



STUDY GUIDE

Opera Candy!

The Gourmet Adventures of Hansel and Gretel

TEXT PASCAL BLANCHET AND JULIE DUBÉ • **ILLUSTRATIONS** LORRAINE BEAUDOIN, KARINE ALLIE, JULIE DUBÉ, PIERRE-LUC BOUDREAU AND ALBERT CORMIER • **LAYOUT** ALBERT CORMIER • **ARTISTIC COORDINATION** JUDITH PELLETIER

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PREFACE



Jeunesses Musicales presents

Opera Candy! The Gourmet Adventures of Hansel and Gretel

For over 60 years, Jeunesses Musicales Canada (JMC) has been dedicated to promoting classical music to young audiences and their families. Through its many productions, JMC brings over 500 concerts to schools, halls and cultural centres across Canada.

This is the study guide for *Opera Candy – The Gourmet Adventures of Hansel and Gretel*. This document contains a host of information and a whole series of activities of varying difficulty that educators and teachers can use and that are easily adjusted for different age groups. The guide can serve as a preparation tool for the concert, but it can also help debrief after the event and continue the learning introduced by the show. *Opera Candy*, available to young audiences since September 2017, is designed as an introduction to the fascinating and comprehensive art of opera. Fascinating because it centres around the human voice at its maximum expressive capacity, the height of human emotion, from sadness to hilarity... Comprehensive because it combines theatre and music while also involving dance and visual art, set design and costumes. In this show, Engelbert Humperdinck's popular opera serves as a gateway into the trials and tribulations of a funny and lovable trio of artists. The combination constitutes the ideal medium to initiate youth to the joys of the voice!

Enjoy the concert!



➤ Meet the *Opera Candy* artists

We asked the original cast of *Opera Candy* four questions back in June 2017:

- 1) What is your role in the show?
- 2) What is your greatest challenge?
- 3) How did you first discover opera?
- 4) What is your favourite type of candy?

HERE ARE THEIR ANSWERS!



CÉCILE MUHIRE, SOPRANO

1) I play the role of a soprano singing the character of Gretel. I am also the one who pitched this concert to JMC, so that youth could become familiar with opera through humour and fantasy.

2) My greatest challenge is keeping my concentration! Our story is very funny and I often want to burst out laughing right on the stage...

3) I first discovered opera when I went to see *The Barber of Seville* at the movies. It was incredible to me that the human voice could sing so many notes so quickly while telling a story. I decided right then and there that I would pursue it as a career!

4) I love really sour cherry gummies. I could eat them for breakfast, lunch, and dinner!



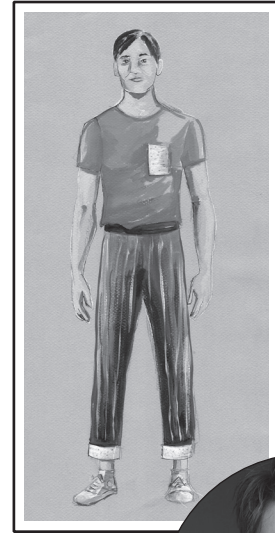
**CHARLOTTE GAGNON,
MEZZO-SOPRANO**

1) I play a kooky, quirky little girl named Charlotte. She loves Spanish dance and likes to show her moves to her friends every chance she gets. Charlotte plays the role of a candy-loving little boy (yes, yes, a BOY!) named Hansel.

2) My greatest challenge has been switching back and forth between the girl and boy roles quickly several times throughout the course of the show.

3) I first discovered opera through my mother, who listened to classical music and would take me to see opera performances. When I was younger, I liked theatre, but when I discovered opera, I fell in love!

4) I loove chocolate! Anything chocolate-flavoured... especially ice cream!



**GUILLAUME RODRIGUE,
ACTOR**

1) I play the distracted friend who loves candy, and who is not expecting to play a second, much wackier role in the opera...

2) I feel my challenge is to give the young audience members a taste of a "living" art, be it opera or theatre. And to prove to young people that some things are even more interesting than a phone screen!

3) I first discovered opera when I was young, listening to an aria from *Carmen* on the radio. I was very impressed! My music teacher told me it was opera, and that the voice I heard was that of the great soprano Maria Callas!

4) I loove caramel chocolates!



**CARL-MATTHIEU NEHER,
PIANIST AND ARRANGER**

- 1) My role is to play the piano and take care of all things musical in this concert. I help the singers practice their arias, I make sure to follow them well during the performance. I am constantly listening to them in order to make their life easier!
- 2) My greatest challenge is acting crazy while being serious at the same time. When I deliver a line, that's theatre, but when I am accompanying the singers, I have to stay concentrated on the music and make sure that all the notes are in the right place!
- 3) I discovered opera when I was very little, through a TV show called "Soup Opera" that featured these very funny and strange 2 minute shorts. There are clips of it on YouTube, go and check it out!
- 4) I love sour candies and pop rocks!



**PIERRE-LUC BOUDREAU,
SET DESIGNER**

- 1) I take care of all things visual! I start by chatting with the director and we decide what we are going to do. Then, I draw a sketch of the set, costumes and accessories on large sheets of paper. I present my sketches to the team and once everyone is in agreement, I start creating, building, painting, and even sewing!
- 2) My greatest challenge was the witch costume! It was the most elaborate costume in the opera and it also needed to be very easy to change into quickly.
- 3) Being a musician myself, I discovered my first opera... by singing in it! I was a dragonfly in an insect choir!
- 4) My favourite candy is red licorice, which was actually the inspiration for a few of the set elements.



ALAIN GAUTHIER, DIRECTOR

- 1) I take care of coordinating everything that happens on the stage. I talk to the set designer, make suggestions to the playwright, and help the singers know how to move and deliver their lines.
- 2) My greatest challenge is keeping the story clear, interesting and entertaining. I make sure that the show is aesthetically pleasing and that all the singers are at their best, but I also want the audience to understand the story we are telling.
- 3) I was introduced to opera by my dad, who loves the sound of operatic voice. Every Saturday evening, he and my mother would go to a restaurant where there were opera performances between the appetizer and the main course... and after dessert!
- 4) When I was little, I loved candy apples! That still counts as a serving of fruit, right?



