
Press contact:

Joseph Duong, 408.437.2229 duong@operasj.org

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Opera San José Presents Humperdinck's Enchanting Hansel and Gretel

SAN JOSE, CA – **Opera San José** (OSJ) continues its 30th Anniversary Season with Engelbert Humperdinck's ***Hansel and Gretel***. This enduring fairy tale of lost children, candy treats, and an evil witch comes to life for the holiday season in this delightful production. ***Hansel and Gretel*** will be sung in English, with English supertitles. Eight performances are scheduled from November 16 through December 1, at the California Theatre, 345 South First Street, in downtown San José. Tickets are on sale at the Opera San José Box Office, online at operasj.org or by phone at (408) 437-4450. The production of ***Hansel and Gretel*** is made possible, in part, by a Cultural Affairs Grant from the City of San José.

Hansel and Gretel, with libretto by **Adelheid Wette**, is an enchanting story about two imaginative siblings who embark on a precarious journey to find something to eat, when their fortunes turn for the worst. Based on a story by the Brothers Grimm, this nineteenth-century opera is admired for its fun and folk-music-inspired themes, including the famous "Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep."

Joseph Marcheso conducts ***Hansel and Gretel***. **Marcheso** returns after conducting Opera San José's productions of *Suor Angelica*, *Gianni Schicchi*, *Faust*, *La traviata*, *La bohème*, *Manon*, *La Cenerentola*, *The Elixir of Love* and *Lucia di Lammermoor*. **Marcheso** has conducted over 30 operas in theaters around the country and recently made his debut with Opera Theater St. Louis. **Marcheso** is on the conducting staff of San Francisco Opera and is also a conductor and coach for the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

Andrew Whitfield will conduct alternating performances. **Whitfield** recently made his debut as principal conductor for the company's production of *Falstaff*. **Whitfield** served as assistant conductor for *Il trovatore*, *The Pearl Fishers* and *Pagliacci*. **Whitfield** was also Chorus Master for the company's productions of *Suor Angelica*, *Gianni Schicchi*, *Idomeneo*, *Pagliacci*, *La traviata* and *Faust*. He made his West Coast professional debut conducting *Lucia di Lammermoor* with Festival Opera.

Layna Chianakas returns to Opera San José to direct *Hansel and Gretel*. **Chianakas**, a former OSJ resident artist, previously directed the company's 2011 production of *La voix humaine*. In addition, she has performed with such opera companies as Cleveland Opera, Nashville Opera, Des Moines Metro Opera, Sarasota Opera, Virginia Opera, Dayton Opera, Festival Opera, Nevada Opera, Opera Santa Barbara, Madison Opera, Sacramento Opera, Intermountain Opera, and the Richard Wagner Bayreuth Festival. **Chianakas** is currently an assistant professor of voice at San José State University's School of Music and Dance.

Hansel and Gretel features current members of Opera San José's resident ensemble in the principal roles as well as guest artists. Alternating in the role of Hansel are resident mezzo-soprano **Lisa Chavez** and guest artist **Kindra Scharich**. **Chavez** recently made her debut as Meg Page for the company's production of *Falstaff*. Other roles performed recently by **Chavez** include Dinah (*Trouble in Tahiti*), Geraldine (*A Hand of Bridge*), and Lorca (*Ainadamar*) with Opera Parallèle of San Francisco.

Resident soprano **Cecilia Violetta López** and guest artist **Sara Gartland** alternate the role of Gretel. **López** is in her second season in the resident ensemble and recently performed the role of Nannetta in Opera San José's production of *Falstaff*. She appeared last season in the title role of Opera San José's production of *Suor Angelica*, Leonora (*Il trovatore*), Rosalinde (*Die Fledermaus*) and as Léïla (*The Pearl Fishers*).

Sharing the role of Gertrud, Hansel and Gretel's mother, are mezzo-sopranos **Nicole Birkland** and returning guest artist **Buffy Baggott**. **Birkland** made her company debut last season and has appeared as Dame Quickly (*Falstaff*), Prince Orlofsky, (*Die Fledermaus*), Azucena (*Il trovatore*), Principessa (*Suor Angelica*) and Zita (*Gianni Schicchi*).

Resident **Evan Brummel** and former resident **Karassen Karagiozov** share the role of Peter, Hansel and Gretel's father. **Brummel** returns for a third year as a member of the resident ensemble after appearing in the roles of Ford (*Falstaff*), Gianni Schicchi (*Gianni Schicchi*), Count di Luna (*Il trovatore*), and Zurga (*The Pearl Fishers*).

Resident tenors **Marc Schreiner** and **James Callon** alternate in the role of the Witch. They previously shared the role of Fenton (*Falstaff*). Recent engagements for **Schreiner** include Rodolfo (*La bohème*) with Fargo-Moorhead Opera and Orfée (*Orphée et Eurydice*) with Opera Memphis. **Callon** is in his second year in the resident ensemble. Previous credits include the roles of Nadir (*The Pearl Fishers*), Eisenstein (*Die Fledermaus*), Manrico (*Il trovatore*), and Rinuccio (*Gianni Schicchi*). Rounding out the cast are **Christine Capsuto** and **Chloe Smart** as the Dew Fairy. **Smart** also alternates as the Sandman with **Antonia Tamer**.

