



Opera on the James

Presents

My First Opera: Fun with Hansel and Gretel

Fall 2009

If ever there was a fairy tale stunningly re-told through beautiful music and song, it's the delightful operatic setting of the Grimm's Brother's *Hansel and Gretel* by German composer, Engelbert Humperdinck. On November 15, **Opera on the James** will present a lavish, fully-professional production of this classic opera for the general public at E. C. Glass Auditorium.

School Production

In addition, the company has put together a smaller version of this operatic fairy tale with piano and three artists for the school children of our community. Our company is committed to providing quality educational programs and opportunities in our local schools and this program is the first of its kind created by **Opera on the James**. We call it, "**My First Opera – Fun with Hansel and Gretel.**"

This is an imaginative 35-minute adaptation of the full opera, created by artistic director, Craig Fields, for children age 6-12 years old. It combines some of the best musical moments of the opera with a quirky, comedic script and that will capture the imagination of your students as an entertaining introduction to the wonderful world of opera. The school schedule appears at the end of this document.

School Production Cast Members

Nora Moore,	Gretel
Tara Bouknight,	Hansel
Drew Dowdy,	Narrator, Mother, Father, Sandman and Witch
Naomi Amos,	Musical Director
Craig Fields,	Writer and Director

Teachers and Parents

We hope that teachers and parents will tell students the story and play a few recorded examples of the wonderful score (available on YouTube; look for Hansel and Gretel Royal Opera House) before they attend. It will make their first opera experience richer and even more FUN than ever imagined.

About our Full Production

With a beautifully rich orchestration, Humperdinck's 1893 grand Germanic score has been favorably compared with the greatest operas of Richard Wagner, his musical mentor. Running the full gamut of emotions, you will experience the heartache, suffering and hunger of impoverished children, the magical (delightful!) sorcery of a 'food-obsessed' Witch along with the exuberant joy of a family finally re-united in love.

Artistic Director Craig Fields promises, “This operatic fantasy has so much to offer both young and old alike, working its magic on several levels. With a rich musical score second to none, a wonderful ballet and breath-taking moments of dreamy ecstasy, it captivates any viewer’s imagination. Be sure to watch for some oddly amusing twists and turns that will delight the younger viewer and tickle the more mature.”

The company has assembled a stellar cast of talent that features Danielle Talamantes, Katherine Pracht, Kyle Engler, Madeleine Gray and William Andrew Stuckey (returning from our 2006 *Così fan tutte*), along with local favorites Nora Moore and Tara Bouknight. Also appearing are the gifted ballet dancers from Virginia School of the Arts choreographed by Dominique Angel and the children’s voices of “Cantate” led by Peggy Howell. Musical director Francesco Milioto returns to conduct an outstanding professional orchestra of forty players.

See www.OperaOnTheJames.org for more information!

School Schedule

Monday, October 19	Heritage Elementary	9:30-10:30
	Linkhorne “	2:15-3:15
Monday, October 26	Sandusky “	9:30-10:30
	R. S. Payne “	2:00-3:00
Friday, October 30	Bedford Hills “	9:00-10:00
	Perrymont “	2:30-3:30
Thursday, November 5	James River Day	9:30-10:30
	Holy Cross	2:30-3:30