**PASCAL BLANCHET,
PLAYWRITER**

- 1) What do I do in the concert? Absolutely nothing! My work was finished a long time ago. Starting with Cecile's idea, I came up with this story about these three artists who are working hard to do the roles of Hansel and Gretel justice.
- 2) My greatest challenge was writing many versions of the script! I would get Cecile, Alain, and Judith from JMC to read each version, then I'd write down their ideas and rework the text until everything was working well.
- 3) I discovered opera thanks to my mother, who used to bring home a lot of classical music CDs. Among them, I discovered an amazing composer, Jacques Offenbach. I loved his operettas – light and funny opera works. Gradually, I started becoming interested in all different kinds of operas.
- 4) I love those little sour fruit-shaped candies... Once I start eating them, I can't stop!

HISTORY TELLS THE STORY...



➤ The Birth of Opera

Opera is a story told through song, or alternatively, theatre set to music. Rather than being spoken, the dialogue (the conversations between characters) is sung. Opera has existed for about 400 years. It originated in Italy and then quickly spread all over Europe.



ORFEO BY MONTEVERDI

Inspired by the Camerata's initiatives, Italian composer **Claudio Monteverdi** wrote what is now considered to be the first real opera. With *Orfeo*, Monteverdi established the defining characteristics of opera. First off, he introduced the full orchestra by writing music for multiple instruments. He also integrated the aria, a style of singing that is much more expressive than monody. Through their solos, singers could now demonstrate the characters' feelings and emotions. And finally, Monteverdi made use of multi-voiced choirs. *Orfeo* became the model for opera composers everywhere.



Opera's Founders

The first opera artists were Italian musicians and poets. They formed a group called the Camerata. These Italian artists wanted to add elements of ancient Greek theatre, like sung dialogue, to their music. This led the Camerata to invent a type of solo singing called monody. Actor-singers were accompanied only by a harpsichord and a few string instruments.

Composers **Giulio Caccini** and **Jacopo Peri** helped opera take the next step! These two Camerata artists came up with the idea of transforming theatre monologues and dialogues into monody. They took existing texts and set them to music. It later became very commonplace for composers to write operas based on plays.

Opera rapidly became a very popular form of entertainment! More and more theatres started presenting opera. New halls were even built specifically to accommodate this new art form!

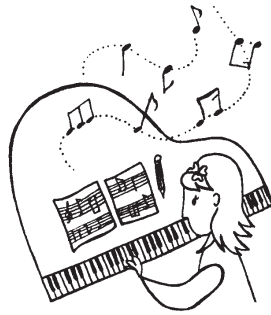


> OPERA'S MAIN ACTORS

TO WRITE AN OPERA, YOU NEED TWO PEOPLE:



• a librettist to write the words



• a composer to write the music

Once the opera has been written, you need singers! Some of them will be soloists: singers who take turns singing solos. Soloists play the main roles.



Other singers will be part of a **choir**: their voices will unite to comment on or summarize the story told in the opera. Often playing members of a royal court, peasants or specific social circles, the choir is a character in itself! Before presenting the opera to the public, singers have to **rehearse** the opera several times. They learn the song lyrics with a **musical director** (or "**répétiteur**") and, during rehearsals, they are given direction by a **director** who helps them to convey their character.



Artiste - Gilles Lafleur

At the opera, the music is played by an **orchestra**. If you have ever been to the opera, you have probably noticed that the orchestra is hidden in the **orchestra pit**. As its name suggests, the orchestra pit is a pit or hole between the stage and the audience that is big enough to hold ALL the musicians of the orchestra. Finally, there is a maestro who conducts the musicians in the pit as well as the singers on the stage.

DID YOU KNOW...?

An **operetta** is a little opera that deals with a light and fun subject. It has its roots in comedy. Operettas alternate between spoken and sung dialogue and showcase popular dances.

Musicals are large scale productions that combine theatre, dance, song and popular music on a single stage. Musical theatre has wowed audiences for a long time, because it uses popular contemporary music. In Quebec, many musicals have had a lot of success, including *Starmania*, *Demain matin Montréal m'attend*, *Don Juan*, *Notre-Dame de Paris*... In the States, some musicals have even been turned into movies – older ones like *Singing in the rain* and *Grease* as well as newer ones like *High School Musical*. There are even television musicals, like *Glee*.

BUT WHAT IS THE OPERA ABOUT?

Opera often transports its audiences into imaginary worlds. Indeed, it is especially suited to fantasy and heroic tales, myths and legends. But the feelings these stories evoke are very real. Opera comes from theatre. It takes dramatic scripts and sets them to music.

➤ Do you know Engelbert Humperdinck?

Most people are familiar with names like Mozart, Beethoven, or Bach. Some may even be able to name Schubert, Haydn or Strauss (Johann or Richard!). But, when prompted to name a classical composer, few would spontaneously think of “Engelbert Humperdinck”.

And not only because his name is kind of difficult to pronounce!

Humperdinck kept to himself and led a very quiet life.

Born in Cologne (Germany) in 1854, he started taking piano lessons at the age of seven and composed his first works at the age of twelve. As a conservatory student, he won numerous prizes in his hometown, then moved to Munich, a larger city, to pursue further studies. There, he met a celebrity: the great opera composer Richard Wagner. Humperdinck became his assistant and friend, and even taught music to Wagner’s children.

In 1890, when Engelbert was in his thirties and still had not had much success as a composer, his sister Adelheid asked him to compose some songs for a little show she had written based on a Grimm Brothers



fairytale called *Hansel and Gretel*. At first, he wrote fifteen little tunes for his sister. But soon, he was inspired to compose even more music. A year later, *Hansel and Gretel* became a large-scale opera lasting over two hours!

Humperdinck showed his score to another great composer, Richard Strauss (not to be confused with Johann Strauss, another famous composer known for his waltzes). This other Strauss was so enthusiastic that he asked Humperdinck if he could conduct the first production of the work in 1893. It was a huge success!

In the following years, *Hansel and Gretel* was performed all over Europe: in Berlin, Vienna, London, Milan, Paris... and later, even across the pond in New York. Following this success, Humperdinck wrote another opera, a children’s tale (*The King’s Children*), but its success was lesser and did not last. He also became an excellent teacher who taught many great musicians and composers. But he will stay forever associated with *Hansel and Gretel*, the Dew Fairy, the Witch and the Gingerbread House!