Opera San José's production of *Hansel and Gretel* includes set designs by **Larry Hancock** and **John Draginoff**, costumes by **Elizabeth Poindexter**, lighting design by **Pamila Gray**, and wig and makeup designs by **Jeanna Parham**.

About Opera San José

Opera San José, performing at the historic **California Theatre** in downtown San José, is a professional, regional opera company that is unique in the United States. Maintaining a resident company of principal artists, **Opera San José** specializes in showcasing the finest young professional singers in the nation. In addition to mainstage performances, **Opera San José** maintains extensive educational programs in schools and in the community at large, and offers *Preview* lectures and *Introduction to Opera* talks for all mainstage productions.

Hansel and Gretel In English with English Supertitles

Cast:

Hansel

Gretel

Gertrud

Peter

Witch

Dew Fairy

Sandman

November 16, 21, 24, 29

Lisa Chavez•

Cecilia Violetta López•

Nicole Birkland•

Evan Brummel•

Marc Schreiner•

Christine Capsuto

Chloe Smart

November 17, 23, 26, Dec. 1

Kindra Scharich

Sara Gartland

Buffy Baggott

Krassen Karagiozov

James Callon•

Chloe Smart

Antonia Tamer

• Resident Company

IRENE DALIS, GENERAL DIRECTOR
DAVID ROHRBAUGH, MUSIC DIRECTOR
LARRY HANCOCK, GENERAL MANAGER

2149 PARAGON DRIVE
SAN JOSE, CA 95131-1312
BOX OFFICE 408-437-4450; FAX 408-437-4455
WWW.OPERASJ.ORG; BOXOFFICE@OPERASJ.ORG

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

- What:** **Opera San José** continues its 30th Anniversary Season with Engelbert Humperdinck's ***Hansel and Gretel***. Based on the Brothers Grimm fable, ***Hansel and Gretel*** is a cautionary tale about two siblings that embark on an precarious adventure to find something to eat when their fortunes turn for the worst. ***Hansel and Gretel*** has long been a holiday favorite with the young and old, with its playful score mixing elements of folk music and hymns, including the famous, "Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep." ***Hansel and Gretel*** will be sung in English with English supertitles. Eight performances are scheduled from November 16 through December 1 at the California Theatre, 345 South First Street in downtown San José. Tickets are on sale at the Opera San José Box Office, online at operasj.org or by phone at (408) 437-4450. Performances supported, in part, by a grant from the San José Office of Cultural Affairs.
- Who:** Composer: Engelbert Humperdinck
Librettist: Adelheid Wette
Conductor: Joseph Marcheso
Assistant Conductor: Andrew Whitfield
Stage Director: Layna Chianakas
Set Designer: Larry Hancock and John Draginoff
Costume Designer: Elizabeth Poindexter
Lighting Designer: Pamila Gray
Choreographer: Maria Basile
Wigs/Makeup: Jeanna Parham
- Dates:** November 16, 17m, 21, 23, 24m, 26, 29, December 1m; 2013
- Time:** "m" indicates matinee at 3pm; all other performances are at 8pm
- Location:** California Theatre, 345 South First Street between San Carlos and San Salvador, San José
- Tickets:** Available at Opera San José Box Office, 2149 Paragon Dr., San José, CA 95131; \$51–\$111 (includes city facility usage fee). Students 25 and younger (with current student ID) \$11 (cash only); 408-437-4450; 408-437-4455 fax; operasj.org. Seniors (65 and older) 10% discount available 90 minutes prior to curtain at the California Theatre box office only. Family special: Family 4-pack \$100; use online code Family. Thanksgiving Black Friday special: \$2 for children under 18 with paid adult; use online code Friday.
- Photos:** www.operasj.org/news-events/press-room/press-photos/2013-2014-season/hansel-and-gretel
- Press Room:** www.operasj.org/news-events/press-room

To learn more about ***Hansel and Gretel***, please visit operasj.org and consider these opportunities:

Hansel and Gretel Special Preview: October 31, 4pm, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, 150 East Fernando Street, Room 225, 2nd floor, downtown San José; Free vocal preview with members of the cast. For information, call 408-437-4450.

Hansel and Gretel Evening Preview/Lecture: November 5, Bella Mia, 58 South First Street, downtown San José. Reception at 6:30pm; program 7-8:00pm. Wine and light refreshments will be served; Vocal preview from members of the cast, followed by a lecture by General Manager Larry Hancock. Tickets - \$30.00, call 408-437-4450.

Introduction to Opera: Before each performance (except opening night), General Manager Larry Hancock will present a free 45-minute talk about the opera at the California Theatre, beginning at 6:30pm prior to evening performances (except opening night) and at 1:30pm prior to Sunday matinees. No reservations required.

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