



For Immediate Release

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Michigan Opera Theatre to Present "Hansel and Gretel"

Opera to feature larger-than-life puppetry, family day with children's activities

April 6-14 at the Detroit Opera House

DETROIT, March 25, 2019 – Michigan Opera Theatre (MOT) will present Engelbert Humperdinck's "Hansel and Gretel" opera based on the classic Grimm's fairy tale. The production, designed by master puppeteer Basil Twist, features larger-than-life puppetry created with the Jim Henson Company. MOT will offer a special family day for the April 14 performance featuring complimentary children's activities.

The opera tells the story of Hansel and Gretel, a brother and sister from a poverty-stricken family who must fend for themselves in the woods. After losing their way, the starving children encounter a magical gingerbread house, which they begin to eat, only to find themselves caught by a witch who intends to eat them.

"Hansel and Gretel is a tale as old as time, but this production is unlike anything you've seen before," said MOT Principal Conductor Stephen Lord. "The puppets add a level of magic and fantasy to the opera that is sure to wow children and adults alike."

With the exception of Hansel and Gretel themselves, nearly everything on stage is made through puppetry or augmented costume, including the 15-foot witch. It also features a larger-than-life mother and father and 14 flying angel marionettes operated by puppeteers from high above the stage.

Lord said the music is unique with folk-inspired elements.

"Humperdinck called it a fairy tale opera," he said. "And like a fairy tale, the music echoes the oral tradition of a story passed-down through the ages, with familiar tunes and words so all generations can relate to them."

The opera features Emily Fons and Deanna Breiwick as Hansel and Gretel, respectively, and Matthew DiBattista as the witch. The production is conducted by Lord and directed by Twist.

It is sung in German with English supertitles. MOT will offer a free opera talk one hour before the performance.

MOT's family day will include a display of unique puppets from Metro Detroit's Puppet Art Theatre & Museum. It will also include craft-making with Arts and Scraps, ice cream samples from Treat Dreams Bakehouse and Puppets on Parade, an opportunity for patrons to visit the stage following the performance to see the "Hansel and Gretel" puppets up close.

Following "Eugene Onegin" and "Candide," the production continues MOT's opera series based on great literature. The series includes May 11-19 with "The Grapes of Wrath."

This production is made possible by 2019 Spring Opera Season Sponsor, General Motors, and in part by an award from The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

Ticket prices range from \$39 to \$160. Tickets may be purchased online at www.MichiganOpera.org, by calling (313) 237-7464 or in person at the Detroit Opera House (1526 Broadway, Detroit).

For full casting and additional information visit <https://michiganopera.org/season-schedule/hansel-and-gretel/>.

"Hansel and Gretel"

Music by Engelbert Humperdinck, libretto by Adelheid Wette, based on the Grimm's fairy tale

Performed at the Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway, Detroit

Saturday, April 6, 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, April 10, 7:30 p.m.

Friday, April 12, 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, April 14, 2:30 p.m.

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About Michigan Opera Theatre

Michigan Opera Theatre, one of the nation's most vibrant nonprofit arts organizations, is committed to presenting opera and dance of the highest artistic caliber. Founded in 1971 by Dr. David DiChiera, the company's mission is to serve as a major cultural resource to the state of Michigan and the city of Detroit. The organization is led by President and CEO Wayne S. Brown, Principal Conductor Stephen Lord and Chairman of the Board Rick Williams. Visit the website at www.michiganopera.org.