Engelbert Humperdinck, not to be confused with... Engelbert Humperdinck!!!

There is actually a British pop singer with exactly the same name as this German composer. The singer behind many great pop hits in the 1960s and 1970s was originally called Arnold George Dorsey. That name felt a bit plain for a superstar, so he started using the stage name Engelbert Humperdinck. He took on the *Hansel and Gretel* composer’s name, because he liked how it sounded... which means that when you search the name on Google or YouTube, the pop star shows up first!

Repertoire you will hear in *Opera Candy*



OTHER OPERA EXCERPTS YOU WILL HEAR DURING THE CONCERT,

IN PERFORMANCE ORDER.



	Aria	Title Opera	Character	Voice Type (Fach)	Composer	Sung Language	Premiere Year	Premiere Location
1	«Подруги милые» (pronounced: Poe-drew-ghee mealy)	<i>The Queen of Spades</i>	Pauline	mezzo-soprano	Pyotr Ilyich TCHAIKOVSKY	Russian	1890	Saint Petersburg, Russia
2	«Tornami a vagheggiar» (pronounced: vagg-eh-jar)	<i>Alcina</i>	Morgana	soprano	Georg Friedrich HANDEL	Italian	1735	London, England
3	The Flower Duet	<i>Lakmé</i>	Lakmé and Mallika	soprano and mezzo-soprano	Leo DELIBES	French	1883	Paris, France
4	«L'amour est un oiseau rebelle»	<i>Carmen</i>	Carmen	mezzo-soprano	Georges BIZET	French	1875	Paris, France
5	«O Isis und Osiris»	<i>The Magic Flute</i>	Zarastro	bass	Wolfgang Amadeus MOZART	German	1791	Vienna, Austria
6	«La donna è mobile»	<i>Rigoletto</i>	Duke of Mantua	tenor	Giuseppe VERDI	Italian	1851	Venice, Italy

TONGUE TWISTER!

• Each of these operas was created in Europe. Europe was the birthplace of opera and is where opera first gained popularity. In the 18th and 19th centuries, there was little to no opera in North America (Canada, United States, and Mexico) because its countries were much younger and did not have any opera infrastructure (singers, orchestras, and halls).

• Other than the languages listed in the table above, there are also operas in English (by composers like Henry Purcell and Benjamin Britten), in Czech (by Antonin Dvořák, for instance)... Those are the main languages, but nearly every European country has had composers writing in the native tongue.

• *Hansel and Gretel* was originally written in German because that was the language spoken by the composer. For the first French production of *Hansel and Gretel* in 1904, the poet Catulle Mendes translated the opera into French. The French version is used a lot today. There is also an English version that is often used.

➤ Other Composers Featured in *Opera Candy*

The main composer of the music you will hear throughout the concert is, of course, Engelbert Humperdinck (see page 8), who wrote *Hansel and Gretel*. But our performers will also sing excerpts from famous operas by other well-known composers. Let's learn more about them!



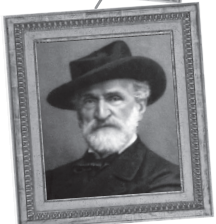
GEORG FRIEDRICH HANDEL (born in 1685, died in 1759)

Handel was born in Germany but spent most of his career in England. He wrote over 40 operas, but he was known for his many oratorios. An oratorio is a sung work about Biblical characters. His most famous oratorio is *Messiah*, which is often performed at Christmas and Easter.



WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (born in 1756, died in 1791)

Even though he only lived to be 35, this Austrian composer was able to produce over 600 works. It is worth mentioning that he started very young: he wrote his first works at the age of 6! He wrote masterpieces in every genre: symphonies, concertos (especially for piano), sonatas... His operas are often performed today, the most famous of them being *The Magic Flute*, *Le nozze di Figaro* and *Don Giovanni*.



GIUSEPPE VERDI (born in 1813, died in 1901)

Contrary to Mozart, who wrote lots of different types of works, Italian composer Verdi was almost exclusively an opera composer. And also contrary to Mozart, Verdi lived a very long life and worked until the bitter end; Verdi was over 80 years old when his final opera was premiered. Many of his melodies are well-known: the *Hebrew Chorus* from *Nabucco* or the triumphant march from *Aida* are recognizable even to those who have never been to the opera before.



GEORGES BIZET (born in 1838, died in 1875)

This French composer is mostly known for his opera *Carmen*, one of the most performed works in the world, if not THE most! The few other operas he wrote during his tragically short life include *The Pearl Fishers*, which also features some wonderful arias.



LEO DELIBES (born in 1838, died in 1891)

Just like his compatriot Bizet, Leo Delibes wrote a dozen opera, but only one is still performed regularly today: *Lakmé*. It features *The Flower Duet*, a melody so famous that many can sing it without even knowing where it is from. Apart from his operas, Delibes also wrote ballets like *Coppelia* and *Sylvia* that are still performed today.



PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY (Born in 1840, died in 1893)

Russia's most famous composer, Tchaikovsky wrote a dozen operas, including the more well-known *Eugene Onegin* as well as *The Queen of Spades*. Like Delibes, Tchaikovsky's most famous works are his ballets, which include *Swan Lake* and the ever-popular *Nutcracker*, which is performed year after year during the holidays.

Other opera composers that could have made this list:

- Rossini (composer of *The Barber of Seville*)
- Puccini (*Madama Butterfly*, *Tosca*, *La Bohème*)
- Gounod (*Faust*, *Romeo and Juliet*)
- Wagner (*The Valkyrie*)...

Opera is a vast universe that can be discovered over the course of an entire lifetime!

THE DISCONCERTING MAESTRO EXPLAINS



➤ The Plot

Opera Candy tells the story of three friends who decide to present their very own version of *Hansel and Gretel*. They decide to focus on a few select parts of the story. Here is a synopsis of the full *Hansel and Gretel* story, as told in the original opera.

SYNOPSIS:

Hansel and Gretel are brother and sister. They live with their parents, Gertrude and Pierre, in a little thatched cottage at the edge of the woods. Together, they make brooms for their parents to sell at the market. But the family has fallen on hard times. Food is hard to come by. One day, the family has nothing left to eat. At their mother's behest, Hansel and Gretel head into the forest to forage for strawberries.

