

# **Hansel and Gretel**

**Tuesday, January 1, 2008 (13:00 ET; 18:00 UTC; 19:00 CET)**

**Running time: 2 hours, 10 minutes. 1 intermission**

## **Act I**

Hansel and Gretel have been left at home alone by their parents. When Hansel complains to his sister that he is hungry, Gretel shows him some milk that a neighbor has given them for the family's supper. To entertain them, she begins to teach her brother how to dance. Suddenly their mother returns. She scolds the children for playing and wants to know why they have gotten so little work done. When she accidentally spills the milk, she angrily chases the children out into the woods to pick strawberries.

Hansel and Gretel's father returns home drunk. He is pleased because he was able to make a considerable amount of money that day. He brings out the food he has bought and asks his wife where the children have gone. She explains that she has sent them into the woods. Horrified, he tells her that the children are in danger because of the witch who lives there. They rush off into the woods to look for them.

## **Act II**

Gretel sings while Hansel picks strawberries. When they hear a cuckoo calling, they imitate the bird's call, eating strawberries all the while, and soon there are none left. In the sudden silence of the woods, the children realize that they have lost their way and grow frightened. The Sandman comes to bring them sleep by sprinkling sand on their eyes. Hansel and Gretel say their evening prayer. In a dream, they see fourteen angels protecting them.

## **Act III**

The Dew Fairy appears to awaken the children. Gretel wakes Hansel, and the two find themselves in front of a gingerbread house. They do not notice the Witch, who decides to fatten Hansel up so she can eat him. She immobilizes him with a spell. The oven is hot, and the Witch is overjoyed at the thought of her banquet. Gretel has overheard the witch's plan, and she breaks the spell on Hansel. When the Witch asks her to look in the oven, Gretel pretends she doesn't know how: the Witch must show her. When she does, peering into the oven, the children shove her inside and shut the door. The oven explodes, and the many gingerbread children the Witch had enchanted come back to life. Hansel and Gretel's parents appear and find their children. All express gratitude for their salvation.