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Recommended Citation

Office of University Communications, "Gardner-Webb Opera Theatre presents "Hansel and Gretel"" (2011). *Gardner-Webb NewsCenter Archive*. 1982.
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Gardner-Webb Opera Theatre presents "Hansel and Gretel"

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Office of University Communications

November 7, 2011

Besides Public Performances, Special Matinees Expose School Children to Opera



Watch Video At: <https://youtu.be/vnn7NLjAoUU>

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. – The Gardner-Webb University Opera Theatre, a part of the School of Performing & Visual Arts, is proud to present its fall production “Hansel And Gretel” – composed by Engelbert Humperdinck. Performances will be held in the Dover Theatre, located in the Lutz-Yelton Convocation Center (LYCC), on Nov. 9-12 at 7:30 p.m.

“Hansel and Gretel” is a familiar fairy tale of German origin that was first published in the early 1800s by the Brothers Grimm. The story is about a brother and sister, who live with their parents in a modest home. Times are hard for the family as the father makes a living selling brooms. Susan Ali, assistant professor of music and director of the Opera at GWU explained, “The father finally has a good day selling brooms and is coming home to celebrate. However, Hansel and Gretel’s mother has sent them into the woods to collect strawberries. Witches are known to dwell in the woods, so the parents panic when the children don’t return home. As night falls, things get interesting as Hansel and Gretel are visited not only by witches – but fairies and angels.”

Besides the evening performances, open to the public, two matinees will be presented to school groups in the area. The Opera Theatre has been hosting these "Student Days at the Opera" for 31 years, with an estimated 25,000 children attending. This year, over five hundred elementary students are expected on Wednesday. For many of them, it will be their first time exposed to a live opera.

Ali noted, "They (the students) look forward to it. We even decided to add a second matinee and invite older students to come this year, middle and high school age, including a few private schools."

The cast features 15 students, two faculty members—including Ali as a witch and Patricia Harrelson, assistant professor of music, as Hansel and Gretel's mother—and one alumnus. Music will be provided by a small version of the GWU Orchestra under the direction of Dr. Patricia Sparti, chair of the Music Department.

The cast even features a Gingerbread Chorus from Crest High School in Shelby, N.C., led by Crest Chorus Director, Michael Martinez. "Hansel and Gretel' is Humperdinck's masterpiece opera. It's a large undertaking, but I have no worries in our group," said Ali.

For more information about this event and the Department of Fine Arts call 704-406-4448.