Night falls. Hansel and Gretel can't seem to find their house. In the dark, they are petrified. Suddenly, the Sandman crosses their path and casts them into a deep sleep. The Dew Fairy awakes them at sunrise. The kids immediately see a gingerbread house covered in candy. Starving, Hansel and Gretel approach the house to break off a few pieces. What they don't know is that the house's owner is a witch!

It happens to be the home of the Gingerbread Witch, a wicked lady who turns children into gingerbread... in order to eat them! The witch captures Hansel and Gretel. Hansel is thrown into a cage and Gretel is forced to clean the house. The witch is excited. She can't wait to put the children in the oven. But Hansel and Gretel have a few tricks up their sleeve. Gretel steals the witch's magic wand and frees her brother. Together, the siblings push the mean old witch into the oven, turning her into a giant gingerbread cookie.



What's Up With Their Names? Not As Strange As They Sound!

Hansel is a diminutive of Hans, which is a nickname for Johannes – the German equivalent of John in English. Gretel is a diminutive of Margarete, which is the German equivalent of Margaret.

FAMILY TIES!

It all started with a folk tale about two children – a brother and a sister.

The tale was published by **Jacob** and **Wilhelm Grimm** – two brothers.

Then, **Adelheid Wetter**, composer **Engelbert Humperdinck's** sister, rewrote the tale to turn it into an opera libretto. Another brother and sister duo!

And now, three close friends who love each other, and occasionally bicker with each other just like siblings, have come together to present *Opera Candy*.

SOLFA TEACHES US



> How the voice works!

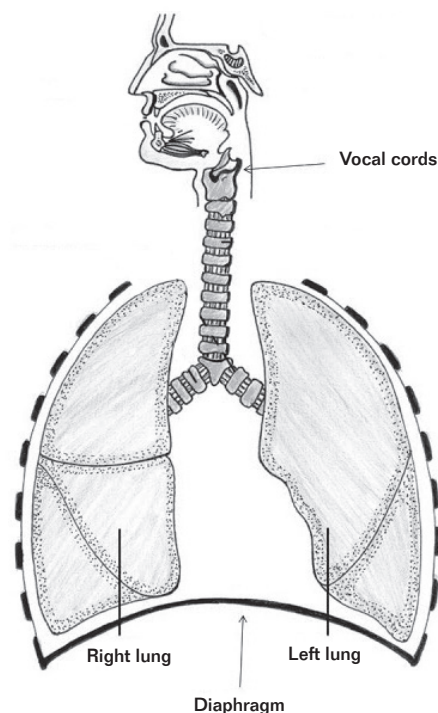
Did you know that your body is an instrument in and of itself? When we speak or sing, our vocal system produces sounds in the same way as certain musical instruments do. When we breathe in, our lungs fill with air, and when we breathe out we can make sounds. Of course, we can make noise when we are breathing in, but the sound is much harder to control. See for yourself!

In order to speak or sing, our **vocal cords** have to vibrate. The outgoing air is what makes them vibrate as we breathe out. Without this vibration, the vocal cords would not produce any sound. Try speaking at full voice after letting all the air out from your lungs. It should not be possible. If you are able to, you still have air in your lungs!

The sounds produced by the vocal cords are amplified by the **chest, neck, and head**, which all serve as **resonance chambers**. In order to produce very precise pitches, like a singer, you must learn how to vibrate your vocal cords properly. You can tighten or loosen your vocal cords using the muscles in your throat.

The **diaphragm** is a muscle in the stomach that pushes against the **lungs** to help push air out. In order to speak or sing very loudly, more air must be expelled and pass through the vocal cords. Conversely, people who speak or sing very softly are only lightly skimming their vocal cords with air. Therefore, the amount of air coming into contact with the vocal cords determines the voice's volume. The more the air strikes the cords, the more they will vibrate and the more volume they will produce. On the other hand, cords that are only being moved by a small quantity of air will vibrate less, so the sound won't be as loud.

Have you ever noticed that whispering doesn't require much air? When you whisper, the air only vibrates in your mouth. Your vocal cords do not need to vibrate when you whisper. Try it yourself.



Why is Everyone Yelling?!

Opera singers don't sing the same way as pop singers do. (People who make fun of opera singers say it sounds like they are yelling!) To hear the difference, look up the famous tenor Luciano Pavarotti on YouTube, and compare his singing with Quebecois singer Louis-Jean Cormier, or compare an aria by Anna Netrebko with a song by Cœur de Pirate... Quite a difference, wouldn't you say?

Keep in mind that when opera was first invented a long time ago, microphones did not exist. In order to be heard, singers had to develop a special technique that made use of the entire body as if it were a loudspeaker. This means they could be heard without a microphone in enormous halls. Pop singers almost always use microphones, so they don't need to sing loudly.

Just like a musical instrument, the voice can produce low and high pitches. Our vocal cords are kind of like guitar, violin or harp strings.

The longer they are, the lower the sounds they produce. Conversely, the shorter they are, the higher the sounds they produce. Anatomically, female vocal cords are generally shorter than male vocal cords. This is why women's voices tend to be higher than male voices. Even a single person can produce a variety of pitches. This is because we all have the ability to elongate or shorten our own vocal cords by tensing and relaxing them. As you already know, the throat muscles are what allow us to tense and relax our vocal cords.

The shape and size of the mouth and throat influence the voice's timbre. Because no one is built exactly the same way, every voice has its own unique sound.

HOW CAN I BECOME A BETTER SINGER?

Stand tall so that air can travel easily between your lungs and your vocal cords.

Relax your neck and shoulders.

Breathe in easily, allowing your stomach to expand.

Your shoulders and chest should stay down as you breathe in.

Articulate your words so that your audience can hear them clearly.

Train your throat muscles by alternating between high and low pitches.

Work on your interpretation: try to convey the emotions in the words you are singing.



Opera singers can be categorized according to their voice's pitch, also known as their tessitura. The table below explains the differences between voice categories.

