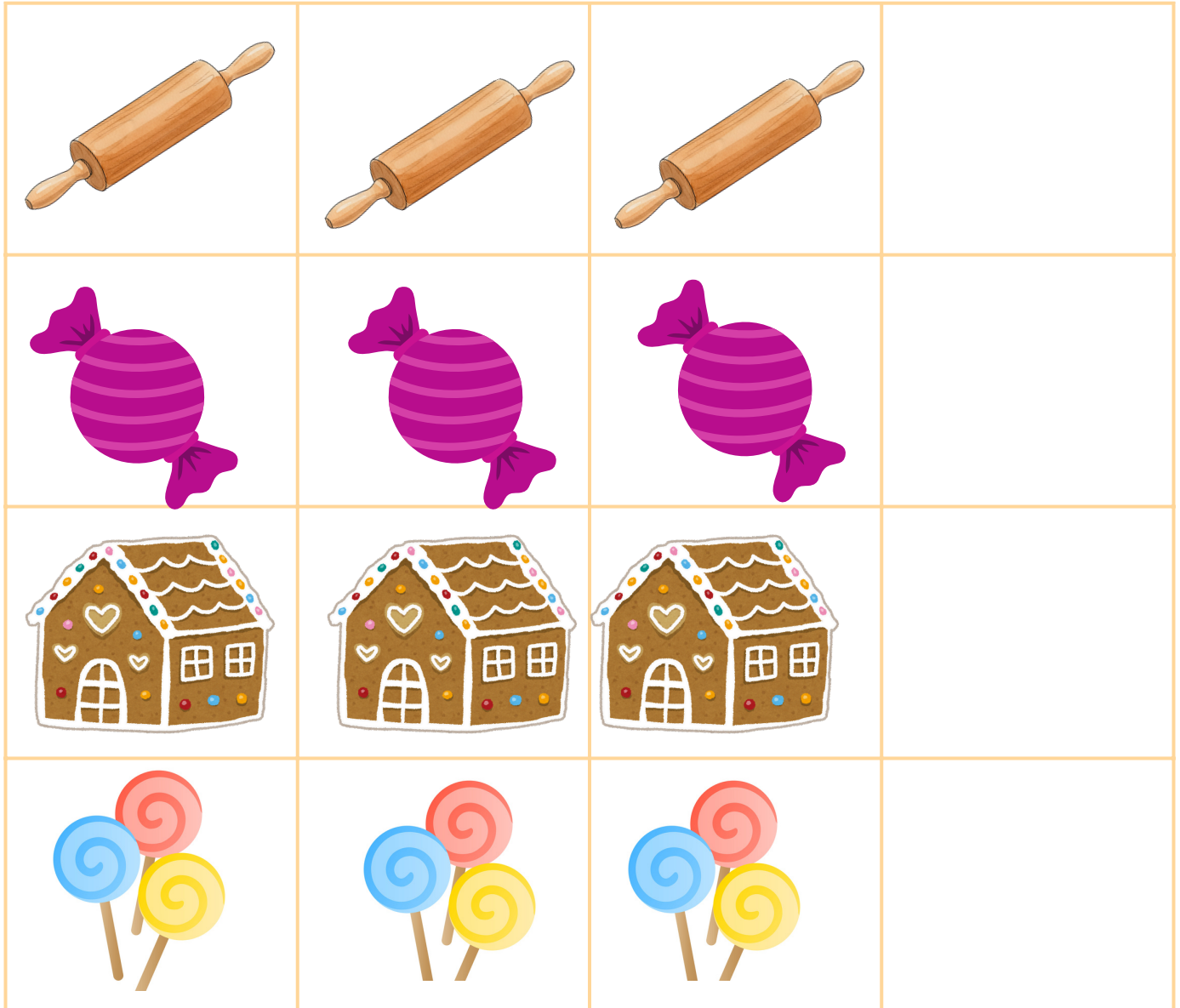
What I like to do in my spare time: Running!

Cat's Name: Tamino

# Matching Pictures

Cut and paste the pictures from the bottom next to the pictures that they match

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

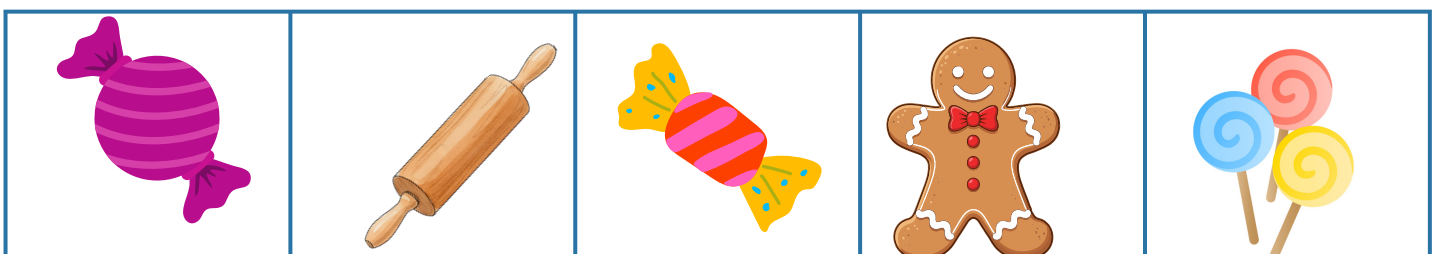


# Complete Patterns

Find the Picture from the bottom that completes the pattern.

Cut and paste it in the empty box.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_





Name: \_\_\_\_\_



Help Hansel and Gretel find their way home!



## ACTIVITY KEY

Draw a line matching the word to the definition.

Aria (AH-ree-ah)

Tenor

Baritone (BARE-ih-tone)

Bass (BASE)

## Dancers

Mezzo-Soprano (MEH-tsoh-PRAH-noh)

Soprano

Bravo or Brava

Designer

Conductor

Orchestra

Composer

Libretto (lih-BREHT-toh)

Opera (AH-peh-rah)

The middle range male voice.

Lowest male voice.

The highest female voice.

The highest male voice.

- The person who leads the orchestra.

- The middle female voice.

- The person who writes the music.

A musical piece for solo voice.

People who move their whole body to tell a story or express a feeling

A large group of musicians playing instruments.

- Literally “little book,” this is the text or words of an opera.

Person who creates the scenery, costumes, and light.

A play that uses singing instead of speaking and is accompanied by instrumental music.

Great Job- What you say at the end to show you like it

There are multiple solutions, This is just one of them.