Highest ↑ ↓ Lowest	Female voices	Soprano	Sopranos sing the highest notes.
		Mezzo-soprano	"Mezzo" is an Italian word that translates as "mid" or "medium". A mezzo-soprano voice is somewhere between the soprano and the contralto range.
		Contralto	Contraltos are the lowest of the female voices. When contraltos sing their lowest notes, you might even mistake them for a man!
	Male voices	Tenor	This male voice has an impressive ability to sing very high notes. Tenors have powerful voices.
		Baritone	Baritones sing lower than tenors, but not quite as low as basses. Like mezzo-sopranos, baritones have a middle-of-the-road vocal range.
		Bass	The bass voice is the lowest of them all.

TO YOUR INSTRUMENTS! READY?... PLAY! ...OR SING!



YOU CAN CHOOSE TO PLAY THE MELODY ON THE FLUTE OR

ANY OTHER INSTRUMENT, OR SING IT IN TWO GROUPS,

A "GRETTEL" GROUP AND A "HANSEL" GROUP.

Brother, Come and Dance With Me!

Allegretto con moto. (♩=100)

Gretel (Clapping her hands.)



Bro - ther come and dance with me! Both my hands I of - fer thee, Right foot first,

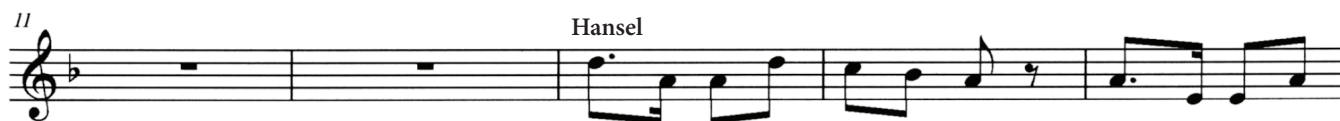
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Left foot then, Round a - bout and back again.

(Hansel tries to do it, but awkwardly.)

11



I, would dance, but don't know how, When to jump or

16



when to bow, Show me what I ought to do, So that I may dance like you.

21



With your foot you tap tap tap, With your hand you

26



clap clap clap, Right foot first, Left foot then, Round a - bout and back a - gain!

31 **Hansel**

With your foot you tap tap tap, With your hand you clap clap clap! Right foot first,

36 **Gretel**

Left foot then, Round and back a - gain! That was ve - ry good in - deed,

41

O I'm sure you'll soon suc - ceed! Try a - gain and I can see Han - sel soon will

46 (clapping her hands joyfully.)

dance like me! With your head you nick nick nick,

51

With your fingers you click click click, Right foot first, Left foot then, Round a - bout and

56 **Hansel**

back a - gain! With your head you nick nick nick, With your fingers you click click click,

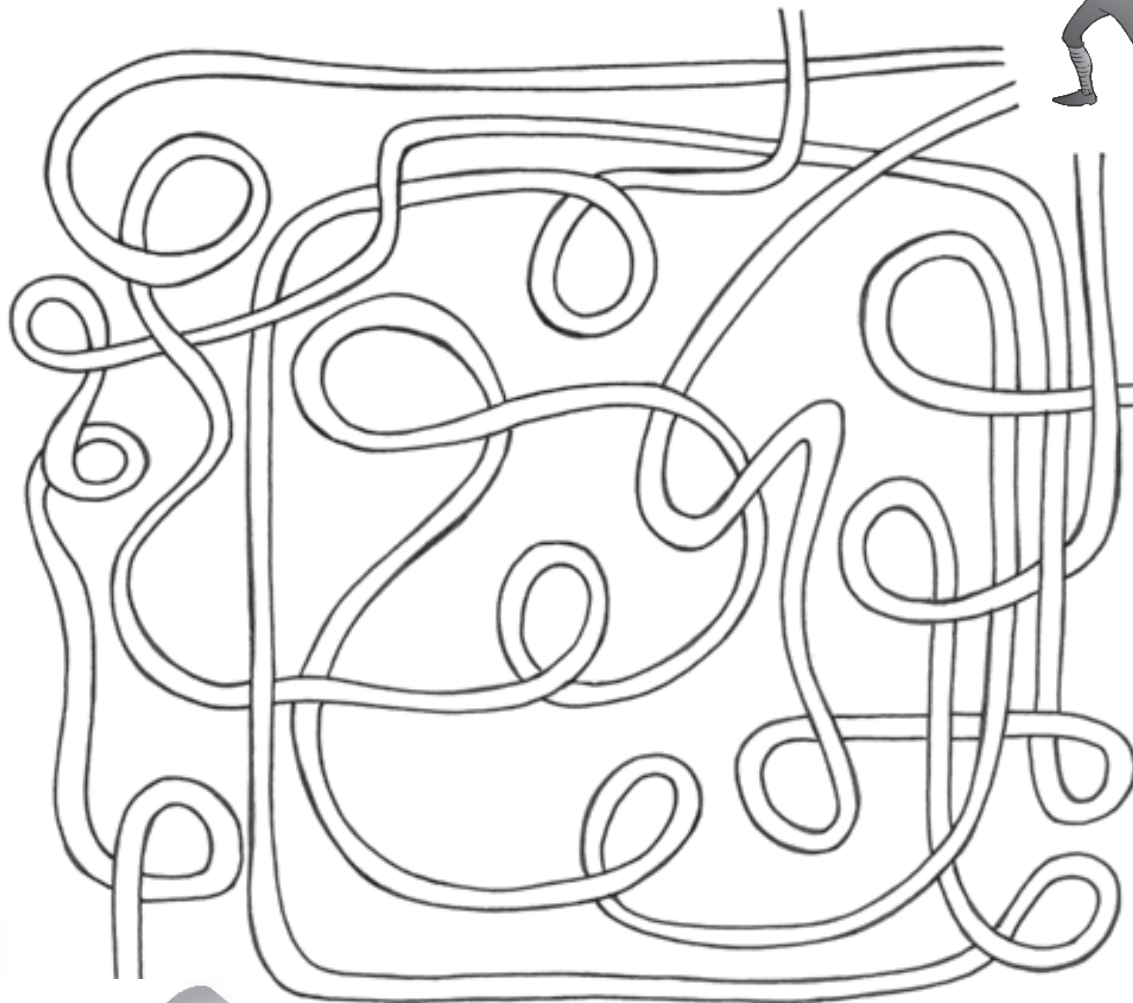
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Right foot first, Left foot then, Round and back a - gain!

● LET'S HAVE SOME FUN

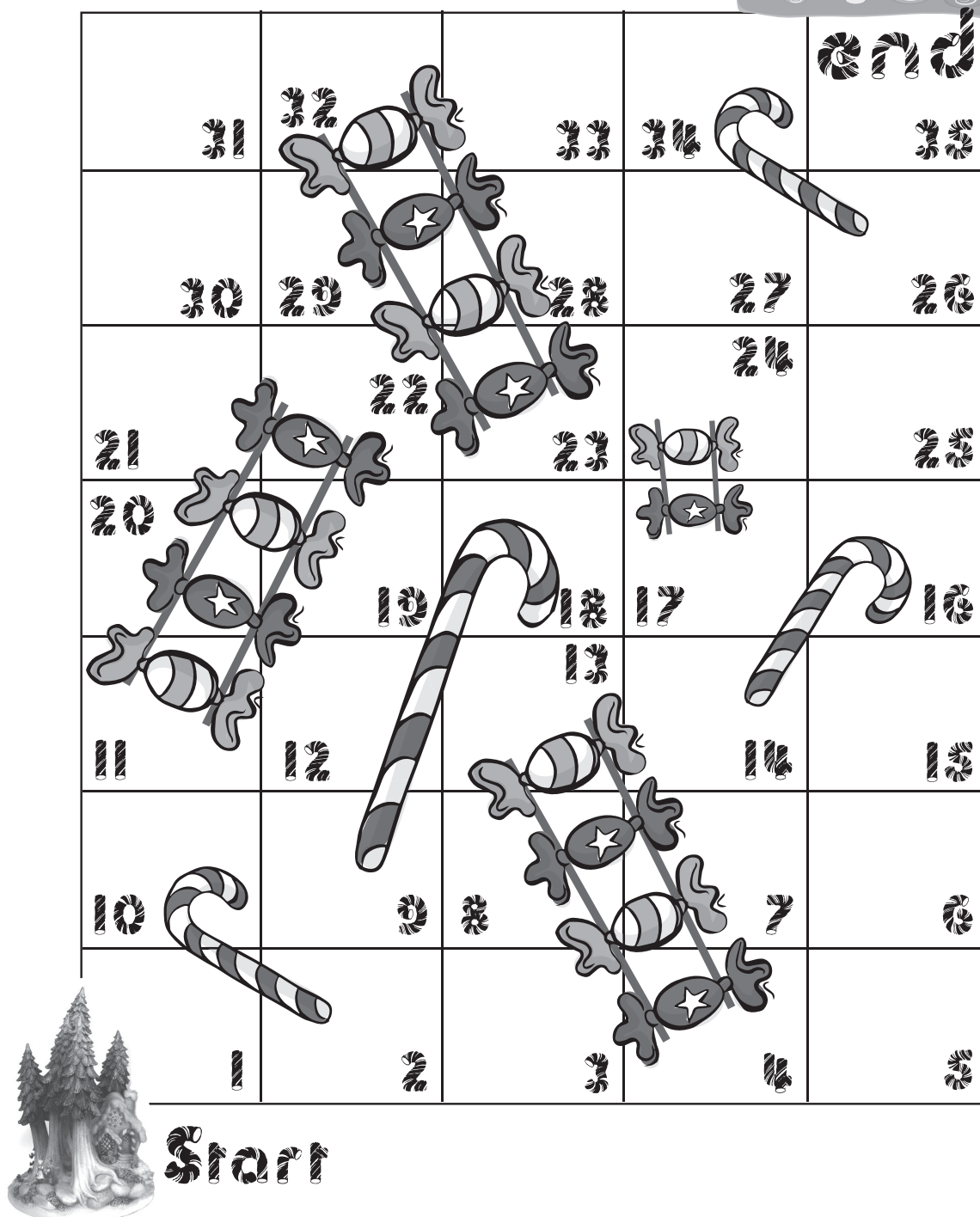


The Thatched Cottage:
Hansel and Gretel's house



The Gingerbread House

> SUGAR LADDERS & CANDY CANES!





➤ Sugar Ladders & Candy Canes!

Help Hansel and Gretel find their way back home! Roll the dice to move forward on the board. Answer the question that corresponds to the number your pawn lands on. If you don't know the answer, go back to where you started at the beginning of your turn. If you land at the top of a candy cane, slide down it to the other end. Do not answer the question at the bottom of the candy cane. If you land at the bottom of a sugar ladder, climb up. You must answer the question at the top of the sugar ladder correctly to be able to stay at the top. Otherwise, return to the bottom of the ladder.

1. In what country was opera first created?
2. Name the group of musicians and poets who created the earliest form of opera.
3. Who were the two artists who thought to combine theatre monologues and dialogues with singing?
4. Name the earliest opera.
5. Who wrote the earliest opera?
6. How old is opera as an art form, approximately?
7. What do you call the person who writes the music for an opera?
8. What do you call the person who writes the words for an opera?
9. What instrument replaces the orchestra during the rehearsals for an opera?
10. Name another performing art that is similar to opera.
11. In the first *Hansel and Gretel* song, what sound do you make with your feet?
12. In the first *Hansel and Gretel* song, what sound do you make with your hands?
13. In the first *Hansel and Gretel* song, what sound do you make with your head?
14. In the first *Hansel and Gretel* song, what sound do you make with your fingers?
15. What language are Tchaikovsky's operas sung in?
16. What language are Verdi's operas sung in?
17. What language is *Lakmé* sung in?
18. What language is *The Magic Flute* sung in?
19. Who wrote *Carmen*?
20. In what city did Handel spend most of his career?
21. To write *Hansel and Gretel*, the composer had help from a member of his family. Who?
22. Who composed the music of *Hansel and Gretel*?
23. Who causes Hansel and Gretel to fall asleep by sprinkling sand over their eyes?
24. Who comes to wake Hansel and Gretel at the crack of dawn?
25. What type of house does the witch live in?
26. What does the witch do to the children she captures?
27. What happens to the evil witch?
28. Tchaikovsky wrote an opera named after a playing card... Which one?
29. The opera *Hansel and Gretel* is based on a fairytale written by two brothers. What are their names?
30. The composer who wrote *Hansel and Gretel* had been the assistant, and later the friend of another composer. What was that other composer's name?
31. What vibrates in our body when we speak and sing?
32. Name one of the parts of the body that amplify sounds, acting as a resonance chamber.
33. Which muscle pushes against the lungs, causing air to be expelled?
34. Which voice type produces the highest pitches?
35. Which of the female voice types is the lowest?
36. Which of the male voice types produces the lowest pitches?
37. Which of the male voice types is characterized by its powerful and high-pitched sounds?
38. What are singers (male) who are neither tenors nor basses called?
39. Why did singers have to be able to sing louder a few centuries ago than pop singers do today?



➤ Fun Finger Puppets

COLOUR THE FINGER PUPPETS IN WITH BRIGHT COLOURS.



Cut them out, following the outlines carefully.
Then, cut out the circles at their knees.



Insert your index and middle fingers into the two knee holes in each of the puppets.
Your fingers become Hansel and Gretel's legs. Have fun!



LET'S HAVE SOME FUN

FOR OLDER STUDENTS:

> How does it feel to be an opera singer on stage?

This game was invented by Peter Brook, a British director who has staged several operas and plays.



Number of participants: 4

Accessories: none needed!

Student #1 stands in the centre of the classroom (or any other space).

Student #2 stands across from **Student #1** and makes different gestures, with their hands, feet, head, and body, as quickly or as slowly as they wish. **Student #1** must imitate the other student's movements closely.

Simultaneously, **Student #3** asks **Student #1** a variety of personal questions: their likes and dislikes, preferences as to books, TV shows, fruits and vegetables, and candy!

Also simultaneously, **Student #4** asks **Student #1** a variety of general knowledge-testing questions (French, math, geography, history, etc.). **Student #1** must answer **Student #4** and **Student #3** while mirroring **Student #2**'s movements.

(**Student #3** and **Student #4** will do their best to avoid talking over each other.)

You can already imagine that **Student #1** is going to have a hard time and become very tired by the end of the game (which could last five minutes, or until **Student #1** asks to stop!)

This game causes some funny situations, but it is designed to show what an opera singer has to do on stage: follow the conductor's movements (**Student #2**) while thinking about the emotions in the music and the words about love, fear, despair, intense joy (**Student #3**)... while also remembering all the notes, all the words, and all the dynamics. **Student #4** brings that more "scientific" side. It's not always so easy being an opera singer!



EVER MORE FUN STUFF



➤ Project: History and Music Between the Lines!

Draw a timeline spanning from the birth of opera (1607) all the way to today. Place all the events we have talked about in this study guide chronologically on your timeline:

- dates of birth and death of all the composers mentioned (feel free to add other composers you may know);
- year of premiere of the different operas;
- any other musical event or musician you may know.

Below it, create a second timeline of important historic events:

- the year Montréal was established;
- the year Québec was established;
- the year your city was established;
- the year of Canadian Confederation;
- the dates of different wars you may have heard of (First and Second World Wars, Civil War in the United States, the French and Indian War...)

If you wish, create a third timeline of important inventions: the telephone, electricity, the automobile, the rabies vaccine...

What do you notice? Have fun drawing links between the different events: could Verdi have used a telephone? (Yes!) Could Mozart have gone to Québec? (Yes!) Could Handel have gotten the rabies vaccine? (No!)... and so on.

LET'S WRITE AN OPERA!

Hansel and Gretel is a German folk tale. Before the Brothers Grimm wrote it down, the story was told in the oral tradition, from generation to generation. In Canada, we have fairytales and legends of our own! Research the following subjects: Chasse-Galerie, Werewolf, La Corriveau, Alexis le Trotteur... These are but a few examples. Alone or as a team, research other Canadian legends and tales.

Once you have chosen your story, make a list of all its characters. You may choose to focus on certain characters rather than others, or you can add some to make the story your own!

Decide which part of the story would make a good song or musical number. Write some lyrics for these sections. Don't be shy - let your imagination run wild!

If you know someone who can write music or if you have an idea for a melody, that is great. Otherwise, select existing songs and switch out the words to fit them to your story.

You can choose to complete just one step of this project (e.g. only write the songs or the script).

Can you picture your new opera (or new musical) being presented at your school?



LET'S GET READY FOR THE CONCERT



YOU CAN KEEP THIS GUIDE AND REFER TO IT EVERY TIME

YOU GO TO AN OPERA OR CONCERT.

It sets out various rules that you must follow before, during and after the concert, and information about applause, an ancient custom that has continued to this day.

Read the guide carefully to become an experienced concertgoer!



CLAP YOUR HANDS

To show your appreciation during a concert, you can clap your hands.

In a concert, it is customary to applaud the performers at the end of each piece. If the piece is in several movements, you should wait for the end of the last movement and leave a moment of silence, just as the musicians leave a moment of silence between movements. This does not apply here, but make a note of it in case you find yourself attending this type of concert in the future.

At the opera, a different system applies. The audience often applauds the singers at the end of a well-known or difficult aria, as well as applauding at the end of each Act. At jazz concerts, the audience often applauds the players after each solo improvisation.



1

BEFORE THE CONCERT

To make sure you don't distract the artists and audience, turn off any electronic device (watch, cell phone, etc.)

Make sure you don't arrive late for the concert. It is preferable to arrive 10 to 15 minutes before the concert is scheduled to begin. This will give you time to read the program!

2

DURING THE CONCERT

To show your respect for the musicians and the audience, don't talk to the people next to you. Silence is essential to allow the musicians and everybody at the concert to concentrate. However, as there are comedic moments in many of our concerts, you are allowed to laugh out loud when you find something funny!

Candies and sweets should only be eaten outside the concert hall. They can make a lot of noise and disturb your neighbours if you unwrap them during the concert.

Unless there's an emergency, never leave the concert hall during the performance. If possible, wait for the intermission. Young audience concerts like this one have no intermission and are less than an hour in length... so it isn't very long anyway!

The musicians on the stage are aware of everything going on in the hall and hear all the sounds made by the members of the audience. By keeping a respectful silence, you will allow the performers to give the best concert possible. Except laughing, of course, which the artists are very happy to hear in the funnier scenes!

3

AFTER THE CONCERT

Make sure you haven't forgotten anything on or under your seat. Leave the concert hall calmly, without pushing or shoving. Take the time to discuss the concert with your friends.

It is often possible to meet the performers after a concert to congratulate them or ask them questions. Sometimes, the musicians come back on stage to meet the audience members. If this is the case, you just have to go up to them and speak to them. If the musicians do not come back on stage, ask one of the ushers where to go to meet them backstage or in their dressing room.

GAME ANSWER KEY



ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS IN

SUGAR LADDERS AND CANDY CANES!

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Italy | 16. Italian | 29. The Brothers Grimm |
| 2. The Camerata | 17. French | (Jacob and Wilhelm) |
| 3. Giulio Caccini & Jacopo Peri | 18. German | 30. Richard Wagner |
| 4. <i>Orfeo</i> | 19. Georges Bizet | 31. Vocal cords |
| 5. Claudio Monteverdi | 20. London | 32. The chest, neck or head |
| 6. 400 years | 21. His sister (Adelheid) | 33. Diaphragm |
| 7. The composer | 22. Engelbert Humperdinck | 34. Soprano |
| 8. The librettist | 23. The Sandman | 35. Mezzo-soprano |
| 9. Piano | 24. The Dew Fairy | 36. Bass |
| 10. Operetta or musical theatre | 25. A Gingerbread House | 37. Tenor |
| 11. Tap tap tap | 26. She turns them into | 38. Baritone |
| 12. Clap clap clap | gingerbread cookies | 39. Because they did not have |
| 13. Nick nick nick | 27. Hansel and Gretel push her | microphones! |
| 14. Click click click | into the oven | |
| 15. Russian | 28. The Queen of Spades | |

Colour in the
Gingerbread House
as you imagine it.



FURTHER MUSICAL LEARNING



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- Grimm, Jacob, and Wilhelm Grimm. *Grimm: the Illustrated Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm*. Little Gestalten, 2017.
- Pogue, David, and Scott Speck. *Opera for Dummies*. Hungry Minds, 1997.
- Vila, Marie Christine. *Quatre siècles d'opéra: 140 œuvres lyriques de la Renaissance à nos jours*. Larousse, 2000. [French]

The **composers** mentioned in the concert each have their own dedicated **Wikipedia** page. These pages are well structured and generally reliable, since they are reviewed regularly by Internet researchers and specialists. You can learn about Humperdinck, Handel, Mozart, Verdi, Bizet, Delibes... and any other composer that peaks your interest!

There is also a **Wikipedia** page dedicated to each of the works discussed in this study guide. Search Hansel and Gretel, Alcina, The Queen of Spades, Carmen, The Magic Flute, Lakmé (or any other well-known opera) to learn more about the plot, the characters, and the historical context behind each work, and more.

DISCOGRAPHY:

- Humperdinck, Engelbert, and Adelheid Wette. *Excerpts from Hänsel und Gretel* (Fassbaender, Popp, W. Berry, Hamari, Schlemm, Vienna Philharmonic, Solti).

If you want to learn about opera as a whole, nothing beats listening to its greatest hits! There are many affordable compilations available.

Here are a few that you are likely to find in a library or used record or CD store:

Operamania, London Records in collaboration with Decca Records: 5 discs featuring Western opera's most famous arias sung by the greatest voices of our time.

And, of course, there is **YouTube**! Search for the composer's name, the title of the opera, or the first few words of the excerpt you are looking for and you will immediately access a wide selection of versions by various singers and conductors. You can spend hours jumping from one excerpt to the other and discovering new things as you go along.

INTERESTING WEBSITES:

This website showcases a variety of topics from the opera world (e.g. Opera and Cinema, Your First Opera, Costumes in Opera...) <http://www.olyrix.com/decouvrir-opera> [French]

To learn about Canadian singers, check out the **Canadian Music Encyclopedia** (part of the Canadian Encyclopedia) www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en

There is a Québécois magazine dedicated entirely to opera, focusing on local singers and news in the classical singing world in Québec. It is called *L'Opéra – Revue québécoise d'art lyrique*. <http://www.revuelopera.quebec> [French]

There are two main opera houses in Québec:

Opéra de Montréal: <http://www.operademontreal.com>

Opéra de Québec: <http://www.operadequebec.com>

The biggest Canadian opera house, the Canadian Opera Company, is in Ontario: <http://www.coc.ca>.

Many other main Canadian cities also have their own opera companies:

Winnipeg: <http://www.manitobaopera.mb.ca>

Saskatoon: <http://www.saskatoonopera.ca>

Calgary: <http://www.calgaryopera.com>

Edmonton: <http://www.edmontonopera.com>

Vancouver: <https://www.vancouveropera.ca>

Victoria: <http://www.pov.bc.ca>

Their websites feature photos, opera synopses, singer biographies and often short videos showing what it is like backstage or in a rehearsal.

FOR THE "LET'S WRITE AN OPERA" PROJECT:

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- Boivin, Aurélien. *Contes, légendes et récits de l'île de Montréal*. Trois-Pistoles, 2013. [French]
- Deschênes, Gaston and Pierrette Maurais. *Contes et légendes de la Côte-du-Sud*. Septentrion, 2013. [French]
- Gagnon, Cécile. *Mille ans de contes au Québec*, Vol. 1 and 2. Milan Jeunesse, 2008. [French]

➤ LET'S REVISIT THE CONCERT TOGETHER

A FEW SUGGESTIONS OF QUESTIONS TO ASK THE CHILDREN:

- Did you enjoy going to a concert that featured opera excerpts?
- What was your favourite part of the concert?
- Were you scared when Hansel and Gretel were captured by the witch?
- What other scary fairytale characters can you think of?
- When they are lost in the forest, Hansel and Gretel are very hungry. What is your favourite thing to eat when you are really hungry? What is your favourite food? What is your favourite flavour of cake? What is your favourite fruit? What is your favourite type of candy?
- The witch performs magic tricks. If you had magic powers, what trick would you perform?
- In an opera, the music translates the characters' emotions. Which part of the music was the gentlest? The loudest? Did any part of the music make you laugh? Feel scared? Feel sad?
- Toward the end of the concert, the *Opera Candy* characters brainstorm ideas for a different ending to *Hansel and Gretel*. Do you have any ideas of your own that would make a good ending to the story?
- Are there other fairytales you would like to change the ending of? Which ones? What would the new ending be?
- If those fairytales were turned into operas, which voice types (soprano, mezzo, tenor, bass) would you assign to the different characters?

